



# HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL

## HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held in the High Easter Village Hall on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

1. CHAIRMAN's WELCOME, Cllr Robert Lodge opened the meeting and welcomed residents to the Annual Village Meeting. In attendance were 7 members of the Parish Council, 10 members of the public and the Parish Clerk.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - County and District Cllr Susan Barker.
3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 were proposed as a correct record by Jo Windley and seconded by Neil Reeve with all in agreement; the chairman signed the minutes. There were no matters arising.
4. Men's Shed Project

Sue Hastings Herbert updated the meeting on the launch of the Men's shed project which opened earlier this year in Barnston. The project aims to tackle loneliness and isolation in men and is funded by West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and Essex County Council. Men's Sheds provides a place to pursue practical interests and to share skills alongside others. The Barnston shed is currently open on Wednesday for 4-5 hours and plans are being considered to add further days.

5. County Broadband

James Salmon updated the meeting on County Broadband's (CB) work to provide improved wifi to the village and their future plans. Over the last few years CB has built a broadband infrastructure using wireless technology which works in a very similar way to TV transmitters, whereby properties need to be in clear site of a transmitter. The service started with 8mbps speeds, in the last year the service has been upgraded to 32mbps and testing is ongoing to achieve 100mbps download and upload speeds across all our networks. Customers are free to take whatever level of service works for them and there is no requirement to take the higher speeds.

CB started providing a service in the area close to the village hall and they now have access points around the village giving about 70% coverage. A number of different services are being launched over the next 2/3 months including more unlimited data allowance, integrated phone service (you will be able to retain existing phone number, however not have to pay the line rental), a final piece of the network running in the centre of High Easter and heading towards Good Easter and extending the network north and to Stagden Cross.

The plan when we first started was to provide the best broadband possible with the technology around. And whilst wireless is very good for getting into rural areas, the best option remains a fibre solution from your house connecting to the network. We have been working on a plan to get a fibre solution into High Easter and for this to be achievable we require Essex Superfast to fund another party to overlay our network, we will keep

you updated as plans progress. I hope this provides an insight into what we can provide and our plans to continue to improve and provide the very best broadband with the technology around.

## 6. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – Cllr Robert Lodge

I will quickly run over some of the key topics and issues we have dealt with in the last year.

We have pushed ahead with the affordable housing project and are at the stage where two areas of land have been offered and are seeking advice from Uttlesford District Council as to their suitability, and are now engaging with developers to determine the feasibility of the project.

We have arranged two Parish Lunches over the year and both have been well supported and appreciated by all who have attended. We would like to thank Brian Hockley and District Cllr Susan Barker for their financial contributions to these events.

For the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations we put on a party where over 200 tickets were sold. A two course lunch was served followed by games, a film, bingo and fireworks. Thanks to our sponsors the event broke even. And I think it's fair to say it was a huge success.

Stansted Airport has been a regular item on our agendas. Our thanks to Allison, Neil and Andrea who have trolled through reams of documents to pick out and document the key points, attended meetings with key parties and tried to advise the Parish Council and residents on responses to consultations. The Parish Council continues to ensure residents frustrations and concerns are made known to the decision makers.

As time is precious tonight, I will just list some other items your parish Council has dealt with in the last 12 months,

- Jubilee Meadow, planting of additional trees and ongoing maintenance. Despite the efforts of monkjack, deer and rabbits, the Parish Council is encouraged that the meadow is growing and maturing.
- A litter pick, where 10 volunteers collected over 30 bags of rubbish from around the village in March.
- Maintenance and repairs to the play equipment, as well as white lining the car park to maximise the parking available.

And its many other mundane responsibilities including considering and responding to all planning applications, highway issues and managing the contracts for verge cutting, playing field and the Jubilee Meadow.

Before I finish I would like to say a big thank you to my fellow Parish Councillors for giving up their time freely to attend meetings and for their practical actions and support given outside of meetings. And thank you to Allison our Parish Clerk for ensuring we follow protocol!

## 7. County and District Council Statement – No report available.

## 8. Parish Council Financial Statement 2016/17 – The Clerk

The Accounts for the year ending March 2017 show an income of £21.7k and expenditure £18.1k. These figures include the income and expenditure of £3.6k from the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday event and as Robert mentioned there was no surplus or costs to the Parish Council. The Parish Lunches resulted in a net cost to the Parish Council of £249, this is after the donations Robert referred to in his statement and the charge of £5 recovered from those attending. The additional bark repairs to the swings and the white lining of the car park were the only other nonstandard costs in the year and together cost £1.1k. As a result, there was a net surplus for the year of £3.6k and a closing cash position of £5.7k.

The value of fixed assets owned by the Parish Council has been amended this year to £50k to reflect the new goal posts purchased from grant funding by Dunmow Rhodes and transferred to the ownership of the Parish Council after purchase.

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

As small team of people continue to voluntarily work to maintain and run the village hall for the benefit of village groups and the local community. The committee are pleased that the transition to a new preschool is now settling and numbers of children attending have increased with the pre-school now operating 5 days a week from 9am to 3pm; without the regular rental income from the preschool it would be difficult to maintain the facility. Other items of note are the completion of the bar work, purchase of a new fridge as well as regular ongoing repairs. The plan for 2017 is to have a small scale fete on 10<sup>th</sup> June with games, raffle, tea and cakes and an evening disco. The Village Hall Committee would like to thank all those who help to keep the hall running and for the residents who come along to support events. We are always open to new committee members, if you are interested please get in touch.

10. Parishioners Questions and Comments

A resident asked if there is any change proposed to the village telephone box as the phone is not currently working. The Chairman confirmed that the last information received by the Parish Council confirmed the equipment would not be removed as the District Council had objected to BT plans to remove it as had this Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to contact BT to report the fault and confirm if plans had changed.

Residents asked if there was any news on whether the Post Office would reopen. The Chairman confirmed the Post Office had extended the deadline for interested parties to respond and that there was a local interested party who was willing to take it on, however the Post Office are only offering the franchise on their new operating model which is commission only. This would generate so little income that it would make it unviable even with parties willing to run it for less than minimum wage. The Parish Council continues to have a dialogue with the Post Office to understand what long term solutions may be viable to re-introduce a service, however if a service is provided it will down to the residents to keep it going by using it.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed

**Cllr Robert Lodge – Chairman High Easter Parish Council**