



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 9th May 2013 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 7.30pm

13/75. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Peter Moore – Chairman
Councillor Clare Thompson
Councillor Andrew Bull
Councillor David Bagnall
Councillor Shaun Sheldrake
Councillor Alan Collard
Councillor John Levick

Also in attendance:

Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council
Margaret Dyson – Doctors Car Service
Anne Read – Community Shop, Footpaths and Flower Show
Tony Davison – Toppesfield Parish Charities
Paul Thompson – Allotments
Malcolm Braithwaite – VANTAGE
Sally Croft – PCC
Bernie Stevenson – Red Barrows
Ginny Laskowski – Village Hall committee
Fran Laskowski
Mr Simms
Zoe Hughes – Little Hedgehogs, Art & Craft group and Fit Fun Club

Apologies were received from

Sheila Braithwaite and Sue Clark representing the W.I., Sian Davies-Hatton representing Little Chestnuts Pre-School and Tony Downs.

13/76. Minutes of the last meeting – 2012 Annual Parish Meeting:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd May 2012 were signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

A question was raised as to why the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were available on the website prior to signing and whether the minutes of the parish council monthly meetings could be available for the public to see prior to signing. Peter explained that the minutes were available prior to signing for the Annual Parish Meeting as if they were held back it would be a year on. The monthly meeting minutes are not published until signed to allow Councillors to challenge them prior to publication.

13/77. Matters Arising from the minutes:

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting.

13/78. Parish Council Annual Report from the Chairman:

Peter Moore gave his report – see attached appendix A. Peter also circulated copies of the draft accounts.

13/79. Organisations / group Reports:

Reports were received from various organisations.

Bernie Stevenson reported that the Redbarrows fundraising continues - £6000 was raised at the car fest last year and £2600 has been raised by Reptile Dysfunction bringing the total up to £46200 so far. Events this year will be another car fest, cricket match, Shalford Beer festival and a Talentless Show.

Sally Croft gave a report on behalf of St Margaret's Church – see appendix B

Tony Davison gave a report on behalf of the Toppesfield Charities and handed a copy of their accounts to the Parish Council. For Tony's report see appendix C.

Ginny Laskowski gave a report on behalf of the Toppesfield Village Hall Committee – see appendix D.

Zoe Hughes gave reports on behalf of the Golden Chestnuts, Little Hedgehogs Toddlers, The Art & Craft Club and The Fit Fun Club. Zoe did mention that on sunny days there was a problem seeing the screen when using the project due to the skylights in the village hall roof. See appendix E.

Margaret Dyson gave a report on the progress of the Doctor's car service – see appendix F

Paul Thompson's report on behalf of the allotment society can be found in Appendix G.

Ann Read gave reports on behalf of Toppesfield Community Shop, The Parish Paths Partnership Group and the Village show – please see appendix H.

Malcolm Braithwaite gave a report on behalf of the VANTAGE group – please see Appendix I. Malcolm also reported that the Toppesfield Stringed Appreciation Society are still meeting in the back room on The Green Man – they have 5 regular members and Malcolm has purchased 6 ukuleles to encourage people to play.

Alan Collard reported that the Toppesfield Community Pub Ltd purchased the pub on the 14th December 2012 and it was the 14th Community owned pub in England & Wales. There are 156 shareholders and just over £156,000 was raised. The first AGM will be held on Saturday 14th May and elections will be held for committees members. TCP are trading profitable. Alan thanked the Community Shop for their grant, The Plunkett foundation, Sainsbury's Family Trust, the Bank, HMRC and the villagers, friends and relatives for their support.

Sue Clark and Sheila Braithwaite were unable to attend the meeting but sent a report which was read out on their behalf. See appendix J.

Sian Davies-Hatton from Little Chestnuts Pre-School was also unable to attend but a report was submitted and read out on their behalf. See Appendix K.

Peter thanked all organisations, groups and Councillors for their support and commitment to the running and organising of the groups and societies within the parish.

13/80. Questions form the public:

It was questioned if the school had been invited to the AGM. Peter replied that they had but no apologies had been received. Discussions followed on how to involve the school more into the village but no decisions were made.

It was questioned if the precept was part of the annual parish meeting and how is it set as Toppesfield's seems high. Peter explained that projects are identified so funds are raised through the precept and that the precept is to run the community. A question was asked as to what the precept is this year – David Bagnall stated it was £53.70 for a Band D property. The budget is set by the Parish Council and a lot of work was done by Alan, David and Kaaren this year to keep the precept the same.

