

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

15th APRIL 2025

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Ashill was held on Tuesday 15th APRIL 2025 at 7.00pm in the Community Centre.

Mr A Ketteringham was in the Chair with 8 members of the Council, the Clerk Jean Sangster, 41 members of the public & District/County Councillor Mr F Eagle in attendance

Apologies for absence were received from Mr T Hinds & Mr K Collins.

Before the meeting commenced the Chair requested that everyone stand in silence as a tribute to Mrs Marilyn Helsby who sadly passed away at the weekend. She had served the Parish well as a Councillor whilst living in the village and our thoughts go out to her husband John and family.

This meeting was also attended by Mr Terry Jermy MP who took questions from the Public at the start of the evening.

These were mainly regarding the proposed Solar and Mr Jermy expressed his concern about the amount of land that this is going to be taken out of agriculture and he feels that grade 1 & 2 should be protected.

Many concerns were raised by the group that has been formed called HOG regarding fire risks, toxic fumes and the contamination of land.

Mr Jermy informed that a meeting has been arranged with Mr George Freeman MP at Bradenham on the 26th April to which PC members will be invited as a Steering Group has been formed for his area. The next consultation period with RWE begins on 24th April to 12th June and the Community Centre has been booked by them for consultation on 10th May between 9.00am and 4.00pm. Other matters that were discussed were the Call-for Sites by Breckland Council which ends 28th April.

Many felt that before development commences the infrastructure should be in place and Mr Jermy also felt that there should be better Social Care and would welcome views from residents for safeguards.

He was asked if he is happy with Government and he said yes but has voted against several of their proposals.

The Chair thanked him for taking the time to come and talk to the residents and hoped he would be able to visit again

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th April 2024 were taken as read, passed and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

HIGHWAYS – We have had better contact over the last year and most drains and gulleys have received attention. The long awaited installation of the gates at entrances to village has been carried out. The problem with overgrown hedges and trees on boundary of Woodlands has now been handed over to Highways and we are assured that these residents will receive letters informing them of their responsibilities.

PLAY EQUIPMENT – Monthly Inspections are still carried out by Councillors and repairs done as soon as possible by volunteers from the Council and the whole site has been kept in an exceptional condition thanks to the Warden Mrs J Pickard. The problem with moles was overcome by Mr Wade who was thanked for all the time he put in to get the field clear. The new Zip-Wire is now in place after many months of attempting to get grants, the Council have paid for this from reserves.

SPEEDWATCH SCHEME – Mr Street has continued as co-ordinator and reported that he now has 10 members in the team 3 of whom are recent recruits. Details of the data collected by the Team and SAM2 are attached to these minutes but prove the necessity for this scheme. The Chair thanked Mr Street and his team for all their hard work.

COMMUNITY CENTRE – In the absence of Mr Collins the Vice-Chair gave the report informing that the Centre is running well and the Committee has done really well with fund raising throughout the year with a very successful Fete and Dog Show last September. Also the Christmas Fair and Bingo had given a real boost to funds.

New replacements lights have been installed and a new sound system purchased. With the help

from Parish Council the Hall and playing field is covered by CCTV which also operates the alarm system. She advised that continued fund raising is vital for the upkeep of the hall with the need for increased insulation above the Upton Room and small hall and several minor repairs. The AGM is to be held on 22nd April and she thanked the Committee for their support and assistance throughout the year.

RECYCLING BANKS AT COMMUNITY CENTRE – Income obtained from these for the year 2024-2024 was £616-95 a further decrease on previous year and it was requested that Parishioners continue to use these recycling banks rather than their own bins.

FOOTPATHS – Report from Warden that all in good condition and all waymarkers and signs are in place. Still awaiting the handrail across bridge at top of Community Centre path. Thanks expressed to Mr Thomas.

ALLOTMENTS – This was presented in reported later by Chair.

ASHILL ESTATE – Also presented later.

ASHLINK – Mr Glen Franklin had taken over the running of this with a very supportive team. They have now reintroduced some advertising of local businesses and have a fundraising evening in September to assist funds. He presented the accounts for the year which are included with these minutes. He requested that a deputy editor would be most helpful if anyone is interested. The Chair thanked Mr Franklin and his team. Balance on Ashlink A/C is £2702-71

SHIPDHAM FOOTBALL TEAM – It was reported that the Ashill Football team had moved away during the last year and that under 15's teams have been playing at Ashill. The Chairman Mr Danny Baxter was in attendance and advised that they hope to bring an under 16's team to Ashill for next season and would be training on a Tuesday and Friday. He also hoped to have different sized pitches and additional goals which prompted the PC Chair to advise that a compound would be needed to keep them in as there had been problems already with the present goals.

Mr Ketteringham said that there had been a lack of communication from the Club and it was felt that a meeting was necessary to iron out some things with the Community Centre, PC and themselves and this will be arranged.

GAS MAIN – Mrs Lusher reported that there had been some gas engineers surveying outside her house recently who had advised that this is a high pressure main running through the village and that there are plans for the future for replacing this in the centre of road but this could be some time.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Mr Ketteringham gave his report on behalf of the Council.

He stated the Council has been working very hard for the residents and many things have been achieved in last year.

Unfortunately Mr Jonathan Pearson decided to stand down from the Council and Alan thanked him for his valued input. Mr Kwadwo Kissiedu was co-opted in his place after three people had applied for the position. It is encouraging that people still care about Local Government.

