



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on Thursday 27th April 2017 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield - 7.30pm

17/71. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Bull
Councillor Mike James
Councillor Linda Bowen
Councillor Alan Preston

Also in attendance:

Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council
Anne Read – Community Shop,
Sheila Braithwaite – Petanque
Malcolm Braithwaite – Toppesfield Stringed Instrument Appreciation Society
Brian Moody – St Margaret of Antioch Parish Church
Mary-Ann Stevenson – Toppesfield Community Pub
Hayley Stewart & Libbie Ketley – Little Chestnuts Pre-School
Trisha Roberts – Toppesfield Cricket Club
Alan Collard – Pumphouse Community Brewery
Zoe Hughes – Little Hedgehogs, Fit Fun Club, The Golden Chestnuts and Arts & Craft Club
Charles Hughes -Village Hall Committee
Wendy Ames – Toppesfield Community Stores and Carpet Bowls
Tony Davison – Toppesfield Parish Charities

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Dave Dyson
Councillor Andrea Chinery
Councillor Paul Thompson - Toppesfield & Gainsford End Allotments
District Councillor Richard van Dulken
Margaret Dyson – Doctors Car Service
Ann Read – Parish Paths Partnership and Flower Show

17/72. Parish Council Annual Report from the Chairman:

Andrew Bull gave his report – see attached Appendix A.

17/73. Organisations / group Reports:

Reports were received from various organisations.

Trisha Roberts gave a report on behalf of the Toppesfield Cricket Club - see Appendix B.

Ann Read provided a report for the Village Flower Show which Councillor Andrew Bull read out – see Appendix C.

Wendy Ames gave a report on behalf of Toppesfield Community Stores – see Appendix D

Tony Davison gave a report on behalf of the Toppesfield Charities and their accounts. For Tony's report see Appendix E. A copy of the accounts can be obtained from the Parish Clerk. After Tony gave his report Councillor Andrew Bull thanked him for all his hard work for the Charities and within the parish.

Libbie Ketley from Little Chestnuts Pre-School gave their report - see Appendix F.

Wendy Ames gave a report on behalf of the Carpet Bowls group – see Appendix G.

Sheila Braithwaite gave a report on behalf of the Petanque group – see Appendix H.

Councillor Andrew Bull read out a report from Paul Thompson on behalf of the Allotments group – see Appendix I.

Malcolm Braithwaite gave a report on behalf of Toppesfield Stringed Instrument Appreciation Society - see Appendix J.

Brian Moody gave a report on behalf of St Margaret of Antioch parish Church – see Appendix K.

Charles Hughes gave a report on behalf of Toppesfield Village Hall Committee – see Appendix L.

Alan Collard gave a report on behalf of Pumphouse Community Brewery Ltd. – see appendix M.

Alan Preston gave a report regarding the Neighbourhood Watch – see Appendix N.

Zoe Hughes gave a report for Little Hedgehogs Parent & Carers Toddler Group, Arts & Craft, Fit Fun Club and Golden Chestnuts – please see appendix O for these reports.

A report from Bernie Stevenson was read out on behalf of the Red Barrows – see Appendix P. Councillor Andrew Bull added that the Red Barrows won the Braintree Fundraiser of the year award.

Mary-Ann Stevenson gave a report on behalf of Toppesfield Community Pub - see appendix Q.

Ann Read provided a report for The Parish Paths Partnership which Councillor Andrew Bull read out – see Appendix R.

17/74. Time and date of next Parish Council Meeting:

The next Parish Council meeting will be on the 11th May 2017 at 7.30pm. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

17/75. Close:

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Appendix A

Chairman's Annual Parish Meeting Report

It has been another successful year for our community and I am delighted that the Parish Council continues to play a key role in this success. It was great recognition for the Council to receive the Golden Gavel Award from the EALC and well deserved if I do say so myself.

The community continues to enjoy some great facilities and we should be particularly proud of the development of the Toppesfield Playing Field. This work was started under the Parish Plan project and is one of the key deliverables and successes of this important project. During the past year, a much-needed hard standing area was installed along with significant improvements to the access from Church Lane. Additional play equipment was also installed, along with a professional standard basketball net. Councillor Thompson has led this work and we are extremely proud of the changes that have been made in this area.

