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Wakes Colne Parish Council

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL WORKING FOR YOUR PARISH

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly Meeting held on Wednesday 1st. May 2024 at 7pm in Chappel & Wakes Colne Village Hall

Present: Cllrs W. Sunnucks (Chair), P. Chillingworth, D. Laws, B. Walsh and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk).
There were also 15 members of the public present.

24/0001 Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly meeting held on 26th. April 2023 already approved/signed at the Parish Council meeting. **All Agreed**

24/0002 Chairman's Annual Report for 2023-2024 from Cllr. William Sunnucks and Presentation of the Wakes Colne Award.

The Chairman asked Sue from Chappel PC to make a short presentation Chappel PC 22nd. Report being delivered the Sue Chair of Chappel. Congratulation to Chris Eaton Speedwatch Champion Patrick Dent is proud to receive this award. In his absence Cllr William Sunnucks read out the following report -

C&WC CSW was formed in June 2016 with 10 volunteers. 3 of whom are still on the register. From June 2016 through to April 2024, bearing in mind that for 2.5 years- Covid – no shifts allowed to take place, we executed 192 shifts with the following results:

2016 through to 2024 inclusive – 1756 vehicles travelling at 36 – 39mph. 609 vehicles travelling at 40mph plus
We now have 6 regular volunteers, when weather permits, which is not often due to changeable conditions and H&S factors, totally dry roads – no wet, ice or snow.

We have 2 volunteers who, due to ill health, are unable to carry out shifts.

Last year we welcomed Denise Stocker onto the team. Denise has set up a Facebook page solely for relying information from Safer Essex Road Partnership, and C&WC information. Denise is a valued member of the team. In January 2024, CSW teams were given a CSW co-ordination pack

- In this, CSW volunteers told that we now have to have a minimum of 3 trained operators on each shift.
- Previously at the Water Tower, Station Road, The Chicane and Swan Street Chappel, we were able to cope adequately with 2 trained operators. This option is no longer available. This decision was questioned and advised by HQ for H&S and Insurance reasons.
- The A1124 at both the village hall end and Rose Green end. We always had 3 trained operators. In view of the amount of traffic/speeds being driven.

The foregoing means that the Water Tower, Station Road, The Chicane and Swan Street Chappel may no longer receive C&WC CSW coverage as it is very difficult to organise 3 trained volunteers together at any one time.

All CSW teams throughout Essex advised that far too many errors are annotated on log sheets

- In order to reduce avoidable errors, C&WC CSW have asked if Head Cam's could be used or Body Cam's
- Not allowed to use Head Cam's, can only use body cam's if supplied by local organisations, or privately.
- No CSW teams momentarily funded in anyway. The only equipment issued to us is – CDD (speed detection device – no longer calibrated on a regular basis) and road signage. The rest of what we use we provide ourselves

Our volunteers give freely of their time and efforts. C&WC CSW volunteers feel that our concerns are being not taken into account. "dedicated CSW police officers cover the whole of Essex.

C&WC CSW will continue on a very limited basis. We have advised CSW HQ of this.

Denise Stocker said that William has already said thank you for coming along this evening. I will add to that, by thanking you for supporting us too.

Most of you will know that Wakes Colne Parish Council have had rather a tough year.

In May 2023, I became the Chairperson and

it became apparent very quickly that the PC was being crippled with huge administration commitments.

As always, there necessary rules and practices that have to be followed, unfortunately some were far-less than unhelpful.

This eventually resulted in a somewhat difficult and ultimately, unsustainable situation.

Eventually, in November '23 something had to give.

However, during that rather challenging period, we continued to fulfil our statutory duties as a parish council, representing the Village on matters, such as planning, to Colchester City Council.

Within the community we continued to work on Village issues:

Keeping the parish notice boards and telephone exchanges in good repair by re-painting them, organising repairs of broken solar lights, servicing and maintaining the defibrillator and the insatiable verge cutting responsibilities etc.

The newly installed VAS on the A1124 wasn't playing ball

and eventually the manufacturers agreed that there was a fault and new software had to be installed so that

a) it worked properly and

b) information recording volume and speeds of vehicles and the time of day they were travelling could be downloaded.

