

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN BEETLEY VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 5 APRIL 2012

Present:

Councillor A Leigh (Chair)

Councillor A Luck
Councillor R Richmond
Councillor J Baldwin
Councillor M Rose
Councillor A Fox
Councillor J O'Donovan

County Councillor M Kiddle Morris

Mr. G Hayes

Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Jake Luck.

Minutes of the last Meeting

Councillor Richmond proposed and Councillor Rose seconded the resolution that these be adopted.

All were in favour.

Chairman's introduction and report.

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting and I thank you all for attending.

Again it has been a proactive year for the Parish Council. Planning is always an agenda item 17 planning applications received. This is slightly lower than the previous year. One of these has gone to appeal and a decision is still awaited. I am pleased to report that there have only been two which we objected to and Breckland Council granted permission. There was an additional application that the Parish Council objected to and following these objections, and those from neighbours, the design was amended and granted permission. The new national planning policy framework is in place which has reduced the number of planning policy statements from 1000 pages to 54. Councillor Maxine Rose has done an excellent job on assessing the applications prior to the Parish Council meetings and I would like to thank her for her time and the articulate reports she has produced.

Beetley River Meadows has had new gates fitted to the play area which was always an item for attention in the ROSPA report, unfortunately within a month three out of the four have been maliciously vandalised and are at present waiting for replacement parts to be obtained and fitted. It is very disheartening to see such vandalism when time and money is spent to maintain this lovely area. Grateful thanks are given to Councillor Alan Fox who has taken on the role of Risk Assessor for Beetley River Meadows together with carrying out minor repairs when required. Match funding for a picnic area at Beetley River Meadows has been progressed this year and an application was sent to Norfolk Community Foundation which unfortunately was not successful. As the saying goes 'if not successful try again' which the Parish Council did, this time to Breckland Council and I am really pleased to report that I had notification 2 days ago that the application was successful and during the next weeks the picnic area project will be progressed with it hopefully being completed by the Autumn.

The contracts for the grass cutting and tree maintenance will remain the same this year as the previous 2 years the contractors have provided a high standard of workmanship at a competitive price.

Thanks are given to the Beetley Common Advisory Committee who liaise closely with the Parish Council to maintain Beetley Common. Horace Bloy in particular works hard, and both he and the other members are a dedicated and compassionate team.

The Minerals and Waste Framework is ongoing with slow progress this year the next consultation will be at the end of this month.

Three Parish Councillors were appointed to the Village Hall Committee to represent the Council and continue to assist where possible.

Beetley Parish website is now up and running. My thanks to the Clerk for his time and input spent in liaising with John Relph to get it live and thanks also to John who updates it and is responsible for the technical aspect.

The Beetley Buzz is now up to edition 63. My thanks to Julia the editor who does a grand job in collating the information and also thanks must go to all of the distributors who are often walking from house to house in inclement weather, without this assistance the Parish would not have a newsletter.

The biggest achievement this year is that the Affordable Housing scheme has finally come to fruition which has been ongoing for eleven and a half years. All 8 properties are now occupied and all of the residents have either lived in the Parish or have close connections to the Parish. Unfortunately the Parish Council requested at the outset that 2 of the dwellings be shared ownership to enable a footing onto the housing ownership ladder. Due to the current economic climate where mortgages are difficult to obtain Flagships policy at present is rent only. It has been confirmed that in the future shared ownership will be considered if required. Councillor Robert Richmond and myself have always wanted this and we did have a battle to convince the other councillors when it first came to the table, thanks to Robert for his determination and thanks to the clerk for keeping the 'ball rolling' when the communication on this project started to lapse. Flagship are organising an opening event to take place on April 11th which Alan Abram is the guest of honour. Thanks must go to Alan for agreeing to sell the parcel of land to Flagship Housing for this development. Flagship are providing refreshments in the village hall afterwards.

Councillor Adam Luck is resigning from the Parish Council after tonight's meeting. Myself, the other Councillors and the Clerk are sorry to see him step down but we wish him well with his 'new hat' as Chairman to the Village Hall Committee. His knowledge and commitment both as a Councillor and Vice Chairman will be missed and I am sure we will keep in touch and pick his brains from time to time. He will always be welcome when we carry out our Annual Parish Walks and hopefully he will be able to fit it in even though there will be a bit of bribery with the offer of a free pint at the New Inn afterwards.

