

Minutes of The Freckenham Annual Parish Meeting

held on Wednesday 15th May 2019

At 7.00pm at Freckenham Village Hall, Fordham Road, Freckenham

Present: Cllr Wheeler, Cllr Barton, Cllr Pearson, Cllr Cornell, Nicky Russel from Community Action Suffolk, Glen Smithson (Lark Preservation Society), Parish Council clerk, Jadi Coe and 20 members of the public

The Chairman, Cllr. David Wheeler welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked the guest speakers for their time.

1. Apologies for absence

Six parishioners had sent apologies for their absence.

2. Presentation from Nicky Russel, Project Officer of 'This Community Can' at Community Action Suffolk.

Nicky reported that she was the Project Officer of This Community Can at Community Action Suffolk which is sponsored by Sporting England, and that the main goals of the project was to tackle rural isolation through activity and teamwork.

Nicky reported that loneliness is a big problem in rural areas which is not helped by the closure of shops and services and the reduction in bus services. Community Action Suffolk have helped reduce loneliness by initiating many projects in Suffolk from gardening to bowling.

Nicky gave the clerk questionnaires to hand out to the public, this would provide her with an understanding of activities the public attended and what they would like to see in the area. Once the questionnaires were reviewed and if Nicky felt there was the scope for a project in the village then a Key Volunteer would be appointed who she would communicate with, and the Key Volunteer would seek other volunteers to help with any projects undertaken.

Cllr Wheeler thanked Nicky for her presentation and asked that once questionnaires were completed if they could be returned to a member of the Parish Council

3. Presentation from Glenn Smithson on 'The River Lark Catchment Partnership' and 'Lark Angling Preservation Society'.

Glenn began his presentation by providing details of his background and how he came about being the lead volunteer in helping restore Lee Brook. He continued to report of the damage that had been identified in Lee Brook back in 2017. Lee Brook was overgrown, had very little flow, low water levels and had classic crayfish damage, resulting in vertical banks.

He continued to report that after 18 months of planning, materials were delivered in March 2019 and along with the help from a group of volunteers the work begun. The banks were lined with brush bundles put between wooden posts to help prevent further damage to the banks from the Crayfish. Gravel was used to help shape the river and increase aquatic wildlife. Glenn praised his group of volunteers who helped make this his favourite project to date.

Finally, Glenn reported on the current condition of Lee Brook, being that the flow was still poor but the water quality was very good providing a habitat for rare aquatic wildlife, and of his intentions to return to Lee Brook for further improvements in the near future.

A member of the public asked if the concrete lintels placed in Lee Brook many years prior had helped the flow of the water. Glenn responded stating that flow deflectors only really worked if the initial flow was good and that natural deflectors are now used which would be a tree or a log.

Cllr. Wheeler thanked Glenn for his presentation and his hard work and extended this to all the other volunteers including those that provided refreshments for the volunteers.

4. Report from County Councillor Louis Busuttil

Did not attend and no report provided.

Report from District Councillor Brian Harvey

Cllr Harvey gave the following report:

Good evening and thank you for giving me an opportunity to reflect on our last year's work.

Firstly, I would like to say how much I have appreciated the past four years as your DC and the support that both the Parish Council and Residents have given me during this period is very much appreciated.

The recent Elections proved to be a non-event for Manor Ward and I do apologise for any confusion which the un-contested seat caused to yourselves. The team was ready to go with leaflets, postal vote letters and calling cards.

Anyway moving on as you are no doubt aware our Ward has revised and extended by the boundary commission and now

covers Barton Mills, Cavenham, Freckenham , Tuddenham and Worlington. I'm going to be very busy attending as many of the Parish meeting as I'm able throughout the year.

Planning Issues

On a local level we have been able to advise and support various Residents queries and concerns raised during the planning and development process supporting and presenting concerns which the Parish Council and Residents might have over various proposed development within the Freckenham area.

Locally your chair David Wheeler and I have been successful in tracking down with the support of our Locality Officer Mrs Lesley-Anne Keogh those responsible for the front wall repairs in Shores Close and Chippenham Rd. No update as yet when the actual work is to be carried out.