The Parish Council supported the now traditional Christmas Lighting Up Ceremony in what was our biggest attended event to date. The tree looked magnificent with new lighting and we again thank Shaun and Bridget Sheldrake for the co-ordination of this event. We will seek to improve, as always for 2017.

We were delighted to acquire a small piece of land on behalf of the community during the year. The aim of this purchase was to secure and protect the fantastic view behind The Green Man community pub and I understand that we are the only Parish Council in the East of England to purchase land over the past eighteen months. A tremendous achievement especially with a Parish income through the precept of £11,000.

Our finances were well managed throughout the year, enabling us to make substantial grants to Toppesfield Cricket Club, St Margaret's Church and the Allotment Society. The Council also supported the Talentless Show in September, which raises money for the Nancy Salmon Trust. We were also able to purchase much needed replacement gates for the Village Hall. This was all possible through sound prudent finance management from all councillors and Kaaren Berry our responsible financial officer. We will seek to review our operational expenditure for the new financial year to see where we can make efficiencies and look to spend more on improving the services and facilities within our community.

Toppesfield Parish Council have always been at the forefront of online communications including the early adoption of a social media presence which works very well for our community. Over the next year we will review our communications, particularly the Newsletter to look for to see what works for us, particularly our younger generation.

Finally, it was a tremendous privilege to be invited to the RCCE Essex Village of the Year Presentations at Chelmsford City Racecourse in July. We were delighted to pick up the Best In Class Trophy for a community of our size, and then to also pick up Essex Village of the Year Shield was well worth the many hours and preparation for the judging.

I would like to record a special thanks to Tony Davidson who has resigned from the Toppesfield Charities Group. Tony has served the village in many ways including the Parish Council and he has been the central point of contact for the Charities Group and his knowledge and experience will be sorely missed. The Parish Council have agreed and nominated Alan Collard to be the new representative from the Council on the Charities Group.

Appendix B



Toppesfield Cricket Club Annual Report 2017

Background.

Coinciding with the village show a cricket match had been played against Old Southendian's for three consecutive years contesting for the Dick Ruggles Trophy. It was felt by some enthusiastic individuals that there was an opportunity to make more of the time an effort that was spent preparing a wicket for just a single game so it was decided to arrange some more friendly fixtures throughout the summer months.

On the back of this a grant application was made to the Parish Council which was duly accepted and effectively giving the 'rubber stamp' and the funds to get the ball rolling.

TCC was officially formed in August 2015.

Highlights of 2016 Season.

- Committee formed comprising of a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Social Secretary, Coach and Catering Coordinator.
- Club Rules and Code of Conduct adopted by the committee and introduced.
- Three fixtures played throughout the summer against Cornish Hall End, Shalford and the annual Dick Ruggles Trophy match against Old Southendian's.
- A closely contested game over Shalford narrowly lost against a much younger opposition, but victorious over Cornish Hall End and Old Southendian's. The later resulting in Toppesfield successfully retaining the Dick Ruggles Trophy.
- Family fun day held on 6th September, very well supported by all ages whom came together to play the customary and now renowned 'Crinders'. Complimented by live music from Reptile Dysfunction, local food donated by Andy and Diane Howells loving prepared and served by Clare Dore and Rob Stafford-baker, along with a raffle kindly organised by Trisha all helped to raise some valuable club funds. All in all, a very enjoyable day had by all.
- Practice net purchased on the back of the donations from the Sainsbury's Trust, Village Shop, and the funding received from the P.C.
- Practice and coaching sessions held on Thursday evenings throughout the summer months were very well attended by all ages from the local community. Aussie Rob (Head Coach) providing some valuable coaching for the up and coming youngsters along with some honing of those skills long forgotten by those more mature members.
- During the closed season a considerable amount of work went into improving the wicket for the next season. Before winter set in the wicket was scarified, cut, aerated, seeded and 1 tonne of top dressing applied.

New Season 2017

- Anyone interested in becoming a member of the T.C.C should come along to our dedicated signing on evenings being held on Friday 21st, 28th May and 3rd May held between 6-8pm in the Green Man.
- Membership is £10 adult, £5 under 18's, and £5 if anyone wishes to be associated with the club in the capacity as a non-playing member.