13/81. Any Other Business:

It was suggested that the notices advertising the Public Consultation on Tuesday 14th May should have read Public Meeting as some people did not realise it was a meeting. Other residents were not aware there was a meeting – notices have been put up in three notice boards, the shop and pub to advertise the meeting. Peter explained that there will potentially be drawing available on Tuesday and a representative from Braintree District Council will be there. Peter Moore stated that the meeting was to gain the view of the parishioners with regard to potentially extending the village envelope.

13/82. Time and date of next Parish Council Meeting:

The next Parish Council meeting will be on the 16th May 2013 at 8pm. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

13/83. Close:

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Appendix A

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Parish Council

AGM Year Overview

2012/13 has been a very busy year for the Village and the Parish Council.

It was the 5th year of the Christmas tree lighting and yet again it was a great success – fortunately we had better weather this year. Thanks to Bridget and Sean Sheldrake and the team for organising this.

The web site has continued to increase and expand and has good links to other Village content. This was down to Councillor Levick's hard work in getting the content pulled together. The Village face book page has also continued to increase in popularity thanks to Councillor Bull. Any links or content from other groups in the Village would be welcome.

Councillor Bull has also worked very hard on the Village newsletter and it's great to hear so many residents look forward to sitting down with a cup of coffee to read what has been going on in the Village. A big thanks to Andrew for the time and effort he dedicates to this.

The excellent Village Plan was finished and handed to the Council by Malcolm Braithwaite; there has been lots of progress made against the Plan so far, albeit there is still a lot to do. A massive thanks to Malcolm and his team for a huge piece of work.

The allotments continue to be a great success championed by Paul Thompson and Rob Stafford Baker. A new water pipe was installed earlier in the year so we are expecting a great harvest this year.

The 30mph speed limit through the village has finally been installed after three years of waiting. We now just need to ensure people abide by the speed limit. We are still working with BDC on a foot path along the Causeway.

Last year we commissioned a survey for the Playing Fields equipment. This report detailed some potential safety concerns with current equipment in the Toppesfield playing field. We have now completed the refurbishment of the playing field areas in both Toppesfield and Gainsford End and are now excitedly awaiting the new plans to expand the equipment from LARG.

High speed broadband has also been implemented in the Village and rolled out to over a dozen users so far. The next level of expansion will be implemented over the next few months which will see the service available across a larger area.

Overall it has been another great year for Toppesfield.

Peter Moore
Chairman

Appendix B

St. Margaret's Church

The Church is changing – it has to. Sundays are now occupied with sport, leisure and shopping. The numbers regularly attending are dwindling and we have no children in the congregation. We are however not the only Church in this predicament. The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Coterill has recognised this and has launched an initiative called Transforming Presence, the essence of which is to bring Church outside of the building and on other days of the week. Your Church in Toppesfield is keen to implement this thinking and we are looking at different forms of services appealing to a wider range of people. We are keen to expand our links with our primary school, playgroup and mother &

toddler group and are hoping to set up a youth choir at the primary school. Our Vicar Barbara and I have set up our pastoral team in each of the 5 villages in the benefice, to serve each village by visiting the sick and others in need and building links across the community. I am in the process of a pastoral survey project in the benefice to highlight needs we are not fulfilling and hopefully produce a booklet to give to every household that will inform them of pastoral care available to them, both delivered by the Church and the local authorities.

We have had our usual fun filled fund raising activities in the past year. The fete at Berwick Hall and the auction in November were both well attended and great events. The Cheese and Wine held last month was our best ever raising over £1000 and we are adding another event in July, a BBQ at Oliver's Farm, which I am sure will be a lovely evening. All these events raise valuable funds not only for the general upkeep of the Church, but in order to improve the Church as a village facility. We are looking at efficient ways of heating the building and need to replace the old pews in order to make the space inside the Church more flexible for other activities such as concerts.

We would like to thank the villagers of both Toppesfield and Gainsford End for their continued support both with fund raising and attending special services. We would like to remind you all that we are here to serve you, so please tell us what you need.

Thank you for listening.

