



HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held in the High Easter Village Hall on Thursday 9th May 2019

1. CHAIRMAN's WELCOME, Cllr Robert Lodge opened the meeting and welcomed residents to the Annual Village Meeting. In attendance were 5 members of the Parish Council, 10 members of the public, Tim Dagnell-Scott and James Salmon from County Broadband (leaving after their presentation) and the Parish Clerk.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – County and District Cllr Susan Barker, Parish Cllr Nigel Boreham, Parish Cllr Neil Reeve, Debbie Bryce.
3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Tuesday 8th May 2018 were proposed as a correct record; the chairman signed the minutes. There were no matters arising.

Cllr Lodge invited County Broadband to update the meeting on plans to bring fibre broadband to the village and James Salmon addressed the meeting.

Thank you for inviting us to your meeting. The good news is we have a viable project based on the take up of pre-orders and are currently in the design phase. The take up is very slightly below the 30% target, however we can go ahead because the tariffs people have chosen are higher than we estimated. It means people can still pre-order to take advantage of the initial deals.

In terms of time frame, the design team have been in and out of the village. We are looking at every aspect of how and where we can bring in the supply, i.e. overhead and underground. We haven't finalised that detail yet and our deadlines for completing this are end of May/early June. Based on this target date for design completion we will be in a position to start the build in July. The build will not start in the village as we will need to bring the supply in and it will probably take 3 months for the whole build, assuming we do not come up with anything unforeseen.

Residents were invited to ask questions.

1. Can you give any further information on the uptake? Yes, it is approximately 90 households with, as you would expect the majority of those being in the village centre. Based on our current targets homes should be connected by September, although those nearer the starting point will hopefully be sooner.
2. How will the link come into the village? This is a bit of detail we haven't got and we need to wait until the design team have completed their work before confirming. Will it be via cable or central satellite? The plan is to do it via cable, there is something known as the 'dark fibre', just to the west of High Easter which runs all the way into London and which companies can tap into. We have taken a 'chunk' that we can tap into at Barnston and then hope to come along the country lanes.
3. What sort of speeds can we expect? We are looking at 1gb and a number of people have pre-ordered this, which is fantastic. 1gb is what is possible today, because of the equipment available. We will use some Openreach poles and ducting but we won't use their cabinets or any of their equipment, we will use our own. We will put a particular type of equipment in our cabinets that will do 1GB and in say 5 years we can replace that piece of kit if necessary with a high specification.
4. What are your plans for the out of hours call centre? We plan to increase support to include weekends, timings are likely to be 9am to 8pm Monday-Friday and 9am to lunchtime on a Saturday. It will take us a bit of time to extend the opening hours, we recognise this is an issue and it is not where we want it to be, but this will improve as we continue to grow and evolve. We do monitor the network infrastructure 24/7 and respond.

5. Are speeds the same for everyone? Yes, as we are using fibre for the entire connection, i.e. not a mix of fibre/copper, the latter being influenced by how far away you are from the cabinet; this doesn't apply with fibre.
6. Will the current wireless system be removed? No, because not everyone has migrated onto fibre although we see this happening naturally over a period of time. There will be a point when we will turn the network off but not in the near future. About 2/3rds of customers currently on wireless have pre-ordered. For residents who will move, will you remove the wireless equipment on our houses? It is likely to be something we do only on request, although we appreciate we will have to remove it rather than residents because of its position; we can continue to use this equipment elsewhere.
7. We have a unit in the village hall which is a 'free hot spot' based on the current wireless solution. What are the options for the village hall to move to a fibre solution? We will have a look at this for you.

Cllr Lodge thanked James and Tim for attending.

4. COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT

Dear Residents, I am sorry I am not there this evening but have to be at Uttlesford. I am delighted to have been re-elected to represent you at the District Council and find myself in very different company. The Residents party is now, by far, the largest party in the District with 28 of the 39 Councillors. They will have some tough decisions ahead, around the Local Plan, the future financing of the District, with government grants expected to reduce further over the coming years and, of course, the airport.

You will be aware that the airport expansion to 43mppa was granted last November on the Chairman's casting vote. That Committee, made up of Conservative, Residents party and Lib Dems, delegated the detail of the S106 agreement to Officers, which is normal practice. I attach Uttlesford Legal officer's comments in the aftermath of that meeting as well as a copy of the draft S106 itself, (copies available on request to the Clerk). I shall watch with interest to see what happens next.