Locality Budget

During the last financial year each DC has an allocation of £2500 to be used in support of Community type projects. My carry over for the 2017/2019

- WW1 Memorial Bench - £500.00*
- Freckenham Parish Council - Community Notice Boards - £500.00*

Just to remind you all that If any group has a proposed community schemes which might be in need of support, please let me know soonest.

West Suffolk District Council

Well the process has been an uphill struggle but we are nearly there now. With the elections now out of the way the Conservative group still maintains an overall majority on the council with 36 members and the joint independent and green parties having 28 members

We have our first full council meeting on the 22nd May when full details of Cabinet posts and chairs of council will be announced which the press for full details.

Revised Planning & Development Control – Local Plan and Long Term strategies.

Licensing & Regulation – The changes being introduced effective from the 1st April 2019 bringing the joint Regulation into one document effecting Hackney & Private Hire Taxis, Clubs & Bars, Street traders etc.

Leadership – To select a new Joint Leader for the new council post May 2019.

Borough vis District status – Effective from the 2nd May the new West Suffolk Council has now been formed – matters to be resolved still concerning civic duties etc.

Financial Regulations – Council Tax, Budget setting and Long term financial strategy.

Only too pleased to take any questions that you might have this evening.

Thank you.

Cllr Brian Harvey (Manor Ward)

Tel: 07801-472461,

Twitter: @Brian4manorward, West Suffolk Email address: brian.harvey@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Harvey was asked by a member of the public whether a planning permission could be re-appealed. Cllr Harvey answered stating that yes you are entitled to go back to appeal, however WSC can now charge fees.

5. Parish Council Updates:

• Neighbourhood Plan progress

Cllr Pearson reported that to date nine meetings had been held and experienced consultant Ian Poole has been appointed. The intention is complete the Plan before 31st March 2020 and are looking to secure a further £9,000 grant in order to fund the plan including Ian Poole's fees. The recent drop in session went well and at the current point the committee are waiting for the questionnaires which were delivered recently to be returned. The next stage in the process would be to review the surveys and have a second drop in session.

Member of the public voiced concerns of the survey, in that the map attached was very unclear.

It was agreed that new maps would be printed and that this would be addressed in the near future.

• Community Speed Watch

Cllr Cornell reported the following:

- very few checks had taken place recently due to loss of the gun when it was recalibrated and time issues
- in February checks took place outside the Village Hall, and no vehicles were found to be speeding above the allowable limit
- the AGM for the Speed Watch Group is coming up in which she will attend

Cllr Cornell also asked for further volunteers to help with the checks, so if anyone can spare any time please contact her, and also if anyone has concerns over a particular time or place within the village where checks could take place, again please let her know.

• Recreation Field

Cllr. Cornell thanked the volunteers who help keep the field tidy and well maintained.

Cllr Cornell reported that monthly play equipment inspections were carried out by WSC free of charge.

Finally, Cllr Cornell reported that although dog mess on the field and paths has reduced, it has not stopped completely and would like to ask that dog owners are responsible and clean up after their dogs.

- **Sunnica Energy Farm Project**

Cllr Barton reported that most households in the village (dependant on where you live) should have received a leaflet in regards to this project. The Parish Council were informed of this project and had requested a meeting with Sunnica and this took place in April.

Following the meeting Cllr Barton was able to report the following:

- Two new solar farms connecting to the National Grid at Burwell
- This area is ideal as the land is dry and is low quality for farming
- Area is low lying so along as the areas are landscaped correctly the farm should not be seen from the roads
- The intention would be to have the land on a 35year lease
- Sunnica intend to hold an exhibition to provide more information in the Village Hall in June

There were several concerns from the members of the public in regards to the intended site, noise levels and the impact on local habitats. The public were reassured the project was still in the very early stages and nothing had been formally agreed in regards to the actual site.

A member of the public asked how the Parish could benefit from such a project. The question was answered by stating that the Parish Council would request a private wire agreement which could decrease charges to householders' bills.

6 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd May 2018

Cllr Wheeler read the minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd May 2018. It was agreed these were a true record of the meeting held and the minutes were then signed by Cllr Wheeler.

7 Matters arising from the last meeting

Cllr Wheeler reported any matters which were relevant have been dealt with accordingly.

8 Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Chairman Cllr Wheeler gave the following report:

Thank you all for attending this evening and I would also thank for their support my fellow Councillors and our Clerk Mrs Jodi Coe who took over the position in January from Mrs Hilary Gurner.