Sally Croft

Appendix C

Annual Charities Report 2013

At the annual Meeting of the Charities in December 2012, the committee consisted of:- Tony Davison and Dusty Millar (Parish Council Representatives) and Brian Moody and James Blackie representing the Church.(James Blackie replacing Dennis Mortlock). Apologies were received from Rev Barbara Hume.

The income from the Charities remained the same as last year - £794.

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

There was a change in this year in the nature of the school award. Instead of two £5 book token, one for excellence and one for effort, being awarded to two children in year 6 leaving Toppesfield School, a single book token of £10 was given to the school as the Headmistress had refused to accept awards for individual children. This refusal caused some concern as according to the rules of that particular charity, it was an Educational award, so donating a single book token to the school seemed one way of solving the problem.

In 2011 the income from the Parish land was increased by charging rent on 12 acres instead of 10 (as explained previously). It has been a few years since there has been a rent review on this land so I intend to look into this during the year.

Tony Davison
Hon Treasurer

Appendix D

Chairman's Report Village Hall AGM 2013

This last year has seen a new patio area built, purchase of a new PA system and we have raised £527 towards new stage lighting. This has been achieved by holding various events including a garage sale, the bottle stall at the village show and our booze raffle.

The major achievement has been our new kitchen. The units and worktops were donated by Howdens and thanks to Shaun for organising this. Thanks again go to Shaun for painting the kitchen area.

Plans for the year ahead include: the repairing of the wall adjacent to the patio. We are also looking into heating for the toilets, a new heating system for the hall and the possibility of a false ceiling for the hall.

We are holding two functions in the coming months to help raise funds – these will be a Cream tea on the 1st June 2013 & a table top/boot sale 6th July 2013.

Appendix E

Golden Chestnut – we have almost 40 members to date. The group started on the 9th November 2012, 15 members that attended the first meeting decided on the group's name. We have had a hot lunch, people play cards, scrabble and other games, and we get together and have a good laugh. We have plans for walks and outings in the summer and are grateful to the shop for a donation from the shop committee.

Art & Craft Club – normally 8 members with a range of arts and crafts from card making to needlecraft as well as water colour and even building with matches. We were invited to exhibit our art at Stambourne Chapel; Adrian Burr last night gave us a slide show on the event. We will be holding an art exhibition at the village show in September and we continue with our monthly still life.

Little Hedgehogs Parent & carer group – are very low numbers but still going. We will have been running 25 years in September; we feel that low numbers are due to changing times of routines of parents and other activities available nowadays.

Fit Fun Club – started this time last year, we have just added another session on Tuesday evenings. We do Salsa, Zumba, kick boxing and hopefully introducing Zalzuz soon.

Appendix F

Doctor Car Service Report for Annual Meeting 2013

Doctor Car service is being well used; we have had 53 requests for the service since the last annual parish meeting. Only on two occasions were we unable to help. One due to short notice and the other no driver was available for the time requested.

As usual I could do with more volunteers, and will again try in the village magazine and put notices in the shop and on the notice boards.

Thank you to the Parish Council for their on-going support, and if any of you wish to volunteer great but please let me know we need more volunteers.

Margaret Dyson

Appendix G

Last year was very wet, we did not use much water!!!!

We had a splendid trip to Hampden Court and a small trip to the Edible garden show Warwick. The grasslands were kept cut to encourage growth and stem the bramble re growth and are now looking like a village green thanks to Rob Stafford-Baker.

TGEA have maintained links with NASLAG and have introduced a Tenancy agreement in line with PC requirements after Clare's Local Gov. training at Dunmow, which has been adopted by all 22 members. We are now full until possible further undergrowth is cut back.

The community orchard and herb garden are getting established and blossoms are on the Apple trees for the first time.

We have sold out the planned picnic trip to Sandringham flower festival. Accounts are £1200 in credit , for contingency funds .

We are planning a Summer BBQ and bonfire night Sausage Sizzle again this year along with another Quiz in the Village hall.

The TGE barrow will soon be outside the Pumps again with surplus produce. The school have been approached with the offer of a small plot. A working party was formed to bury the surface bowser pipes in April and the final tightening of the joints will be done soon.

Thanks to all for continued support. GO SEE FOR YOURSELF! what has been happening.

Paul Thompson

Appendix H

Toppesfield Community Shop Report for Annual Parish meeting 9th May 2013

We have had an exciting year during which we celebrated our 10th anniversary. We held a party for all, volunteers, shareholders , suppliers and customers. And we were particularly delighted that most of the original committee were there to join in the celebration.