Following the completion of the Emergency Plan, the Fire Service requested that a copy of this is kept in locked box at Community Centre to enable prompt access to contacts and this has been done.

He said it was pleasing to see that at last Victory Housing is rebuilding the fire damaged houses in Edward Close.

The Local Plan is in the process of being compiled following Government changes to the Planning Regulations and we welcomed a visit to talk things through with Mr Simon Wood Head of Planning and Sam Chapman-Allen, Breckland Chairman. They explained that the village would be expected to accommodate an increase in development and there is a Call for Sites at the present time for land owners to submit areas they would like to include for development. This closes at end of April and we then will hear what has been submitted for consideration in the village.

By far the biggest effect on the village will be the proposed Solar Farm which covers not only our Parish but a large area of other local towns and Parishes.

Having had a voluntary consultation last Autumn we are now at the stage on Statutory Consultation. There is now a Working Party who are working along side the Council who are fact finding, connecting with other local groups and Parishes and attending meetings.

Unfortunately some of the farming residents who will be gaining from this proposed development have taken to verbally abusing members of the Council and their families outside meetings causing much upset. To this end the Council will look at how to support the people affected by this abuse and take a closer look at the Civility and Respect Policy which they signed up to a few years ago.

He went on to thank all those people who give their time to the village and help with clearing litter, repairs and come forward to help when needed.

He wished to thank his fellow Councilors for their support and as always the Clerk who gives the village undivided attention at all times.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Mr Eagle gave details of the finances of Norfolk County Council and stated that Norfolk would be a priority area for Devolution under the new Government Reform which could result in a Unitary Authority across Norfolk.

Norfolk is set to receive the highest Highway maintenance allocation in the region and this will mean major investment in the year ahead.

He said that Norfolk County Council had committed to keep people warm schemes through the Household Support Fund joining with AGE UK and Citizens Advice Bureau.

He also reported that the Council is supporting Family Farms, upgrading street lighting and helping people with long-term health issues to keep working.

He was pleased to report that the additional cuts to dangerous junctions which had been funded previously for this division from his allocation, has now been adopted across the County.

He feels very privileged to be dedicated to this area that he grew up in. (full report attached)

The Chair thanked him for his attendance at our monthly meetings and the help that he has given the Parish.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME

Mr Hinds was unable to attend but had sent in brief report stating that there had been very little to display as information arrived too late and he felt the system has failed.

However he will still post anything significant. Thanks expressed for his work.

TREE WARDEN

Mr Roy Simpson has carried out regular inspections and all appear to be very healthy.

Three trees on Woodlands had been brought down in storm in December and a further tree was removed as trunk split. All had TPO's.

The Chair thanked him for his help.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Mr Leighton as Chairperson of Trustees presented his report stating that they were pleased to welcome the Reverend Patrick Morrow who joins the trust as an ex officio member.

The Common continues to be entered into a mid-tier stewardship for grazing. However the money received gets less and less so new schemes will need to be looked into. He thanked Mr & Mrs Sherwood for monitoring the condition and keeping Trustees informed of any problems. The village green is now a safe area to enjoy following tree work and he thanked Mrs Peckham for keeping it clean and tidy.

A new 21 year Lease has been drawn up and signed with AVA for the Call-In

He felt sad that some families had fallen on hard times but was pleased that the Trust was able to assist as this is main reason the Charity was set up to help the poor of the village.

Finally he thanked his fellow Trustees for their continued support and special thanks to Mrs Seager the Clerk for all her dedicated work for the Charity.

THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE ASHILL WELFARE CHARITY TRUSTEES for year ending 31st March 2025 were then presented by Mrs Seager showing a balance of £35420-66 noting that these are yet to be audited. These were adopted proposed by Mr J Leggett seconded by Mrs D Rix.

THE ACCOUNTS FOR ASHILL PARISH COUNCIL for year ending 31st March 2025 were presented by the Clerk/Financial Officer Jean Sangster showing a balance of £356682-17 noting that these accounts had not yet been audited. These Accounts were then adopted proposed by Rev Morrow seconded by Mrs S Whinnett.

LGR & DEVOLUTION

Breckland is in favour of a 2/3 tier split across Norfolk but NCC has submitted that they prefer a 1 tier across whole Norfolk.

SOLAR ACTION GROUP

A fact sheet is being compiled and the next meeting of the Group is 1st May.

Mrs Racher asked that people sign petition and also send letters to MP.

RWE has booked Ashill Community Centre on 10th May between 9.00am and 4.00pm for consultation with public. She requested that people attend to ask question.

The Group is also hoping to take part in National Community Walk on 8th June and details will follow in Ashlink and facebook.

ALLOTMENT SITE AND REPLACEMENT SITE

Mr Ketteringham explained what had been happening and why the Council had held meetings in 'camera'. This was due to financial discussions that could not be made public but as these did not result in any land being purchased for a replacement site he felt it only right that the public be brought up to date.

At the present time NCC are not happy to sell the Parish Council the land known as Ashill Estate to south of Community Centre but there is the possibility of moving the small plots onto this site to secure tenancy of the land.

There is also the possibility of another piece of land being offered but no details are available at present.

The School Piece site is included in the Call for Sites at present but we are duty bound to provide allotments and burial ground.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further matters to discuss.

This concluded the business of the evening and Mr Ketteringham thanked everyone for their support and attendance and closed the meeting at 9.28pm

SIGNED _____

DATE _____