The four of us were returned unopposed and we look forward to co-opting a fifth member on Monday.

Following on, I would extend our thanks to Cllr Louis Busuttil of Suffolk County Council and District Councillor, Brian Harvey for contributing from their locality budgets towards the costs of items required for the benefit of the village, of note recently a World War one commemorative bench which was installed by Mr Mick King and is located at the flower bed next to the bridge in The Street.

Following a meeting with a representative of the County Council Highways department and Councillors Busuttil and Harvey, in respect of driving many of our roads it has now been confirmed that re-surfacing will take place during this financial year of Elms, Mildenhall/ Freckenham, Beck and Isleham Roads. Some limited work has been done over this past year to refill the pot holes on our village roads.

We still have a bus service to Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds which thankfully will continue, although it is a limited service.

The Coffee Caravan has commenced its annual visits to Freckenham and will continue every first Tuesday of the month until the last one on the first of October.

As I have mentioned before the staff members provide information and help, on most matters to do with the public's welfare.

The Parish Pump was again produced three times this last year and delivered to every household.

Any news items that villagers feel should be included in forthcoming issues then do pass to Mrs Marilyn Badger, myself or our Clerk. I will then subsequently pass relevant news items to our editor Peter Taylor- Whiffen. Next deadline for copy covering the summer edition is Monday 10th June.

The circular paths at Elms Road, as well as in the recreation field, are well used but as you have heard from Sue Cornell's report, there are still issues of dog matters that do not go away, despite this problem being stated many times.

Our telephone box is well stocked with books, cd and DVD's. Thank you to those that have placed items in the box but please anyone when placing do not put them on the floor.

If there is no space then most charity shops will take them.

Neighbourhood Plan

As you have heard this evening from Campbell and Lawrence this is well under way and we look forward to receiving the surveys shortly after the 17th of this month.

Oil Purchasing Scheme

How many of you here this evening are on the scheme???

I have mentioned in previous years about the scheme, which county wide has proved successful. As explained at previous meetings a minimum order of 500 litres is required and you will find the discount pricing very beneficial. An annual membership fee of £20.00 is required. If you are not yet on the scheme, do consider. The direct contact is Community Action Suffolk based in Ipswich. Tel: 01473 345300. There are twice a month deliveries.

Police

Crime does occur at times in our village unfortunately, so keep vigilant and report no matter how small direct to the police. Speeding through the village is still a concern, but our speed awareness team do a sterling job on a frequent basis. The police attend periodically.

However due to the closure of our roads at times due to UK Networks high voltage cable installations it has been relatively quiet certainly a benefit even though closure has created a problem at times. The Kier workers have been very polite and have done their best to keep local residents on the move.

Volunteers

I would further thank all those volunteers who assist the parish council, keeping the village nice and attractive. A litter pick in the village was completed this last month which was organised by Mr and Mrs Green. 24 bags this time of rubbish as against 42 last year were collected.

Rodney Gillington and Judi Coe continue to keep our village web site updated.

St. Andrews Church

The Church held events during the year including the flower festival and the shoebox appeal. This year the Remembrance Day service covered 100 years since the end of World War One. There were special displays of which Mick King showed on the day his wonderful collection. Other events are also put on from time to time during the year. Our Reverend Canon Sandie Barton was asked to speak and update on matters to do with our Church.

Village Hall

The Village Hall will hold their Annual General Meeting on Friday 31st May at 7.00pm. 21st year since it's opening with a complimentary drink on arrival.

Their committee works hard arranging weekly hire and events covering dancing lessons, yoga classes, to theatrical events for the benefit of adults and children from Freckenham. Two in particular, the Farmers market and film nights.

Mrs Jane Leitch was also asked to update on events and mentioned also they were looking for additional Committee members and volunteers as the existing had quite a workload at times.

Again, if you the villagers have any thoughts that concern the village, then let the Clerk or one of your Councillors know and it will be considered.

And finally, it is pleasing to know our village pub has now re-opened and we wish them every success.

D E Wheeler

15th May 2019

9 Parish Council Accounts

The clerk presented the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 and informed all that that these were subject to approval of the council at the Parish Council meeting on the 20th May 2019 but that they had been audited by local accountant Anthony Preece.

10 Any Other Business

None

The meeting closed at: 9:15