- Work has already commenced on preparing the wicket, early cutting and rolling taking place.
- Practice Nets and coaching evenings commence on Thursday 11th May at the playing field from 6.30 onwards.
- We have number of fixtures both home and away scheduled for the coming season, including Earls Colne, Cornish Hall End and Old Southendians's.
- The Family Fun day fundraiser will be held on Sunday 3rd September with a similar format to last year.

Questions for the P.C.

There were talks that the Dick Ruggles bench was going to be relocated to the opposite side of the field (where the old bench once stood). T.C.C would be in favour of this happening as there would then be no need to move the memorial elm tree which is currently located next to it.

Can anything be done about the ever-increasing population of rabbits?

Careful consideration needs to be given before sighting any additional play equipment; this could be detrimental to future cricket matches if located in the field of play. Can we ask that T.C.C are consulted reference any future plans?

On behalf of Toppesfield Cricket Club.

Nick Hasler.

The Committee

Mary-Ann Stevenson, Nick Hasler, Bernie Stevenson. Trisha Roberts, Rob Sullivan, Rob Stafford-baker.

Appendix C

Village Show report for APM on 27th April 2017

The show was held on 10th September and right in the middle of days and days of endless sunshine, show day dawned rather dreary and wet and so it continued for the rest of the day. However, spirits inside the village hall were not dampened as a record number of exhibitors made their way to the village hall on Saturday morning to place their exhibits. There was a huge increase in the number of adult entries from 124 last year to a record 194 this year and the children's entries also showed an increase from 52 last year to 57 this year. Fantastic. It was amazing to see the tables loaded with exhibits and quite a challenge to make sure every entry was in the correct place and displayed to its' greatest advantage. What was so encouraging was that several exhibitors who used to exhibit but had not done so for a long time, returned to the fold, increasing the competition.

The fruit and vegetable classes showed a great increase this year with lots of entries in each class rather than just one or two. There were eight entries in the four-apple class giving the judge quite a head ache to decide on the places. Also, the comments about the two entwined carrots in the unusually shaped vegetable class had to be censored! The over sixties class usually is something that exhibitors can just pick up and bring but this year we decided to make them work a little harder and the class was a miniature garden. Only two entries in this class but both were terrific and I think the two exhibitors enjoyed going back to their childhood. As ever the children's exhibits were fantastic, in particular the animals made from fruit and vegetables and the decorated cakes. Such imagination. Really super.

The hall looked fantastic and as ever the Art Exhibition added greatly to the show.

Following on from the success of 2015 show we combined with other organizations in the village to collect items for the raffle and created hampers of goods rather than having lots of individual prizes.

Unfortunately the outside stalls were rather limited as five stall holders cried off in the last two days . Possibly the weather forecast was to blame?

The show cleared about £25.00 surplus. Not very much for the huge effort involved. Possibly the weather was to blame as the gate was down and so the takings for the raffle. However, it is not about making money but about having a show. So many villages have lost their shows. The cricket match on the playing field organized by Bernie completed a great village day.

A huge thank you to Zoe” Hughes, Maureen Dimmock, Lesley Scollay, Angela Delaney, Ros Castle and Chris and Brian Hammond for their terrific help in getting the show on the road and also to all the people in the village who so kindly donated items for the bottle stall and the raffle.

I am delighted to be able to report that three new people have joined the committee. This years' show is on Sat 16th September and we are returning to St Margaret's School to house the event.

Appendix D

Toppesfield Village Stores

The village store, even in today’s world of online grocery shopping, continues to thrive and remain a vital hub of our village.

This is in no small way due to Ivy’s amazing, insite and local knowledge when it comes to ordering and stocking the shop.

We, the village, are indebted, to all of our volunteers that staff the shop and enable us to keep our prices competitive and our profits up.

We, the committee, work together behind the scenes, organising ‘the practical stuff’, to try to make the running of the shop as smooth as possible and also try to come pp with new ways to provide the best service we can. For example, the introduction of newspaper sales, which has been a great success. However, we are always open to more suggestions.

As you know the Toppesfield Village Stores is a non-profit organisation, which means that through the good work of our volunteers we are able to continue to accumulate grant funds and put them to good use in other areas of the village.

The most recent being, the grants made to Toppesfield Cricket Club and Little Chestnuts Pre-school.