We have our VAS 'expert' here tonight should you be interested in how the data is collected, configured and put to good use within the CSW team.

We are very pleased to say it seems to be having a positive effect.

We, along with CPC, are supporting the 175th Viaduct, Gainsborough Line celebrations by granting £350 towards the celebratory garden.

But we were very keen to find a way of releasing the grant money early in the Autumn of 2023 in order that planting could start in good time for the plants to be well established for the June celebrations – which we did.

We were very pleased to be able to support the Coronation picnic celebrations.

Granting £500 to CPC for sharing the maintenance costs of the Chappel play area is something which re-occurs annually and we are very pleased to have continued this.

We are supporting the Village Hall by committing to a grant of £1487 to pay for new blinds throughout.

Albeit those funds can only be handed over this month [May 2024], WCPC were still able to approve the application last November therefore giving the Village Hall committee peace of mind that they could move the project on.

So, despite 2023/24 being a rather a 'non-typical' parish council year for all those involved, we did manage to keep the show on the road.

Moving forward, it absolutely doesn't have to be that hard.

WCPC have now gone through some significant changes and the future looks bright and exciting.

We have ideas, the vision and financial resources that can only benefit our beautiful village and the community within it. We do have councillor vacancies, so please come and join us on that journey and help us to build a strong, positive parish council.

Parish Councillors are volunteers too, just like each and every one of you..... and we need to know you are out there, supporting usjust as we try to support your organisations, groups and the Community too.

Once again, thank you very much for coming and I hope you enjoy hearing from your fellow representatives this evening.

24/0003 Public Participation/Open Forum

Opportunity for members of the public to make reports, ask questions and make comments.

- VAS management – working for about a year after some teething troubles. Data can be downloaded, stores and recorded. Speed has been reduced by 2 -3 mph. The average speed recorded at approximately 37mph. 5am – 7am average speed exceeds 30mph.
- Millenium Green was discussed and enjoying the fruits of John's labour over the last 25 years.
- The 200 club (£24 per year) at 12 attempts to win throughout the year.
- Colne Valley Art Group – Cllr P. Chillingworth, informed the meeting that the membership is small (about 10 members). Open for new members not necessarily being artists.

- Patrick Dent is passionate about the Community Speedwatch. 6 regular volunteers. Minimum of 3 qualified operators at every shift they undertake. Head or body cams are necessary when they operate the Speedwatch session.
- Village Hall committee Francesca Mead updated the meeting with the progress of the village hall refurbishment. Many more grants will be needed for solar panels on the roof, the porch,
- RBL is still going in the village for about 90 years but the numbers are dwindling.

Kath Beck from Chappel and Wakes Colne Station Adopters Group said that in 2023 much of the year saw disruption at the station as lights were replaced, the platform was repaired and the car park reconstructed! The adopters maintained their tenacity, keeping the planters looking attractive whatever the challenges. The contractors provided the adopters with a hose which has made watering the planters much easier. Our thanks go to the East Anglian Railway Museum for allowing us to use water from their premises, and their help with putting up posters and assisting with the anniversary garden.

In spring, the adopters along with young children sowed wild flower seeds on the approach to the station. This is in keeping with Greater Anglia and Government wishes to promote diverse natural habitats and flowers for bees on railway premises.

On 6 October adopters, villagers, representatives of the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership planted 350 daffodils on the approach to the station. The ground was very hard after so little rain, but everyone persevered and celebrated with tea, coffee and cake. In spring 2024 the station looked very attractive when all the daffodils flowered.

Throughout 2023 Great Anglia celebrated 20 years of station adoption. A video was filmed at many of the stations showing the amazing work station adopters do across East Anglia. You can see it on YouTube <https://youtu.be/S-Y-we4wrPo?si=cX32WGPqZPZGvCuS>. The adopters were awarded Best Station Adopters jointly with Hockley at the annual awards ceremony.

2024 so far!

