

Notes of the Rettendon Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday 2nd May 2017

Rettendon Memorial Hall, Main Road, Rettendon CM 8DP

Present: Cllr Mark Fleming (Chair)

The Parish Clerk took the notes.

1. Chairman's opening remarks.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said this evening's meeting would be less formal than the regular Parish Council meetings. He said the formal bits would be dealt with first, then the guest speakers, followed by any questions from electors. He said the Clerk would take notes.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs D Fleming and Chapman

3. To agree the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd May 2016.

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd May 2016 were agreed.

4. To Receive the Chairman's Annual Report.

The Chairman's Annual Report was received.

5. Statement of Accounts for the year ending 5th April 2017.

Community Account: £ 44,351.02 @ 5th April 2017.

Business Account: £ 61,544.22 @ 5th April 2017.

HSBC Account: £ 30,000-00 @ 5th April 2017.

6. Guest Speakers: Jane Gardner, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner of Essex and DCI Ronnie Egan, District Commander, Community Policing Team.

The Chairman explained that neither of the advertised Guest Speakers were able to be present and in their place were Roger Hirst, Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex and Community Policing Sergeant Phil Morley.

Mr Hirst introduced himself and explained that his responsibilities as an elected representative were:

- to appoint or dismiss the Chief Constable and hold him or her to account on behalf of residents. The Commissioner is not allowed to be a member of the police, they are a civilian who looks after the police on our behalf. The Chief Constable has just been signed up for the next four years.
- to set the policing budget and precept,
- to set policies in conjunction with the County Council.

The Police and Crime Plan has been set up in consultation with many bodies across Essex. The focus is on local visible policing/anti-social behaviour/protecting the vulnerable/encouraging volunteers. The plan is to increase Special Constables but also recruit regulars.

The Budget has to reflect this Plan. The increase in the precept is necessary as police visibility is too low. Recently crime has been on the increase and we have to get on top of it. The money will pay for 41 new officers and also contribute to improving the control room, particularly the 101 service. The police would like to improve online reporting and Mr Hirst encouraged everyone to do this if possible as it relieved pressure on the 101 number.

There will be investment in technology to make the life of officers on the beat easier. They can report while still on patrol rather than return to the control room.

Mr Hirst was pleased to hear about work by Speedwatch in Rettendon. He said the four crimes of speeding, driving under the influence of drink, driving under the influence of drugs, and using a mobile phone killed more people in Essex than all other crimes combined. The more this can be publicised, the safer the county will be. We need everyone to realise how dangerous this can be.

Fly-tipping is a real problem – industrial grade and illegal waste disposal. He said a partnership had been formed – Operation Bayleaf is dealing with the problem and if anyone reports this issue they should refer to this name. He said the environment Agency were leading. The police need to be able to prosecute successfully and prevent for the future.

Hare-coursing is Operation Galileo. The police have a drone with a heat-sensitive camera which is an effective tool.

Questions from the public

- Is there an easy way to find crime statistics for the parish? RH – they are published on a monthly basis and Rettendon comes under Chelmsford. Police don't regularly publish by parish.
- Are there scare stories? Or are we safer than we think? RH – Essex as a whole is not a high crime area, and has lower than average crime.
- What is being done about the apparent increase in stabbings? RH – Police have set up Violence Prevention Strategy including Gang Strategy. The police and other bodies are looking at diversionary activity. In the last few months Essex has kicked the trend. Cause and effect are hard to prove. PM – there is a rise in gang crime coming out of London. The Metropolitan's Operation Trident has been successful in

pushing this out of London but it has come here. Operation Raptor has had some success against gangs recently. Cannabis farms are also a problem. Police are working with youngsters who are vulnerable.