I would just like to finish by saying we are always looking for more volunteers for the shop and the committee, therefore if you, or anyone you know, would like to help out please get in touch.

Appendix E

Annual Charities Report....2017

This is my report for the year ending March 2016 – including a copy of the Annual Accounts.

At the Annual Meeting of the Charities held in December 2016, the committee consisted of:- Tony Davison & Dusty Millar (Parish Council Representatives) and Brain Moody & James Blackie representing the Church. Apologies were received from the Rev. Barbara Hume.

The income from the Charities this year was £974 – the same as last year.

- Rent on Parish Land £960
- Olivers Farm..... £1

- New House Farm (Stambourne)...£12.75
- Craigs End House £0.25

This equates to:-

- John & William Edwards Charity
- Durnford Annuity
- Robert Edwards Charity

The beneficiaries were the Church; the School and the Older people of the Parish.

After 37 years as the Parish Council Representative & Treasurer of Toppesfield Parish Charities, this will be my last report as I have already tendered my resignation effective from March 31st – the end of the financial year.

Tony Davison
(Hon. Treasurer)

Appendix F



Annual report from Little Chestnuts Pre-school April 2017

September saw the start of the new school year and the number of children registered with our setting was good, and we increased staff sessions to ensure ratios were of a high standard. During this term, we enjoyed the sunshine playing in the garden, growing vegetables and flowers, the children entered arts and crafts into the Toppesfield village show which we all enjoyed. We held an Open week in November, potential and new parents were invited to join us in session to experience what we provide. This was well attended and it was lovely to meet new children and their families. Our Christmas performance was once again well attended and a lovely end to the Autumn term.

The Spring term welcomed new children and their families and our numbers rising, we introduced new activity days, these included a Wellie walk, messy play and cooking the children prepared food for a hot lunch, this has been very successful so we decided to register with Braintree council and obtained our 5* food hygiene certificate so that we can provide hot food on a regular basis, we now cook a hot lunch Tuesdays and Wednesdays which the children really enjoy.

We also held Our Spring Swing this term, an evening of vintage music and lovely food, this was a great success and we raised an amazing £1840, £300 of which is being donated to the Nancy Salmon trust. We look forward to next year's event.

As we enter the summer term, numbers are still increasing, with 18 children attending morning sessions and afternoon sessions reaching 14. We are preparing our older children for their transition to 'big school' to St Margaret's school, continuing our strong community links by visiting class one and class one visiting us. As the weather turns warmer we are enjoying the outside area and excited for the new outside equipment we are purchasing from money raised, we have been planting a sensory garden in our allotment and vegetables, we invite the community to visit the allotment and take a look and weed if you wish!

Looking forward to the coming year numbers are higher than last year, with new children starting in September, and with the Governments enhancement to funding we will continue to provide high quality childcare and education and look to develop the service we provide children and their families.

Appendix G

Carpet Bowls

At the closing of the Petanque season, many of us were dismayed to think that our Tuesday evening get-togethers were coming to an end, so when Sheila told us about carpet bowls in the village hall we thought, why not, we'll give it a try!

It's a very different game in fact, however, there aren't many rules (which Sheila and Malcolm kindly explained to us) and we all took to it like ducks to water.

We have played practically every Tuesday since our firm meeting on 27th September, only missing Christmas week, and if it's not too conceited, I would like to add, that some of us have, well, on occasion, even become fair players. Although not at this stage, we have even talked about joining a league.

We decided to make a payment of £1 each for each meeting to cover the cost of hiring the village hall and I'm not sure who, but Sheila I think, decided to make me treasurer, so I've been collecting our money each week and we are all thrilled to note that, as we always have a good attendance, we are £100 in front already – therefore planning either a night out or perhaps buying some new equipment.

Petanque is due to resume next Tuesday, however, we have discussed possibly continuing with carpet bowls on an alternative evening. New members are always welcome.....so watch this space :0)

Appendix H

The petanque group started just over a year ago when a keen group of villagers braved the early spring weather to share what we all knew or remembered from playing on the beach as children! We played all over the summer and a hardy group of us continued all through the winter!

It's fun and mildly competitive. There is nothing better than having a game with village friends and maybe enjoying a glass of wine and some cheese in the lovely setting of our village playing field.