We continue to build on the firm foundation set up when the shop first opened. Trisha and Keely have just completed their 1st year running the post office. It does seem busier than ever and Trevor Cooper has made very welcome appearances helping out in the holidays.

We continue to support local producers and suppliers and our latest venture is to stock small animal food and a wider range of bird food from Poole Farm. We were very sad to lose the produce from Earey, the butcher in Hedingham. He has supplied us with cheese and meats since the shop first opened but the paperwork and bureaucracy involved in supplying us was so difficult that he has not been able to continue. We have invested in a new wooden outside unit as the old plastic one had given up. It has served us very well particularly housing the coal etc during this horrible Winter.

It is our plan always to award grants to organisations in the village. This year Jubilee tea and medals, WI 40th anniversary, Village Show, Toppesfield Community Pub Ltd, Golden Chestnuts and LARG have all benefited from grants. Plunkett foundation were very excited as this would seem to be the first time a community project has donated money to another community project.

The shop would not survive without its' volunteers. Unfortunately several volunteers have moved away or are no longer available and so we are struggling a bit especially when regular volunteers are away. We would really love to have some new volunteers. So have a think about it and chat to the volunteers in the shop. It is great fun and so good to know that you are helping everyone in your village. It is the Shop AGM next Saturday when a very exiting new idea will be put to the shareholders. Watch this space!

The P3 group is making slow but steady progress. Adam Jenkins who was our P3 officer spent a very wet evening walking some of our paths and showing how to carry out a survey. From the survey we can then identify where there are problems and what needs doing.

In September I attended an Enforcement Legislation course and Simon Taylor, the county enforcement officer, spent a day walking the paths in the parish advising me on how to tackle the problems. You can report any problems you find on the E.C.C. Web site and these are followed up and dealt with. I reported the poor state of the byway Church Lane/ Scotneys lane and whether as a result of this or it was due for attention anyway the byway lane has been repaired.

There have been two applications to divert the route of footpaths lodged with highways. This is unfortunately a rather drawn out procedure but I have spent some time today with the PROW inspector clarifying the diversion of the paths around the new farm road. Until these diversions have been finalized I cannot get started on the maps of walks.

I have organised 4 walks this year. A Jubilee walk on sat 3rd June, Jacquie organised a shorted route, a second walk in July to coincide with the beer festival, a third one on New Year's Day and fourth on 17th March.

If you would like to get involved with the walking group and lead walks do let me know. Ann Read 237464, skomerann@tiscali.co.uk

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Village Show Report for Annual Parish Meeting 9th May 2013

The show was held in the village hall on 15th September 2012 and we were blessed with pleasant day weather wise. I am delighted to report that there was an increase in the number of competitors and entries in both adult and children's classes resulting in the hall being a terrific combination of colour and scent both from the flowers and the cooking! It had been a tricky growing season for both vegetables and flowers but somehow exhibitors managed to get some splendid entries together. The judges, as ever, were really impressed by the high standard of the exhibits. The show is greatly enhanced by the Art and Craft club exhibition. What amazing talent we have in our midst. Unfortunately we were let down by several stall holders at the last minute so the outside stalls were rather depleted however it was a great afternoon. We did get a grant from Toppesfield Community Shop which covered the prize money and greatly eased the finances.

There was a cricket match on the playing field which did add to the excitement and I believe a cricket match is planned again for this year.

The show this year is on Saturday 14th September at 2.00pm in the village hall. We hope to make more of the outside activities this year but as usual are really short of help. Do let me know if you would like to help with this great village event. So many villages have lost their village show.

Ann Read 237464, skomerann@tiscali.co.uk

Appendix I

Village Action Network for Toppesfield And Gainsford End

VANTAGE was set up as a non-structured, loosely formal, but very open group, through which interested residents could contribute ideas and guidance to the Village Plan development process. Almost two thirds of residents took part throughout the review period, which meant that many and varied views were openly considered.

An informally constituted steering group of volunteers, led by a neutral and independent chairman, met regularly to guide the process. The meeting minutes, the results and analysis of the questionnaires, and other relevant presentation notes are all available for open view under the Village Plan tab on the Toppesfield Parish Council web site at www.toppesfieldparishcouncil.org.uk. VANTAGE was registered with the Rural Communities Council Essex (RCCE) and joined their Community Led Planning Network. RCCE is an independent charity, funded by Essex County Council and voluntary donations, to help people and communities throughout rural Essex plan for a sustainable future.