- There is a good Speedwatch team in the village. Are Highways responsible for signage, and the police for enforcement? Some suggestions for improvements would be a survey on the chicanes and moving the 30mph signs, possibly illuminated signs. The chicanes make some slow down but others speed up to get through. RH – thank you for the observations. Enforcement needs to be done effectively.
- Theft of vehicles is definitely on the increase. What is being done to address this? Especially on the retrieving side? PM – most plant that is recovered is being shipped abroad. Known areas are being patrolled. If it's found on the side of the road, the original owner often can't be found. Part of Operation Galileo and resources are being put into this. This type of crime is expected in rural areas. RH – DNA Selector/SelectaDNA is a good marking tool.
- In Ireland, trespass is a criminal offence. Here it is a civil offence. What would be your opinion? RH – it is strange it isn't a criminal offence. Equally, decriminalisation was the result of a long battle by interest groups. If reversed, the police would be stretched and would find it hard to enforce. Law as it stands can be frustrating. On public land, Essex County Travellers Unit involving different bodies is helping communities as well as trying to decrease unlawful activity.
- What about larger vehicles, bulldozers, plant etc? Is that being pursued? Police not coming out to crimes. RH – this is very much on the radar. PM – Police looking at theft of plant on a national basis as it is going out of the country. As to going out to crimes, this is not necessarily the best use of police time. Each will be assessed on basis of apprehending perpetrator, would still be investigated but desk-based. Burglaries – PCSOs are sent out but unfortunately not to every crime.
- ATMs are being taken using stolen plant. – RH/PM – this is looked at as organised crime and taken very seriously.
- If stolen vehicles have trackers, how many police vehicles can track them? RH- most vehicles. The helicopter is also a useful tool and works across Essex.
- Maltings Road is narrow and used by many pedestrians. Who can offer help in getting a 20mph speed limit? RH – ask County Cllr to go to LHP surgery with you.
- How many officers have we lost over the last five years? RH – 12 years ago, we had 2850, six years ago 3600. Now back to 2850. Now recruiting Specials. Growth in different areas of crime eg internet fraud and hate crime. Reality is there are not the financial resources for as many officers as we would like.
- Does Essex do worse in funding? RH – Essex has 3rd lowest council tax precept. Existing funding follows crime – Essex has relatively low crime compared to many areas of the country therefore lower funding. Arguing for new funding formula working on predicted level of crime.

Cllr Fleming thanked both speakers for coming to the Meeting, and for their informative and fascinating talk and answers.

6. Visiting County/Ward Councillors and Questions from the Public.

Cllr Ride said he was happy to take questions and that parish noticeboards carried details of meetings.

A resident raised the issue of the proposed footpath down Hoe Lane. Residents are suffering in Hoe Lane through speed and noise of vehicles.

Cllr Ride said the problems were known. The industrial site was approved retrospectively. With regard to the footpath, more could be done at Parish Council level and it could be taken up with the LHP to help residents of Hoe Lane and other lanes.

A resident asked why there couldn't be another exit.

Cllr Ride said this was never taken further. This can be taken up through the PC and ward councillors.

Residents felt that the speed limit should be addressed and that there was also pollution concern.

Cllr Ride said he would give his commitment to take this up immediately.

A resident raised the issue of housing for young people in the parish. She asked if the ward councillors knew the bands used at Chelmsford for residents.

Cllr Ride said this case had been dealt with and explained the procedure.

A resident said he would like to give his own end of year report. He said it would have been better if residents had known about the Hoe Lane development in advance. He thanked the ward councillors for attending as residents could ask questions in public. He asked where the parish records were being kept. He said regarding the Bell Fields a lot of money had been spent on solicitors that could be put to better use, and couldn't we all move forward together. He said he didn't have confidence on the Parish Council and that a wall had gone up – could we not start again, everyone, not just the Council? The ward councillors are now accessible and say "we". At the Council, can we try and get "we". Training would be a good idea for everyone. Could we all settle down and have a good year?

Cllr Hart said he had three issues. There had been an area marked out for affordable housing and a play area and he had been mortified when it was thrown out. He said the Laurence Jones family had never had an apology. He referred to the Bell Fields and said while the play area was costing £5,000, the Bell Fields cost nothing. He said he was sad the Football Club had been served with a notice re enforcement. He said many residents had lost trust in the Parish Council.

A resident said it seemed a shame all children go out of the village to school after the age of 11. Why have red tape and in-fighting over something that could help children play football?

A resident said he came to meetings to keep a finger on the pulse because of mistrust in the past. He said the way things were going, it would be a long time before trust was re-established. He said it had begun with the planning application and what had happened. he hoped that one day things would be back on an even keel.

A resident said back in 1978 a review in the newsletter gave details of the Parish Council working with residents. Are all councillors aware of the newsletter?

Cllr Hart said it was time for apologies following the action at Christmas 18 months ago of Cllr D Fleming.

A resident said apologies due to Cllr Ride from Cllr Hart had not been forthcoming.

Following this comment a number of residents spoke together and there was a conflict of opinion that led to a number of residents leaving the meeting.

The meeting was then abandoned without Item 7 being agreed.

7. To agree date, time and place of the next Annual Parish Meeting.

This Item was not discussed.