Together we have learnt more details of the game and some of us have played in competitions. We intend to continue to provide opportunities for whatever level folk want to play. We have been invited to join a summer and winter league and we will provide information to the group about the different competitions going on over the summer. Of course, petanque can just be enjoyed as a social evening.

We intend to start our weekly meetings for the summer season on Tuesday 2nd May at 6.30. p.m. We have all the equipment that is needed so we invite anyone to just turn up and enjoy! The petanque rink is next to the pavilion on the playing field.

Sheila Braithwaite

Appendix I

Topps Allotment statement

Thanks go out to Rob Stafford -Baker for tending the grassland around the Community Orchards as it is probably the last year it will need to be intensively mown prior to wild flower sowing next year .

We welcome our new tenant Mary and Tony from Church Lane- A splendid start to the allotment refurbishment which puts most of us to shame.

We still have an allotment (free to a good home) Please put the word about!

Allotment accounts are now up to date.

The balance sheet will need a cash injection for ongoing maintenance issues A possible quiz night may be put on in the autumn.

The CPO have offered help with some maintenance of the hedges. And strimming once the Daffodils have died off.

Unfortunately, the Hampton Court trip has had to be cancelled due to not enough support this year.

I will consider a smaller coach to an agricultural show or country fair next year.

Dog Fouling is still a problem on the Allotments and, the culprits will be named and shamed if they are caught and persist.

It is antisocial and not pleasant for the children that stand in it.

Thanks to Ketley Farm. For the delivery of Bovine after digestive matter

Paul T chair

Appendix J

Toppesfield Stringed Instrument Appreciation Society 2016 - 2017

TSIAS has morphed into various identities over the last year and moves, with enthusiasm, into the future. The main focus has been "Red Hot Ukes", a merged ukulele band made up of four Toppesfield and Gainsford End residents along with members of the "Play Ukulele" group from Halstead and District U3A. We produced a Christmas CD (and sold 24 copies) and went on the road on a tour to play for Age Concern UK before last Christmas. Since then, a further gig, at which 13 members played, was held in Gosfield at the "Cuppa" Friendship Club. We have taken on seven new members, who are in training for a major shift to a ukulele club format which will play fortnightly in Halstead from September.

The guitarists amongst us have played occasionally during the year at various "Open Mike Nights" in the area, including our own at The Green Man on the first Sunday of each month.

We have always included "bell ringing" as playing a stringed instrument! However, our local tower is in desperate need of new, young "string-pullers" (aka "Bell Ringers") now that the local team is down to two stalwart members. The Parish and villagers raised over £180,000 to re-furbish the bells in Toppesfield church tower, and the fantastic peel of bells installed is "crying out" for new ringers!

We guess that there must be more musicians in our Parish and anyone with an interest would be welcome to join in our playing sessions

Malcolm Braithwaite
April 2017.

Appendix K

As I reported last year our parish church is now one of seven in the new benefice of The Hedingham and Upper Colne Parishes, which includes Toppesfield, Great and Little Yeldham, Stambourne, Tilbury-J-Clare, Castle and Sible Hedingham. Barbara is now officially Rector of all seven parishes, with the help from Rev Liz Paxton, Rev Mike Bursell and licensed Reader Dave Brown. Sally Croft is Benefice Pastoral Assistant. (A Pastoral Assistant helps the clergy by visiting people in the local community requiring practical or spiritual support). The benefice office is in Queen Street Castle Hedingham and Barbara can be contacted there on 01787 462136.

This year has been one of both joy and sadness at St Margaret's. We had four joyful village weddings, a wedding blessing and a christening. But the last 12 months have also seen the passing of three members of our church community – Dolly Ruggles, Ted and Dennis Mortlock – who for many years have been at the heart of the church as church officers and members of the choir. They will be sadly missed, as will two other well-loved villagers – John Barnard and Dot Peacock.

The loss of Dolly, Ted and Dennis and Maureen Willis' move to Braintree has reduced the choir to only three singers. We need some new recruits, not necessarily to come to every weekly service but to boost the choir for special occasions. Anyone who would like to join us is invited to Ollivers farm on June 7th – 7pm for an 'open sing' to get the feel of it.