Finally, sorry I have had a long report but that proves the Parish Council is a pro-active Council, I would like to thank all Councillors for their assistance and time they have given to me and the Parish over the past year and thanks also to the clerk who is dedicated and conscientious in his work. We are a good team and I am sure that in the forthcoming year we will continue to improve and maintain Beetley Parish.

Community Car Scheme.

Due to Breckland Council's additional checks required as from April 1st 2012 the Parish Council had to make some hard decisions last year. The Councillors had several meetings with the Community Car Scheme Co-ordinator and drivers to ensure that this valuable service continued.

The two main changes were that health checks and a CRB check was to be obtained by all drivers if the Parish was to continue to receive the funding from Breckland Council. There were 3 options which came out from these meetings, number 1 status quo, number 2

Beetley Parish Council to run the scheme without the funding from Breckland ,number 3 the Co-ordinator and drivers ran it alone without funding from the Parish Council or Breckland Council. The Co-coordinator and a member of the Parish Council went to a meeting where another Parish had a community car scheme run with no direct involvement of the Parish or District Council.

After lengthy discussions the decision of the Parish Council was that it would continue with the funding from Breckland Council. If the Parish Council decided to take it on without Breckland's involvement it would still want the drivers to have health and CRB checks as a health and safety matter, and as Breckland Council would pay the costs for these checks it was not considered financially viable for the costs to come out of the precept. Sadly the Co-ordinator gave her resignation and 3 out of the 6 drivers also decided to leave the scheme. However the Parish Council was determined that the Community Car Scheme would continue as it would be a big loss to the Parish if it were to fold. I took on the role of co-ordinator and ran with the 3 remaining drivers for a few weeks. An advertisement for another co-ordinator and drivers was successful and currently myself and another parishioner share the role of Co-ordinator and there is an additional 5 new drivers which gives 8 drivers in total. The Parish Council agreed to fund the use of a mobile phone for the co-ordinators which enables Parishioners to only have one number to call regardless of who the co-ordinator is. There was a seamless change over and as far as the Parish was concerned the Community Car Scheme did not change other than the new contact number for booking journeys. The mileage for April 2011-March 2012 was 6554.5 and the number of passengers carried was 271 which are similar to last year. I feel the Parish Council made the right decision to continue with the Breckland funding even though I understand at present Breckland are looking at ceasing their funding for Car schemes which is one of many options they are looking at to reduce their costs in the present economical climate. I am positive that whatever the outcome Beetley Parish Council will want to continue the Community Car Scheme for the benefit of Beetley Parish.

Village Hall Report.

BEETLEY & EAST BILNEY VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ACTING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2012

We were all very sorry to learn that, due to family commitments, Steve and Ann would no longer be able to serve on the Management Committee. They are sorely missed. As a result the Vice Chairman has taken over as Acting Chairman and more trustee members will be sought from the club users and the local community at our forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Over the years it has become obvious that the play equipment would need to be replaced, especially in order to comply with health & safety legislation. In line with this, the decision was taken to remove the see-saw and roundabout.

Our oil was stolen last year, just after a delivery had been received, and further efforts have been made to improve the security of the tank.

We are hoping to install litter bins for users of the playing field. When these are in place we will be posting Playing Field Rules. We then plan to contact Breckland's dog warden for help in enforcing the 'dogs on leads' and anti dog litter rules.

We are striving to get professional help with regard to the refurbishment, especially advice on the most suitable heating system.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for their contribution of a new fridge and the insurance premium.

We were particularly grateful to Councillor Richmond for drawing our attention to the 'Fields in Trust' charity, which will ensure protection of the playing field in perpetuity.

Our fund-raising events this year have been dogged by unfortunate circumstances, namely sickness and very short notice to find an entertainer for the Christmas event. We are hoping things will go smoother this year!

We are particularly thankful for the support of our electrician, boiler man, hedge trimmer and gravel spreader who always act as quickly as possible to help us. We have recently placed an order for plumbing work to be carried out.

We look forward to receiving any suggestions local residents may have to further encourage the use of the village hall and playing field by the local community.

