

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON  
FRIDAY 1<sup>st</sup> JUNE 2018 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

23 members of the public attended as well as Parish Councillors Sean McCarthy, Alan Weedon, Sara Scott, David Drane, John Sladen and Mark Welbourn, County Councillor Simon Walsh, District Councillor Simon Howell and the Clerk.

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Niki Mc Neill, Mr and Mrs Shimmin, Tricia Ridgeway, Mrs Hamm, Mr and Mrs Midgely and Anita Rodgers

**1. MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY MAY 19, 2017**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited them to read the minutes from the previous Annual Parish Meeting. The minutes had been previously signed as a correct record at the Parish Council meeting of June 22, 2017 where there were no objections or matters arising not being already dealt with. Copies were available for reading but there were no matters arising for discussion.

**2. FINANCE**

The draft accounts for the Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2018 were reviewed by those present and the Clerk reported that the total balance in the Parish Council's accounts was just over £13 000, though £2000 was earmarked for a grant towards the Play Area.

The Clerk reported that the change to Unity Trust Bank had worked well with much better customer service. The use of email banking meant that payments could be loaded by the Clerk then authorised by two councillors before being paid electronically.

We have looked carefully at value for money and decided no longer to support the Radwinter waste skip as there is no evidence of use by our residents. However, it has been necessary to increase the precept slightly by £250. This will cover an increase in the clerk's hour from 4 to 5 hours per week to cover increase in email traffic and to update and review the statutory documentation from which the Council works. Additionally, there has been a rise in the cost of grass cutting.

We look forward to working with our new internal auditor, Mr Ross Midgely who has volunteered to take on this role. There were no questions or comments from the audience.

**3. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL**

The Chairman ran through the main points of the Annual Report that had been previously circulated. The news that David Haylock had passed away was a source of sadness for the Parish Council that he had worked on for so many years. His particular expertise in planning and long experience of the village in general will be sadly missed.

Planning is becoming a contentious issue with an increase in retrospective applications that have not followed due process. These seemed to get waved through despite our objections but the Council will continue to resist as far as possible.

Mr Drane has had more success with his pothole chasing and getting the Highway Rangers to fix the railings along Anso Road. Sadly, the three traffic management schemes submitted to the Local Highways Panel have all been rejected though the small 40mph extension from Boytons to the 30 mph limit may get done when funds permit. Representations have also been made about the byway from Witchtree Lane to Bobblows which has become impassable in places even to pedestrians due to overuse by recreational 4 x 4 vehicles.

Tricia Ridgeway works hard to keep the Speed Watch group together and maintain good liaison with the police. However, the group is always short of participants and any further volunteers would be welcome.

The refurbishment of the fountain area was completed and now work is progressing on renovating the Village Sign and re-grouting the War Memorial paving. The Play Area is now in place and the Chairman thanked all those responsible.

Mr Sladen has worked hard to make sure ECC is aware of our flooding issues and was successful in getting some jetting done to clear drains before the Autumn rains.

Clean-up day was successful with a litter pick that left the village tidier, the Chairman thanked participants.

The Chairman finished by thanking the District, County and Parish Councillors, and the Clerk for their continued support. He also mentioned that this may be the last meeting for John Sladen who has been a Parish Councillor and Trustee of the Village Hall for many years and his enthusiasm and experience will be greatly missed.

He added that there would be an opportunity for questions and comments later.

**4. REPORT BY THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

District Councillor Howells congratulated the village on its usual high attendance.

Uttlesford is one of the few councils committed to still building council houses despite all the obstacles and equally committed to maintaining sheltered housing.

The investment in the Little Chesterford Research Park, in partnership with Aviva Pension Fund, has had a promising start with a good mix of tenants and links becoming established with other Science and Technology Parks in the area. It has already made a positive contribution towards compensating for the reduction in Government funding. Its contribution is enabling the council to maintain key front-line service such as litter picking, day centres and extra Public Community Support Officers,

Recycling is still successful with the area achieving some of the highest rates. However, there are problems with China taking less waste and viable alternatives slow to develop and inevitably prices dropping.

Progress with the local plan is hopefully reaching its final stages with the planning for three new settlements in North Uttlesford, Easton Park and West of Braintree built on 'Garden Community' principles.

The Chairman thanked him for his interest and support over the year and said that there would be chance for questions to be asked later in the meeting.

## **5. REPORT BY THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Simon Walsh, Essex County Councillor for Thaxted division had sent a report which will be on the website but welcomed the opportunity to again address such a large turnout.

Continuing cuts in Government support have meant hard choices and will do so into the future. Due to inflation, living wage settlements and increasing demand for services mean that the County Council is increasing Council tax for only the third time in the last eight years. There is also a 2% precept from the government which is ring-fenced for adult social care.

In the last year 5000 potholes have been filled and 400 miles of road resurfaced. Superfast Broadband has been brought to another 100 000 homes and 2,500 new places created in Essex schools.

Schemes to reduce waste are being promoted: more food waste collection, more composting, clothes re-cycling and collection of small electrical items at libraries are examples.

The Local Highways Panel is at the moment working on a reduced budget but more funds may yet be available, Mr Walsh told the meeting that he is Cabinet member for Environment and Waste. This includes oversight of the new Bradwell nuclear power station and flooding.

The Chairman thanked him for his report and support through the year,

## **6. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS**

The chairman then opened up the meeting for questions from the public.

School places are still matter for concern with Saffron Walden High School constantly oversubscribed and now only serving the town. Newport Joyce Frankland Academy is now the village catchment school. The Education department is constantly monitoring the situation and new schools will be built as needed. The question was asked why the Walden School, which offered purpose-built facilities could not have been used? It had been sold to developers although some of the buildings are listed it will offer scope for many houses.

The Council is starting to explore the possibility of installing a defibrillator as many other villages had done.

A range of views were expressed with some rightly identifying the ongoing expense which has to be considered as well as the initial installation. Some queried how much it would be used? Hopefully never, but as services have retreated into urban centres it may offer some sort of solace. The Parish Council promised to continue looking into the issue and keeping the community informed of costs and benefits.

Although faster broadband has come to the village we are still in the dark ages as far mobile 'phone signal quality is concerned. This is just as necessary for many facilities that are needed today. It was agreed that the Parish Council would endeavour to invite EE and Vodaphone to a meeting. County Councillor Walsh also agreed to try to get answers.

Discussing the increasing incidence of litter it was mentioned that the Police Comissioner was trying to set up rural teams and strategies. The question was asked if 'daschcam' evidence could be used in instances of fly tipping. The local council said they are increasingly seeking to prosecute on any appropriate evidence.

Two issues were discussed about Church Hill where increased incidents of speeding are reported on what is a very narrow road. Additionally, the hedges on the right when emerging onto the High Street are causing very poor visibility. The Council promised to try to solve the hedge problem but the speeding needed more consideration.

Mr McCarthy closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and he promised that the Council would do their best to pursue all the issues raised. He again thanked District and County Councillors, his fellow Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work over the year.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Date:

Chairman