VANTAGE also signed an agreement with Toppesfield Parish Council setting out the roles and responsibilities of each party. It included a formal arrangement for accessing and controlling the finances raised for the project.



The village plan aims to benefit all the villagers of Toppesfield and Gainsford End by creating a shared vision and process for delivering the vision, based on what the inhabitants might need, want or aspire to in the future.

The villages' facilities are very important and their continued use is essential if Toppesfield and Gainsford End are to maintain their sense of community. The residents of both villages have generally been concerned and active in meeting the needs of the Community as they arise.

Progress will be co-coordinated by the Parish Council and reported by various bodies at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Aims and Goals

This Village Plan seeks to address the issues, now and in the future, that will affect everyone in the community.

The Village Plan is not intended to be 'set in stone', nor detail every move and project planned for the village.

However it is intended to be a route-plan providing direction for a group of people to use and develop the thinking further.

Through this process the aim is to deliver a framework that helps bring about the developments, resources,

funding and action required to make the plan a reality.

It is envisaged that the plan will be delivered by interested parties made up from the villagers and other interested parties who regularly use the amenities and facilities within the Parish boundaries.

Progress will be co-coordinated by the Parish Council and reported by various bodies at the Annual

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN TABLES

1. **You and Your Family**
2. **Ecology and Environment**
Energy Collective Purchasing Local Food
Maintenance of roads, verges, hedgerows, green areas
3. **Social and Community**
Car parking and village assets
4. **Leisure and Recreation**
Playing fields and Playground Equipment
Footpaths
5. **Transport and Communication**
Communication - Broadband
Transport Traffic and Speed Limits
6. **Economy and Employment**
7. **Parish Youth Council**

Appendix J

TOPPEFIELD & GAINSFORD END

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

APRIL 2013 WI NEWS - we didn't quite make it to 41.....

Those of you who have been following the articles about the T&GEWI will know that we were taking advice on what to do in the event of being unable to form a committee at our AGM in April 2013.

Sadly I have to report that at our meeting on 9th April this was indeed the case and following a vote by those present the Federation of Essex WI (FEWI) Advisor has suspended our Institute; this suspension remains in place for 3-years or until someone decides to revive the Group, whichever comes first. Three Trustees have been appointed from the remaining membership who will retain the goods and chattels while outstanding funds will be held by FEWI.

T&GEWI was started back in 1972 by a group of young housewives looking for a means of meeting others in the same situation to share experiences and time together. Some of these young housewives

continued to be members of the WI right until the end and they, along with those of us who joined subsequently, are very sad at its demise. Unfortunately we all became exhausted with the efforts of trying to encourage the present day young housewives to come along without success and despite the news every month in the WI LIFE magazine that new WI groups of young women are starting up all over the place.

Perhaps there is someone out there who, before the 3-years are up, will feel inspired enough to try again and if that is the case, then I promise you, we all wish you the very best and, as a WI needs a diverse mix of individuals and ages I hope it will be publicised so that us outgoing members have a chance to be a part of it. Some of us are planning to join other neighbouring WIs and this is of course an option for anyone interested in getting involved.

It just remains for me to thank everyone who supported the WI over the last 40+ years and particularly those members who stuck with it to the end.

Sue Clark
President (retired)
April 2013

Appendix K.

Little Chestnuts Pre-school

The committee and staff at Little chestnut's Pre-school have had a very busy year, we have welcomed our new supervisor who has fitted in nicely, there have been lots of young additions (2yr olds) which has been challenging at times, but staff and help from the parents and the support from the committee we have adapted our daily routine to enable us to provide a good educational, safe environment for each child in our care.

The committee and staff have been updating all the necessary items to upgrade our outcome when Ofsted return to inspect us; this includes staff training and developing our equal opportunities policy.

We have fundraised as usual. Our mouse racing nights were a great success and lots of fun, which helps towards the purchase of new toys, outings and the development of the setting.

The treasurer has been busy applying for funding and grants due to this we secured a grant for ICT, so a new laptop and software has been purchased, now to find some internet access to the hall. All our accounts are up to date and filed online with the charity commissioner.

Our main goal is for the children that attend our setting are settled and enjoy their time with us and we have managed to keep our prices the lowest in the area, which helps families who have been hit by the recent recession.