While attendance at regular weekly services is small, attendance at special services – Easter and Christmas, Harvest and Remembrance – increased this year. And we had two special events in church. In April we celebrated the 90th Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second with an art competition and in early December, as part of the village's launch of Christmas, there was the now famous Christmas tree competition with 13 village organisations taking part and Father Christmas appearing on the roof of the tower.

Many people of course help the church in lots of ways, for which we are very grateful. They clean the church and the brass monuments, arrange beautiful flower display, ring the bell, wind the clock etc. However, more volunteers to help with any of these will be very welcome.

We are also grateful to the Parish Council for its financial support in keeping the church yard tidy. It is a place many people walk through to the school or shop or to visit family graves. Again our thanks to Stuart Hammond who works hard to make it a beautiful and peaceful part of our village, and to those who keep their family grave tidy.

The fabric of the church continues to be a major responsibility for the Parochial Church Council. We tried again this year to get a grant to repair the south aisle roof but again we were unsuccessful. This summer we will be having our five-year architect's inspection of the building and will need to carry out any work he recommends. We already have preliminary ideas for improvements and redecoration inside the church.

We are still trying to make progress with County Broadband's proposal to install a broadband antenna on the roof of the tower. We thought it was going ahead a few weeks ago. The church authorities have at last given their approval, but when County Broadband did a final inspection before starting installation they found a technical problem with their system and postponed the work. We are still waiting for them to come back to us.

Because of the increasingly pressing need to carry out repairs and redecoration our fundraising programme becomes ever more important. Last year the weather was not kind to us either at the Fete or the Barbecue and there was no Wine and Cheese evening. But all is in hand for this year, the weather is bound to be better and thanks to everyone who helps run or support them.

Appendix L

Toppesfield Village Hall Report.

We held our annual tombola at the village flower show plus drinks hamper raising money for improvements – we had new heaters installed in the toilets plus kitchen and stage area. We held a Cockney Night which was enjoyed by all that attended. We had a new cub start each Tuesday evening – Carpet Bowls.

All safety checks have been carried out and have been certified. Four new skylights have been fitted in the roof.

It's been a difficult few months leading to our chairperson, Ginny, resigning. We thank her for her long service to the village hall.

I then stood in as acting chair until being elected on as chair officially – this has been noted by the RCCE and the Charity Commission. We are now all working together as a committee for the future of the village hall. Our plans for the year ahead are to install much needed ambient lighting with dimmer switches, renewing the stage flooring, new double glazed windows and fire doors. Replacing skirting boards and repair and decorate parts of the hall. We are also looking into updating some of the heating in the main hall and possible changes to the outlook from the back of the hall. We will be looking into finding funding for the projects ahead.

Thank you
Charles Hughes - Chairperson

Appendix M

Pumphouse Report to Annual Parish Meeting, 27th April 2017

1. Have been in production now for 18 months
 - The period ending 31 October marked the first full financial year of the brewery's operations;
 - Since we started we have produced 543 firkins of beer in barrels and bottles;
 - That is equivalent to 39,096 pints, or more than 77 pints per man, woman and child in the parish;
 - Most of the production – about 75% - went to the Green Man., about 7% into bottles and most of the balance to private sales and beer festivals. Recently we have supplied beer to 4 local pubs – the Waggon & Horses in Yeldham, the Horse & Groom in Cornish Hall End, the Cock in Clare and the Fox & Hounds in Steeple.
 - We still have a strong volunteer group. The volunteers undertake a range of tasks, including bottling, labelling and racking the beer from fermenter to barrel;
 - In addition to the staple beers produced – Tap, Gold, Plough Dog and Black – during the year we also saw one-off brews such as Jenny, VIPA and Little Freckled Wren. At the end of the financial year we had our first taste of a new beer, Pale Oktober. Although brewed by Phil for the Oktoberfest, the beer proved so popular that it is still being regularly brewed;
 - During the year we obtained our off-sales licence from Braintree District Council and became registered at HMRC under the Alcohol Wholesalers Registration Scheme. In

addition we have to account for VAT and monthly beer duty returns – there are a lot regulatory and governance issues involved;

- During the year we purchased some new fermenters and a number of new barrels.
- We (and the Green Man) have had a number of visits from Camra groups from around Essex and Suffolk and some very good reviews from them – but having seen the state of some of them when they departed (we were the last call of the day) I think we could have given them cold cabbage water and they would have enjoyed it.
- In March we had a visit from our County Councillor and leader of Essex County Council, David Finch and our local MP, James Cleverly. They took the opportunity to visit also the shop.
- We now open the brewery regularly for off-sales every Saturday between 10:00am and midday.