On other UDC matters, you will shortly see new refuse vehicles operating in the District, a new Uttlesford Sheltered accommodation unit in Newport is up for an award and the Council has been shortlisted for a further award for its investment in Chesterford Research Park.

At Essex we continue to see pressure our budget. An increasing number of young people with issues such as Autism, others requiring an Educational Health Care Plan and more working age adults needing support. We have been acknowledged as having an "Outstanding" Children's services department. Most older adults who require social care or a place in a care home pay for their own care but there are, at any time, many thousands of vulnerable elderly that Essex Taxpayers support, to receive the appropriate level of care they need.

Next week some major potholes are being done in Bishops Green but please do report any that you spot on the Essex Highways website.

5. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – Cllr Robert Lodge

Thinking about the Chairman's report a few weeks ago I was not sure how much there was to report on. Having looked back at the minutes I realised once again we have managed to achieve a considerable amount given we are a small Parish Council who meet once a month.

I will start my report as I usually do with a thank you to all my fellow Councillors for giving up their time to attend our monthly meetings and for the many tasks they do outside meetings for the benefit of High Easter. I am delighted they all chose to stand for a further four years.

2018/19 started on a good note for me personally when I was invited to the Queen's garden party as High Easter Parish Council chairman and had the honour of being one of a small group presented to the Queen, I am happy to share the photographic evidence for those of you that missed it!

Back to business, our Clerk responded to an appeal from Uttlesford to find suitable work for the Highway Rangers, as a result the majority of the finger posts in the parish were refurbished and more importantly Pump Green was given a facelift, including the repainting of the pump, railings and circular bench.

The Parish Council attended a highways surgery to try and persuade Essex Highways to reconsider their decision to refuse the extension of the 30mph zone to Stagden Cross, unfortunately this was not successful although we did get a concession to install white 'verge gates' either side of Stagden Cross to alert drivers they are entering a hamlet; we continue to work with Essex Highways to get these installed.

Sadly, on two occasions we had unwelcome visitors to the playing field who spun cars damaging the surface, goal posts and the railings around the play area. As a result, the Parish Council accelerated its plans to put new posts along the boundary between the car park and playing field to prevent vehicles accessing the field.

This year's annual playground inspection highlighted weaknesses in part of the wooden frame and the Parish Council was left with no alternative but to remove a section and to make plans to replace the unit.

In early 2019, the Parish Council met with Barclays bank and were successful in releasing the High Easter Sports Initiative monies, which had become inaccessible in a dormant bank account. This £14.6k funding is now held in a designated fund by the Parish Council. Where possible, those who contributed to the fund have been written to and asked to confirm they are happy for the monies to be used for a new project to replace the play area equipment; with only one response still to come, all are happy with this proposal. The fund was further supplemented by a £1k legacy from the estate of the late Geoffrey Taylor which was left to the village for the benefit of the community, and which the Parish Council felt appropriate to allocate to the play area project. Quotes and grants are currently being sort and a proposal will be shared with the community in the coming year.

The highlight of the year was an event organised by High Easter Parish Council for the commemoration of the 100 years since the end of WW1. The day included a spitfire fly past, a well-attended memorial and church service, followed by an afternoon/evening meal attended by 100 people and a guest speaker Major Graham Cooper who gave a fantastic presentation on the events of WW1. The evening finished with a fireworks display, the ringing of the church bells and the lighting of the beacon as part of the national chain.

We have only managed one parish lunch this year, this is not a reflection of the funding but of the resource available to manage these. We are very grateful to Brian Hockley for donating £200 from the proceeds from the Easter Egg hunt in 2018 and a further £500 donation from the estate of the late Geoffrey Taylor which was left for the now disbanded Friendly Club. Our intention is to organise further events for the older members of the community in the coming year.

After two years of conversations and badgering, and many meetings we finally have a post office service, albeit one morning a week reinstated at The Snug café. This will only continue if the community supports it.

The Affordable Housing project has slowly moved along during 2018/19 and your Parish Council has continued to meet with Hastoe, the Housing Association in an effort to push things along. Of the three identified sites only two remain as viable options, a preferred site east of Boreham Court and a second site east of Stagden Cross Villas. Work is ongoing to determine whether the highway access is feasible at the Boreham Court site and once this is complete Hastoe will be in a position to confirm the preferred site from a planning point of view. Before a formal planning application is submitted there will be a public consultation and current timetables suggest this will take place in early July.

