

MARGARET RODING PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

Held via Zoom on Thursday 6th May 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: From the Parish Council, Cllrs Peter Briggs, Lee Cooper (chair), Ian Crisp, Simon Phillips, Lorraine Player, Chris Turner and the Clerk Allison Ward

0 Members of the Public

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME, Cllr Cooper opened the meeting.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – County and District Cllr Susan Barker
3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Tuesday 7th May 2019 were approved and signed as a true record.

Please note there was no meeting in 2020 due to Coronavirus; whilst new emergency legislation was passed to enable Parish Councils to meet and make decisions remotely (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020), Parish Meetings were not included in these Regulations. Therefore, the Annual Parish Meeting was not permitted to meet remotely, and it was not held in 2020.

4. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – Cllr Lee Cooper

Despite the Covid pandemic Margaret Roding Parish Council continued to meet bi-monthly during the year with all its meetings taking place on Zoom. It was able to continue to carry out the normal work of the Council, including responding where necessary to planning applications and acting as liaison between residents and the County and District Council.

This year the heavy rainfall between December and February led to unprecedented levels of surface water flooding along stretches of the A1060 and Marks Hall Lane. Several of the flooding issues were the result of blockages and overgrown vegetation in ditches which prevented the land drainage from being effective and surface water getting off the highway. Our thanks to the landowners that cleared their ditches to alleviate the pressures and to County and District Cllr Susan Barker for her help in getting the jetting teams to visit. The problems with flooding along Marks Hall Lane are in part due to the drainage pipes being too small for the volume of water, a situation that is unlikely to change. The Parish Council met with the Essex Watercourse Engineer in March and are hopeful that with some assistance we will be able to move forward in understanding the remaining issues, determine responsibilities and solutions. Our thanks also to the residents who supplied information to help the Parish Council build up a picture of local drainage flows, going forward this will provide a useful aid in resolving and escalating problems.

We had some further success during the year when Essex Highways carried out repairs to some stretches of the footpaths along the A1060 to prevent the vegetation encroaching the footpath, a request we have been asking for assistance on for several years.

After many years of waiting and despite the disruption with road closures, diversions and damage to the verges, it is good to see the Gigaclear fibre installations nearing completion with some parts of the village being successfully connected to fibre broadband in the last month.

The Uttlesford administration are in the early consultation stages of a new Local Plan and the Parish Council has monitored this although not felt it necessary to submit any responses at this stage, it will continue to consider the various stages and comment where there is relevance to Margaret Roding.

The application for a proposed new sand and gravel quarry including a new access from the A1060 at Chalk End, Roxwell resulted in objections from this Parish Council due to the impact the site would have on local residents

Signed

Lee Cooper

Chairman Margaret Roding Parish Council

and in particular the heavy goods vehicles using the A1060 through the village, a decision is still pending. As a result of the application the Parish Council submitted a request to the Uttlesford Local Highways Panel asking for a speed restriction through the parish. A further request was submitted to the Highway Panel asking for new signage on the bend at Garnish Hall which has seen several accidents in wet conditions as a result of vehicles approaching at speed. We will have to wait and see if these are successful.

In March the Parish Council organised a Covid secure litter pick and our thanks to residents who came along to help on the day and to those residents who regularly pick up litter when they are out and about. Unfortunately, the village Christmas tea which takes place after the carol service was not able to go ahead due to the Covid restrictions. Following the closure of the previous provider a new free website for the parish was launched at the start of the year and is regularly updated with information.

Finally, I would like to thank the Clerk for her work and dedication and my fellow Cllrs for rising to the challenge of virtual meetings during the last year and for giving up their time voluntarily to attend meetings, to read the numerous emails and documents we receive and to listen to and gather information from residents.

5. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL STATEMENT – Cllr Barker was unable to attend and sent a report which was read by the Clerk.

The last year has been an experience for all of us and seen a totally different way of working.

Essex County Council found itself responsible for the sourcing and distribution of PPE to care homes and special schools, delivering help with food packages and vouchers and working with many 000's of volunteers to assist vulnerable residents with shopping, dog walking, collecting prescriptions etc. At the height of the pandemic, we were receiving 1000 requests for help a day and these were being picked up by volunteers via social media groups in less than a minute.

We also arranged Holiday camps for children and moved library 'Story and Rhyme' times online. Libraries were closed and Librarians volunteered for jobs with Essex Welfare (now wellbeing) service, the registration service, business support and other roles.

Early in the pandemic Highways contractors suspended on site works causing delays to scheduled works and much needed pothole repairs. Once able to work they have had to be socially distance with a result that all work takes longer.

Grants administered by both County and District Councils to businesses and organisations have run into hundreds of £000s to keep them afloat, many would have collapsed without financial support.

All of us have adapted to working from home and this trend looks set to continue for large numbers of council staff, with office space adapted to enable teams to come together to meet on occasions.

In Uttlesford 98.5% of all reception age children have been awarded their first or second choice school and for those that didn't, I will support any appeal. Essex is aware of the deficit of reception places for September 2021 and two temporary reception classes will be provided at the current Helena Romanes site.

The new Helena Romanes 'all through' (primary, secondary and sixth form) school was granted planning permission and we shall wait to see how the access arrangements work out. I agree with the Council that what is planned is far from ideal.

I am very pleased that the resurfacing of Dunmow High Street was completed last Autumn and the bypass earlier this year. The small build out at the bottom of North Street is having the desired effect of slowing the traffic and the remaining repairs to the Tesco Roundabout and the Causeway/ Godfrey Way are planned.

In Margaret Roding this year the main issue was the flooding caused by the heavy rain. Unfortunately, there are very few records of where the drains are, so it is difficult to establish who is responsible and needs to clear their drains and ditches.

Signed
Lee Cooper
Chairman Margaret Roding Parish Council

I have supported the Parish Council in further speed restrictions on the A1060 where accidents have occurred in the vicinity of Garnish Hall. This road has heavy usage and the potential for an increase as a result of vehicles using the new Roxwell Quarry.

6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2019/20

The only receipt in the year was the £2k precept and this was matched by expenditure and resulted in a very minor £16 loss. The planned projects were delayed due to Covid and therefore reserves remain at £6.7k with project plans hopefully coming to fruition in the coming months.

The Parish Council issued three grants in the year; £100 Rodings PTA as they were unable to fund raise, £50 Dream Team as a contribution to their covid PPE making efforts including masks which were available for the community in the bus stop, and £800 to the church to cover the insurance of the grade 1 church building.

Fixed assets remain at £1.5k the only change being the reduction in one flood sign which disappeared in the winter weather!

7. PARISHONERS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS - None

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting – Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Signed
Lee Cooper
Chairman Margaret Roding Parish Council