The Chappel and Wakes Colne adopters have been working with Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP), representatives of Bures Station adopters, Chappel and Wakes Colne Parish Councils, Gainsborough House, the East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel Primary School, Platform2 Café, Marks Tey Parish Council and Sudbury in Bloom to plan a range of exciting events to celebrate 175 years of the viaduct and railway line. A child at the school won a prize for designing the logo. The programme is attached.

The steam train planter, installed on the platform on March 25th, was commissioned by the ESSCRP to mark the 175th anniversary. It was constructed by Southminster Men's Shed. This is a charity that supports men's mental health. The engine is called 'Southminster' in honour of the 14 men who made it.

Chappel and Wakes Colne Parish Councils awarded the adopters a combined sum of £700 to create an anniversary garden at the front of the station. We are very grateful to the councils for this award. The garden is already looking established. There is more work to do when the weather is warm enough. In the autumn we plan to plant spring bulbs with the help of some of the children from the school.

You may have noticed the picture of Darcey the Dalmatian on the fence on the platform. He is Greater Anglia's mascot for the line. Dodie Smith mentioned the church in Sudbury in her book 'One Hundred and One Dalmatians.' Children are encouraged to find Darcy at each station. There is an accompanying booklet of activities that links all the stations on the Gainsborough Line.

175th Anniversary of the Gainsborough Line

And Chappel Viaduct

Programme of Events 29th and 30th June 2024

Saturday 29th June 2024

Chappel and Wakes Colne:

10.15 am: An ideal opportunity to leave the car at home and travel by train to walk in the footsteps of the original celebrations of the opening of this beautiful railway line. The walk is starting at Marks Tey Station and ends at Chappel and Wakes Colne station. It will be led by Hugh Turner a relative of the viaduct designer Peter Bruff. Meet in the car park behind the station alongside platform 3. Participation in the walk is free. Refreshments will be available for purchase at Platform2 café at Chappel and Wakes Colne station after the walk. You can stay for the day or return by train from Chappel and Wakes Colne.

2.30pm: Imagine 'Steaming through 175 years of the Stour Valley Railway' a talk given by Nathaniel Dodd at Chappel and Wakes Colne Village Hall. Entry is free.

7.00pm: Go back in time! Travel on the Music Hall train arranged by Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP). The entertainment will be led by a music hall chairman and accompanist. Train leaves Marks Tey at 7.01pm and you enjoy two return trips Sudbury to Marks Tey. Dress up in Victorian costume if you wish and join in the old songs. Words provided. Tickets £5 for adults £3 for children available from the ESSCRP website (<https://esscrp.org.uk/events/old-time-music-hall-train/>)

East Anglian Railway Museum:

Revel in memories of steam and diesel travel. The museum will be open as usual running a diesel and steam train. Visit the exhibition of local artist Waj Mirecki's amazing pictures of the arches of the viaduct, and a collage made by the school children. Entry to the museum costs £11.50 for adults. £8.50 for children. Book online in advance for 5% discount. For more Museum event details see <https://earm.co.uk/events/chappel-175>

Bures:

Mid-morning onwards:

Bures Station Adopters warmly invite you to view a display of art work from Ferriers Barn, the school and different groups in the village. The exhibition is in the barn on the common. At the station admire the garden constructed with the help of Bures Scouts.

During the weekend take a ride on a train along the line and see the great work of the station adopters and the ways in which they, together with members of their communities are celebrating this significant milestone in their station gardens and platforms.

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175th Anniversary of the Gainsborough Line And Chappel Viaduct

Sunday 30th June 2024

Chappel and Wakes Colne:

1.30pm: The opening ceremony will take place under the canopy of the goods shed on the East Anglian Railway Museum site. Our guests include the Mayoress of Colchester, Sir Bob Russell (High Steward of Colchester), Alan Neville (Greater Anglia) and older residents in the community. The children from the school will celebrate by singing, playing instruments and reading some of their work.

2.00pm: Come with the family and picnic in the grounds of the East Anglian Railway Museum. Our fantastic picnic organisers have arranged an exciting programme of games and activities for you to enjoy.