A D Luck
29 March 2012

Club Reports

Football

Beetley United made a bright start to the season and recorded some decent results against the early leaders in the division. However a poor run of form and the exodus of several key players saw them slide down the table during the middle of the season. The team carried on with some fresh players coming in and once the team had settled they began producing some better football. With a handful of games left in the season the team has climbed away from the foot of the table and is looking to finish just below midway.

Cricket

The 2011 Season proved to be one of the most successful in the clubs history winning Division 4 of the west Norfolk league losing only one game. In addition 2 of the clubs players won the individual awards for the league-Keith Daykin for batting and Gary Hinchliffe for bowling.

The season saw the club attracting a few new players and it also saw a number of young players playing a pivotal role in the success. At the start of the season an alliance was made with Dereham CC with their third team playing at our ground and thus helping us by sharing resources. The club was successful in raising funds through Sport England for the purchase of a new pitch mower.

County Councillor Report.

Norfolk County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division **Annual Report – 2012**

The past year has seen work continuing on making the Council as efficient as possible to make inroads into the £155m shortfall in government funding reported last year. We have managed to make £60m worth of saving thus far this financial year, largely through transformation of services, there are some 111 change programmes either completed or underway, where possible staff have been redeployed to save on redundancy costs.

This has allowed the Council to set next years (12/13) Council Tax at the same level as last year. We are aiming to have no tax increase the following year (13/14). Additionally we have been able to keep those services that the public identified during last years Big Conversation as being most valued; we have not closed any Fire Stations and have invested £10m in new fire appliances. Unlike other Councils our public libraries remain open, some with revised opening hours (saving 10% of operating costs) as suggested by the public. Next financial year we have committed an extra £3.5m to maintain and improve roads throughout the County. We were successful in our Broadband Bid with a County Council investment of £15m being match funded by Government. This should lead to 99% broadband coverage of at least 2Mbs in due course (2015 target). We have retained post 16 travel for students receiving further education and restored the budget to maintain Public Rights of Way.

Thankfully, although it is not yet over, this winter has not been as severe as the previous 2. The one bad spell of recent snow was dealt with efficiently with all priority one routes kept clear and priority 3 routes gritted within 48 hours of the first snowfall. There are still concerns in some communities that their preferred travel routes are not on the priority gritting routes. I continue to try to address these concerns and have had some small successes over the last

2 years; however each community does have at least one route to the main highway network which is gritted.

The Council signed an agreement with Cory Wheelabator to build a energy from waste plant at Saddlebow near Kings Lynn which will save £200m in landfill tax over the life of the contract. This has understandably been the subject of vociferous protest from those near to the proposed site. I am not an expert on the technology involved and cannot argue for or against any claims on health grounds; I will leave the final word to the Environment Agency who are the experts as to whether the plant is safe or not and will issue the permit to operate if appropriate. I have had one letter on the subject from my area which supported the proposal.

Norfolk is bucking the national trend as far as unemployment is concerned, while our unemployment figures are concerning especially in the 16 -24 age range they are better than the national figures. The dualling of the last bit of the A11 through Elveden, projected improved rail links to London and Cambridge and the development of the outer harbour at Great Yarmouth is the infrastructure that will put Norfolk at the forefront of economic recovery. The Council have in the past year invested £58m in Norfolk's economy and earmarked £3m next year to fund 200 apprenticeships for 2 years.

The schools in this local area continue to provide excellent education for our children. The County's Children's Service support children and young people with a revenue budget of £154m (this excludes the cost of running schools which are funded direct from Government through the Dedicated Schools Grant) and a capital budget of £70m (for new infrastructure).

In all it has been a challenging year for Norfolk County Council and with careful financial management now and over the next year I am positive that we can maintain the services we provide to the people of Norfolk and provide the stimulus to the local economy that will provide meaningful jobs in a growing economy.

Open Forum

George Hayes was questioned about Speedwatch and he said that it had been active that day, and today the SAM vehicle had also been in the parish for 50 minutes. During this time 115 vehicles had passed the car 15 were between 37 and 50 and 40% of the rest were over 30 m.p.h but under 37 m.p.h. The fastest vehicle caught today by the Speedwatch team was 56 m.p.h.

The meeting closed at 1939