2. Future

- We would like to smarten up the barn in which we currently store bottles, grain, hops etc. Once the building work on the barn exterior has been done we will explore with TCP what Pumphouse could do to utilise the space better. This could involve installing a cold room, more efficient storage and generally making that part of the barn more attractive. Of course obtaining funding for this would be critical;
- We will also look at increasing the capacity the brewery. This may be through acquiring installing a larger capacity brew run;
- Phil has spent time recently with 2 experienced micro-brewers and the plan is to try a series of collaborative brews with them. This is also important as we want to start addressing the succession issue should Phil decide to retire fully or move away to be nearer his children;
- We will be looking at introducing an occasional ‘spend a day with the brewer’ service. For a fee, it would be possible to produce your own brew. In the cost would be a number of bottles of that brew and possibly a pin. The rest would be available for sale by Pumphouse;
- We would like to increase the number of volunteers helping in the brewery – if anyone is interested, even if only on a very occasional basis – please let us know.

3. Summary

- Lot has been achieved;
- Much more successful than any of us thought it would be;
- Now at the stage where we need to think about where the brewery goes on to; what do we ultimately want to achieve?
- All in all we are looking forward to taking the brewery forward and feel confident in its future.

4. I would like to put on record our thanks

1. the shareholders who supported this venture when the brewery was no more than a rubbish tip;
2. TCP our landlords and with whom we clearly have a close, even symbiotic, relationship;
3. All the volunteers who have helped in so many ways.
4. Other village organisations and the village in general for support;
5. Last but certainly not least to Phil, our brewer who has done a magnificent job. Phil is really committed to what he is doing here in Toppesfield and has worked very hard to get the beers to the quality they are.

Appendix N

Neighbourhood Watch

This has been going for just over a year in the parish, both Trisha Roberts and I are the co-ordinators for the scheme. There has been some uptake during the village markets and an article has gone out in the newsletter. There is a lot that Neighbourhood watch can offer and further information will be published in the newsletters and there will be a continued presence at the village markets.

Neighbourhood Watch is to make people aware of their vulnerabilities without frightening them. For more information please contact Trisha or myself.

Alan Preston

Appendix O

Little Hedgehogs Parent/Carer Toddler Group – We have had a very enjoyable years, numbers increased parents/carers with children attended regularly and many friendships have been formed and the group continues to grow. Our babies are now turning two with a few new babies arrived and I believe a few more planned. From our Christmas fundraising cake we managed to raise money towards our new play carpets and mats for the group. This week a new spring look arrived with free play. Hopefully the numbers will continue as still changing times with children starting nursery and pre-school are tired and sleep in the afternoon plus parents return to work and are unable to attend. I am very proud of the group as we are now in our 29th year, we meet on Mondays 1.30pm – 3pm term time only.

Zoe Hughes – Leader

The Art & Craft Club – We had a great response and nice comments about our artwork at our annual art exhibition held alongside the village flower show in September. We have managed to continue with our group as numbers are now very low sadly due to members health and lives becoming more busy. We have had interest from a few people and hopefully now the lighter evenings are here they will attend.

We are due to start painting along with DVD artists to help give us some new inspiration towards our next exhibition at the next village show. We run every Wednesday from 7.30pm – 9.30pm, budding artists and creative new members are always welcome.

The Fit Fun Club – now into our 5th year we enjoy our two sessions a week, we have had a few new members join us but as most members pay as you go life sometimes gets in the way. We have our regular 8 attend each week. Interest was shown by a local ladies group but nothing has happened to date. Future plans to advertise on local notice boards and carry on enjoying our Salsasise we even have a very young member learning the moves – this makes us all smile.

The Golden Chestnuts over 50's club – Our over 50's club celebrated our 3rd year in November by a meal in the local pub, a Christmas party with a secret Santa gift – Santa even visited, fun had by all. We visited Toby Carvery in Braintree earlier in the year on our funds. The ladies and gents in the group have helped prep food for village hall events, set up for the shop supper and sometimes help set up for village markets. Thank you for their help.

