

BRETtenham PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON
THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2015 COMMENCED 7.30 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

MINUTES

1. The Acting Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence accepted and approved: Emily Woods, June Hatherall, Kate Treacher, Annie Taverner, Stuart and Claire Earle.
3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2014 previously circulated to the Parish Council were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Acting Chairman.

4. OPEN DISCUSSION:

Report from Jenny Antill Suffolk C.C.

The Budget

The financial position of the county council remains very difficult. Managed to set a budget for the current financial year that reduces expenditure by almost £40m from that spent in 2014/15.

The main source of savings is a series of transformation programmes through which SCC hope to be able to deliver services more efficiently and reduce demand for services in a number of different areas.

SCC are now starting to try to work out how further savings can be made to bridge a budget gap that approaches £80m over the following two years, around 18% of next year's total budget. This will prove very challenging and it is probable that by 2017/18 if expectations of reduced funding remain the same, there will be no option but to cut some services which are discretionary and which SCC are not obliged by law to deliver, and to reduce the quality of services elsewhere.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the current way in which Local Government is financed is unsustainable. This was recognised recently in an independent report commissioned by the Local Government Association and CIPFA (the body for public sector accountants). They stated that many councils are facing a 'cliff edge', and that unless a future government takes the matter of reform seriously and simply continues to reduce funding many services that are taken for granted will come under threat.

Education

The small improvements in educational standards that were discernible last year have continued to be seen in 2014/15. Progress is slow, but the appointment of a senior OFSTED inspector as an Assistant Director has seen a step change in our approach to addressing school standards. This has not been universally welcomed and indeed has caused some controversy. Jenny Antill believes however that it is essential that the needs of Suffolk children should come first and that all should have as good an education as possible, together with prospects of a good future career.

Adult Care.

The provision of adult care is the area in which SCC are seeing the most pronounced financial pressures. It is likely that last year the Directorate overspent by around £1.5m, a sign that increased demand for services and reduced budgets is taking a toll. Over the past year SCC have been trying to extract a share of the government's Better Care Fund from the National Health Service, to support the provision of care in the community to relieve hospitals. This is proving very difficult since the Fund does not represent new money and the NHS is running at a deficit.

Highways

The pothole experience has, Jenny Antill understands, been better this winter than last, and winter gritting has been carried out on priority routes as and when necessary. This has been achieved with the help of a state of the art pothole mending machine a fleet of new and refurbished gritting machines. There is however an issue with a long list of minor works that are outstanding in a number of areas. The backlog, which was very long a few months ago, is being steadily worked through, although it is fair to say that some parishes in Cosford have been waiting an excessively long time for work to be done. Jenny Antill has done her best to continue to chase up these, sometimes with success, sometimes not.

Suffolk County Council has recently launched a new online reporting tool. The new system is map based, which means that provided you know where you are, you can plot exactly where the fault can be found. This is a key issue for our engineers, who previously, it seems, sometimes could not work out where the problem was situated. A link to the online tool can be found on the front page of the SCC website.

Despite budgetary problems there have been a number of good news stories from the County Council over the last year.

One of these was the opening of the MyGo youth employment centre in Ipswich which is the first employment centre in the UK specifically for 18 to 24 year olds.

Finally the Better Broadband project is reported to be slightly ahead of schedule, and additional funding has been found to extend high speed broadband from 85% to 95% of the county from 2016.

Brettenham

During the year Jenny Antill has dealt with one highway issue concerning drainage at the top end of The Street close to the church, which has been resolved.

Dealt with a number of queries about Broadband and mobile coverage. Jenny Antill has been told that the village should be within the 85% to 95%, and should therefore be enabled between early 2016 and late 2017. The date is likely to be confirmed in the autumn. If anyone receives less than 2 mps they will at the end of 2015 be able to apply for a voucher to enable them to install a satellite solution. A satellite contract is more expensive than that for high speed broadband via fibre and the service is slower, so people may prefer to wait to be linked by fibre.

With regard to mobile a new mast has been planned for Hitcham, as well as Rattlesden. These are likely to be built in the next year or so and should fix mobile problems for the village. This is part of the Government's Mobile Infrastructure Project. One note of caution however: there is currently an ongoing judicial review on the site proposed for Hitcham, which may hold up progress.

Jenny Antill was very pleased to be able to make a contribution towards the wonderful apple day last summer, and is happy to make a contribution towards the neighbourhood consultation if Brettenham Parish Council decide to proceed with this.

Jenny Antill has very much enjoyed representing Brettenham over the past two years and looks forward to doing so in the months to come. Jenny Antill thanked the Parish Council for their warm welcome and support.

Michael Creffield Babergh District Councillor

Michael Creffield the newly elected councillor for Brett Vale attended the meeting and introduced himself. However, having only been elected a week ago had nothing to report. Once available he will provide the Clerk/RFO with his new email address.

Chris Clarke Acting Chairman Brettenham Parish Council Report

Chris Clarke reflected on the year's business:

Following some criticism regarding the notification of planning applications to residents, the Planning Committee Terms of Reference have been amended and systems put in place to ensure emails sent to residents when planning applications received.

Budget outlined, Precept remained the same as previous year at £4,150, Magazine income generated circa £1k and Reserves held at £5k. Full details in the year end account 31st March 2015.

Still issues with the roads, whilst Lower Road has been newly repaired, various potholes in Dux Street and Buxhall Road require action.

The Parish Council oversees the upkeep of the footpaths in the village and continues to report any issues.

The playing field is also managed by the Parish Council, consideration for improvement to the children's play area is ongoing and a village review is planned for October 2015 when resident's views will be sought. This village review will be supported by OBH School; pupils will assist by undertaking online surveys with residents.

Martin Frey Rattlesden Flying Club Liaison Group

Martin gave a brief outline of the agreed planning permission relating to flying at Rattlesden Gliding Club. The Liaison Group has been formed to enable representatives from local villages to meet and discuss concerns regarding flying activity. The next meeting is at the beginning of June. Martin Frey will then report back to the next Parish Council meeting and also report in the village magazine. If any residents have any issues they wish to be raised on this matter, Martin Frey can be emailed at martinfrey@clara.co.uk

Other matters raised by parishioners

- Verges along an area of The Street have become overgrown with brambles and garden rubbish. This is the responsibility of the landowners, but commented that in the 1990's residents undertook work to tidy the verges. It was agreed that this matter would be raised with Martin Bowers, General Manager at Strutt and Parker to ask that tidy up work completed. The councillors will approach Charles Camp to make appropriate contact.
- Recent spraying on farmland in certain areas of the village had been undertaken on windy days and affected local gardens. Acting Chairman confirmed that any issues of this nature should be raised with DEFRA. Subsequent to the APM, the correct approach is that residents should draw the matter to the attention of the farmer in the first instance and only resort to DEFRA if the problem continues.

The Acting Chairman thanked everybody for coming to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.17 which was then followed by the AGM of the Parish Council.

Parish Councillors

Mr Chris Clarke (Acting Chairman) – Mr David Golding (Acting Vice-Chairman)

Mr Paul Brinkley (Acting Chairman of Planning Committee)

Mrs Lindsey Collings – Miss Beverley Cronk – Ms Emily Woods - Mr Peter Truin

Appointment of officers following recent election took place at the AGM of the Parish Council which was held after the Annual Parish Meeting

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