The Parish Council shares resident's frustrations with the situation on fibre broadband which remains confusing with three companies all providing or proposing to provide fibre to parts of the village. As you are aware and with the support of District Cllr Howard Ryles we worked with Openreach earlier in the year to obtain quotes for installing a community fibre solution for the village. However, with both Gigaclear and County Broadband committing to provide the infrastructure for fibre solutions, it is currently not viable to progress the Openreach solution which requires residents to contribute to funding the infrastructure. We continue to monitor progress.

I would like to record my thanks to Cllr Neil Reeve and others who have attended meetings, read pages of documents, prepared responses relating to the Stansted Airport planning application and spoken at various Uttlesford District Council meetings, to ensure the issues of noise and overflying aircraft which concern High Easter residents are heard. Our thanks also to the team at Stop Stansted Expansion without whose expertise we would be lost and the many residents who have responded personally to the planning application. I am sure Stansted will continue to feature on Parish Council agendas in the coming year.

Your Parish Council continues to facilitate the bi-weekly Green waste service, manage the contract for verge cutting, organise the annual litter pick and arrange the maintenance of the playing field and Jubilee Wood. Normal business also includes considering and responding if necessary to planning applications and liaising between residents and the County and District Council.

Finally, we should put on record a very big thank you to our Parish Clerk Allison who has the difficult task of keeping us on the right path during meetings and making sure that the work of the Parish Council runs smoothly.

6. Parish Council Financial Statement 2018/19 – The Clerk

The Accounts for the year ending March 2019 were circulated to the meeting. They confirmed an income of £32.1k which includes the receipt of the HESI fund £14.6k and the receipts relating to the WW1 commemoration event of £3.2k. Expenditure for the year was £17.4k giving a surplus of £14.7k for the year to March 2019. With the exception

of the expenses relating to the WW1 commemoration event of £3.2k, there has been no other significant expenditure and costs have largely been on services.

An additional donation of £1k was received from the estate of the late Geoffrey Taylor and the Parish Council decided to designate this fund to the HESI fund which following confirmation from original donations has been re-designated to a fund for replacing the play area equipment. As a result, the closing cash balance of the Parish Council is £26.7k with £10.7k of this being in the general fund, £15.6k designated to the play area and £0.7k designated to work with the elderly in the community.

The value of fixed assets owned by the Parish Council remained unchanged at £51.2k.

7. Report from High Easter Village Hall Committee – Gordon Robinson

I would like to begin by thanking the Village Hall Committee and helpers for their continued hard work and the service they collectively offer to the community; this is something we are very proud of.

This year improvements include, a refurbishment of the ladies' toilets, supporting the preschool in creating an outside play area and shortly we will be changing the back doors and doing some internal alterations in the store room. We have replaced the boiler and upgraded the heating system and replaced the lead on the roof that was stolen.

There have been lots of different activities in the main hall and committee room, with the hall used on 374 separate occasions and the bar opened on 27 occasions. To give you just an idea of the variety, the Easter egg hunt, Christmas wreath making, Shakespeare performance, Dunmow Rhodes football, church events, annual 10k road run, High Easter cricket lunch, three cancer charity events, WW1 100th anniversary event, talk on the SAS, community first aid course.

Our projects for the coming year include upgrading and redesigning the kitchen and we are looking to the fete as a major fundraising for this, as well as sourcing grants. The fete is on 29th June and will include bbq, dog show, music, stalls and food.

The Village Hall Committee is very grateful for grants and Chris Dyer for his work on submitting these, for the generosity and donations of local businesses including Lodge Coaches, Garnetts Farm and the Punchbowl, to Paul for his musical entertainment on Sundays, Jane Boden for maintaining the garden area and to the Parish Council and the many others that contribute to the life of the hall.

Cllr Lodge, thanked the village hall committee on behalf of the parish and commented that everyone appreciates having such a great facility and it's good to hear how busy and well used it is.

8. PARISHONERS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A resident asked about publicity for village hall events and whether it was possible to look at other sources in addition to facebook, as not all residents use this. Greater publicity was accepted as something that could be improved and discussions continued on whether putting information on the website, additional notices or making use of the Parish Council distribution list would be possible. The Parish Council agreed to consider the latter and to look into the implications with GDPR.

Mike Parnell asked for a vote of thanks to be recorded to the Parish Council for giving up their time and for all they do for the parish of High Easter, he added, it is good to see you all re-elected!

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting – Tuesday 5th May 2020 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed

Cllr Robert Lodge – Chairman High Easter Parish Council