Numbers have lowered due to health of some of our members and we wish them well as soon as possible. We continue our future plans are to hold an afternoon spring tea very soon – date to be arranged. A summer outing will also be planned.

We enjoy a friendly weekly catch up over a cuppa, the age of the group ranges from 50 – 80+ and still going strong.

Yours
Zoe Hughes

Appendix P

The Red Barrows

The Red Barrows as a brand will continue with their promotions and band performances but in June the present RB squadron will be laying down their Barrows for the final time, terminating at a Village function just as it began 2002.

We are not retiring the idea, but recruiting young pilots is almost impossible so watch this space. We did manage to raise just over £3000 last year and will continue in that vein including this September in the Village Hall with a Music Bonanza in Aid of the Nancy Salmon Trust Fund so make sure you by your tickets early.

Cheers General Maggot.

Appendix Q



Toppesfield Community Pub Limited

As some of you already know Brian and Lainey left the Green Man on the 3rd April (which incidentally coincided with my birthday). The Committee had a plan in place ready for Brian's departure and we all have clear roles and responsibilities to take the pub forward.

There is no doubt that we were very lucky that Vikki Weston stepped in, undertook her Personal Licence and is now in post as the Manager of the Green Man.

I don't want to dwell on the past year as I know the pub has been a hot topic of conversation for quite some time now but I have tried to keep people up to date with what has been going on with my communications to Shareholders, on Facebook and in the Parish Newsletter.

The TCP Vision Statement that is displayed in the lobby of the pub clearly outlines what customers and shareholders have told us what they want the pub to be and this is the TCP Management Committee's guide.

We are taking small steps going forward as we want to get it right. We have put a suggestion box in the pub and welcome people's suggestions on how we can improve – we know that we can't please everybody all the time but we will listen and try to do what we can.

There has been a positive visit from Environmental Health and we hope to be serving up food very soon.

It is good to see people back in the pub and we look forward to seeing all the local groups making use of our Community Pub.

Kind regards
Mary-Ann Stevenson
Chair, TCP

Appendix R

Toppesfield Parish Paths Partnership

Report for Parish Meeting 27th April 2017

Another year round, where has the time gone? As I write this our beautiful parish is ablaze with colour. The fantastic different greens of the hedgerows and crops, the cowslips taking over from the primroses and daffodils, the tree blossom, fantastic along the causeway and the amazing blue haze of bluebells in Berwick Hall wood. We are so lucky that ProW enable us to enjoy all these wonderful sights.

Last year at this time there was a problem with several cross-field paths where a late drilling of a bean crop meant that the paths were not clear. However, we contacted the land owner concerned and very quickly the paths were cleared and I am pleased to report that this year the paths are well marked. Last year we had a very wet Winter and in the Spring the fields were very wet and muddy. This year is seems to be the opposite. Already the ground is very dry and cracking open. We are never happy!

The illegal diversion of the footpath 26 down the side of Olivers garden has still not been resolved. However I understand from Simon Taylor, the enforcement and liaison officer, that there has been an application to divert the Oliver's part of the footpath and he is in contact with Mr Kettley to apply for the diversion of the other part of the footpath so that we can move on .

On the walks front I organised a walk on May 2nd joining with Bulmer foot path walkers and we had 12 walkers. It was a lovely day and we went down Park lane, across to Harrow Hill and followed Harrow Hill to the end at Le Hurst. From there we took the bye road up to Thurstons, returning to Gainsford End through the old church yard. We then walked on through Gainsford End turning down to Harrow Hill and retracing our steps back to Park Lane. Quite a challenging walk but fantastic.

I organised the usual New Year walk which was on Sunday 8th January. Just four walkers and a dog joined me but we did walk off some of the Christmas excess.! Again, our walk took us down Park lane, across to Harrow Hill and then up through the vineyard to Gainsford End. We then took Mallows Lane and on to Lewseys farm site, over the brook and up to Olivers. Here we crossed the road and we completed the circle coming back to the village through the church yard.

I have been asked to plan a walk suitable for pushchairs and toddlers so that is next on my list.

Do enjoy our footpaths and let me know if you come across any problems.

Ann Read, Footpath Officer