

**MINUTES OF THE HEMPSTEAD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 28th May 2021 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Attendees: 4 members of the public
Parish Councillors Sean McCarthy (Chairman), David Drane, Diana Frost, Laura Saxel,
Nick Turkentine and Mark Welbourn
County Councillor Martin Foley and District Councillor George Smith
The Clerk, Rebecca Cox

1 MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 26th April 2019

The Chairman, Sean McCarthy, 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 13th June 2019. 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 2021 were reviewed by those present and the Clerk reported that the total balance at Year End in the Parish Council's accounts was £12,571. Extra spending on maintenance had been required, including the cutting of trees on Parish Council land and refurbishment of village railings.

Thanks were made to Ross Midgley who once again acted as Internal Auditor, and who had provided a clean report.

There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

3 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

Sean McCarthy opened by remembering Alan Storah, Hempstead's District Councillor, who sadly died in October. He had been a diligent and very helpful Councillor and will be missed. He then introduced the new District Councillor George Smith and new County Councillor Martin Foley, recently elected and replacing Simon Walsh.

The main points of the Annual Report that had been previously circulated were then presented:

Highways – Road maintenance has been kept up, with resurfacing work scheduled for July. The 40mph limit has been implemented, although not as far reaching as hoped for. The Parish Council would like a 40mph limit on Anso Road and an extension of the 40mph limit in Radwinter to Hempstead.

Speedwatch – This was suspended due to Covid restrictions but will hopefully restart soon. Volunteers will be required.

Environment – A tree survey was carried out in mid 2020, which led to work being carried out on unsafe trees, including felling. Railings in the village have been repainted and refurbished.

Flooding – Nick Turkentine worked very hard during the year to ensure flooding issues were being dealt with by Essex County Council, and will continue to chase as required in the current year.

Emergency Plan – A new plan was created and is on the village website, with thanks to Nick Turkentine.

Neighbourhood Watch and Well-being – Laura Saxel has created a Health and Wellbeing plan, available on the website. Interested residents can join Neighbourhood Watch online.

Communications – The email village newsletter has an ever-increasing number of recipients, including lots of new residents. The Council were very lucky to be donated an archive of papers on the village by Rowan Scott, daughter of Mrs Slee, which have been added to the village archive and uploaded to the website.

Sean McCarthy then went through a recent Uttlesford Biodiversity and Climate Change document, which included ideas that could be implemented in the village including putting up more bird/owl boxes and encouraging residents to take part in litter picking.

Sean McCarthy finished by thanking all the Parish, District and County Councillors, new and previous, and the Clerk, for their hard work throughout what had been a difficult year. The Parish Council were luckily able to continue to meet using Zoom videoconferencing, and are happy with what has been achieved.

4 REPORT BY THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

The new Conservative District Councillor, George Smith, briefly introduced himself; he has been a Parish Councillor for Ashdon since 2013 and grew up in Great Sampford. He is particularly interested in highways' issues and litter picking in the local area.

The main issues for Uttlesford District Council are currently the new Local Plan, which is in the consultation phase with a call for sites soon to be launched, and the Stansted Airport expansion planning appeal. Following a question from a member of public, confirmation was provided that UDC has funds set aside to pay for the appeal legal costs.

Diana Frost raised a concern regarding construction traffic through the village. A small development in Steeple Bumpstead has created an increase in heavy vehicles. What safeguards/rules may be used to ensure that any larger scale construction towards Haverhill, as is planned, restrict heavy construction traffic through the villages and divert them onto main routes? George Smith promised to look into this issue and revert with findings.

5 REPORT BY THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

The new R4U County Councillor, Martin Foley, introduced himself. He has been a District Councillor for 27 years, in Thaxted and The Eastons, is also now a member of the Uttlesford Local Highways' Panel, and came from a background in retail management. As a UDC Councillor he is also chairing the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel, but can't say yet what will happen regarding the expansion.

Only being a County Councillor for a few weeks has meant there was little to report on County Council issues. However, it is apparent that there is a shortage of funding for Highways issues, which are currently of importance in the area, meaning it is harder for issues such as potholes to be rectified. It is therefore important for any dangerous road conditions to be highlighted directly to him, as well as being registered on the ECC website.

6 GENERAL DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

The Chairman then opened the meeting for questions from the public.

The only question raised was regarding The Bluebell Inn, and whether the Parish Council know when it will reopen. The Chairman answered that the tenant has stated that it will reopen in the summer, when social distancing restrictions have been lifted fully. It is hoped that a Bluebell II event can be organised at the Village Hall during the summer as well.

Sean McCarthy closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and once again thanked District and County Councillors, his fellow Parish Councillors and the Clerk.

The meeting closed at 8:40pm.