East Anglian Railway Museum:

Delight in viewing artefacts and carriages from the past. The museum will be open running a diesel and steam train. There will be many additional attractions, including model railways, shire horses and a steam fairground organ. Vintage carriages will be on show, and members of the EARM team will be able to share their knowledge of the history of the displays. Don't forget to drop into Waj Mirecki's and children's exhibition too. Entry to the museum will be free to local people bringing clear proof of residence with a post code, otherwise £13.80 for adults £9.50 for children. Book online in advance for 5% discount. For more Museum event details see

<https://earm.co.uk/events/chappel-175>

Sudbury: Gainsborough House

To help celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Gainsborough Line, Dr Steven Parissien presents two lectures: the first exploring how the coming of the railway completely changed the lives of every Briton, the second analysing the changes in taste, style and ambition of English railway stations.

11am: Coming of the Railway, lecture 1: 11am-12noon

2pm: Exploring British Railway Stations, lecture 2: 2pm-3pm

Lectures are £18 each or £30 for both. When booking both lectures, your payment includes standard admission to Gainsborough's House for you to explore between each lecture. For more information:

<https://gainsborough.org/event/175th-anniversary-celebrations-of-the-opening-of-the-chappel-viaduct-and-marks-tey-to-sudbury-line>

Leave the car at home and travel there by train!

- Cllr Barry Walsh spoke about Wakes Hall Park.
- Local Churches have had restoration of windows. Services were moved to another local Church. Ceilings have also been repaired.
- Darius Laws spoke about Heritage issues and what CCC statutory duties. Grants are available for Heritage and Church projects.
- A local resident spoke about street lighting and verges in the village. The main road is a rat run for commuters, children attending schools etc. Some hedges are overgrown and require landowners to cut their hedges back so that it does not impede on the walkway. The village, over the last 30 years, is a problem.
- A discussion took place about whether street lighting and white line are needed in the village.
- A resident spoke about Climate Community Action. Colne Valley community Action website is now live. Solar panels for residents homes need to contact the organisation for further details.
- The village reporter goes to every household in the village

The Chairman of WCPC, Cllr W. Sunnucks, informed the meeting that:-

Volunteering: This should be at the heart of our Parish Council's activities. We rely on volunteers to act as Parish Councillors and to care for village assets whether they be speed cameras, the village hall, planters or the village notice board. The formal governance arrangements have to be respected but they should never dominate.

Governance: The last year has been a difficult one for the Council. When I took over the chair in December 2023 all the Parish Councillors had resigned, the budget was heavily in deficit and too much time was spent on formal processes. So, we have first had to concentrate on governance rather than volunteering – normally the wrong way round but in this case essential.

May meeting: I hope that our May annual meeting will be a watershed moment where we can switch our focus back to the volunteering work. Over the last three months we have streamlined the organisation and found a way to balance the budget. We now have a sound base from which to concentrate on the practical side of running the village.

Some of the volunteering has continued in the background and big thanks to those who have kept things going. But spring is coming and the grass will be growing so we need to get things onto a more regular footing.

Parish Councillors: in December three Colchester Councillors were appointed to run Wakes Colne PC on an interim basis – Darius Laws, Tom Rowe and myself. We quickly persuaded Peter Chillingworth to join as a fourth. He is well known in the village and my predecessor as a Colchester Councillor. In April Barry Walsh from Wakes Hall Park joined.

Peter has kindly undertaken to co-ordinate the volunteer work leaving the formal governance to our new clerk Kevin Money and myself. He is currently reaching out for volunteers to help with the defibrillator which needs quarterly inspections: and the four planters near the bus stop which need attention at this time of year particularly. As confidence is rebuilt, I hope we will reach a full complement of Councillors, and at that point the three Colchester Councillors will resign and we will be back to normality.

24/0004 Close of Meeting

24/0005 Date of next meeting

(To take place from 1st March - 1st June 2025 – this to be confirmed and arranged by Wakes Colne Parish Council).

The Chair then closed the meeting at 8.30pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

WSunnucks
Willam Sunnucks
Chair

1st. May 2024