

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF HORNINGTOFT HELD AT St. EDMUND'S CHURCH ON TUESDAY 10TH MARCH 2015 AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Councillor A Hill (Chair)
Councillor I Baker
Councillor G Drew

County Councillor M Kiddle Morris

3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Hawke and Chapman, Heather Gooch and District Councillor T Carter.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

Councillor Drew proposed and Councillor Hill seconded the resolution the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 be approved. All were in favour.

3. County Councillor Report.

The County Councillor presented his report.

County Councillor for Necton and Launditch
Report for 2014 – 2015

The Council Tax levied by Norfolk County Council (NCC) will remain the same for 2015/2016. An extra £150m has been granted by central government for highway maintenance and repairs. This will be forwarded in roughly equal payments over the next 6 years, it has not been decided what the extra money will be spent on but I understand that stalled capital projects such as resurfacing work and junction improvements will take priority. Over 141,000 homes are now benefitting from the NCC/BT £30m (£15m from Central Government and £15m from NCC) Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) contract to provide superfast broadband. A second, £12m contract (BBfN2), is now in place to increase the superfast broadband coverage to 90% of household across Norfolk. Government have also granted £18m to NCC to improve infrastructure in Norfolk Schools. The Parish Partnership Scheme which funds small scale highway improvements will be funded at 75% by NCC in the next round, only a 25% contribution will be required from the participating Parish. Previously this was a 50/50 cost sharing arrangement. County Farms has been put on a much firmer financial footing and the 16,000 acres of Council owned farmland now contributes £2.5 to frontline services. The Council changed from a Leader and Cabinet system of governance to a Committee system last May. A review of how the Committee system is working and an assessment of the need for improvement was promised for November last year but has not, as yet happened. There is some discontent among Members about the way the new system is working and that the “democratic deficit” is more marked than under the old Cabinet system which the introduction of the committee system was supposed to address.

Mark Kiddle-Morris

4. District Councillors Report.

District Councillor Carter had forwarded his report which was read out..

District Councillor's Report 2014/2015

Government Funding for councils continues to all

Central Government has continued to cut funding to local authorities – as a result at the last budget 2013/14 Breckland had to find savings in the region of 3 million pounds over the next 3-5 years.

It is really pleasing to report that through good housekeeping Breckland is able to not only present a balanced budget for 2014/2015, with no increase in Council Tax and more importantly no reduction in services, but able to do so for the next two years.

It is also significant that although the number of people working for the council has reduced by more than a quarter, through new ways of working the council has been able to make a significant improvement in productivity. It is this 'More for Less' approach that that other councils are starting to copy.

It is imperative that Rockland maintain a dialogue with residents regarding what they consider important to them. At a number of events, especially the Town and Parish forums, residents have been able to give their views on a wide range of topics.

High on the list was keeping parking in Breckland free and seeking to freeze Council Tax and yet still maintain, and in some cases, improve the service being offered. As a result of the freeze in tax the annual rate of tax for a Band D property is still £69.03, but as only approx 12% of properties in Breckland are Band D the majority of residents will pay less.

As far as Council Tax is concerned Breckland, through once again freezing Council Tax, still has the lowest tax in the country by far – mostly half of that charged by other authorities.

The Council has introduced a range of new Pride in Breckland grants and an increasing number of groups are applying for funding on a wide variety of projects. Look on our website to see what's on offer and how to apply.

Breckland have put almost £1m into improving Broadband for its residents and many villages are able to access Super Fast Broadband enabling local businesses and individual households to access the Internet. It doesn't stop here though. The Council is continuing to help finance turning 'Not Spots' into 'Hot Spots'.

The Council has entered into partnership with a private development company to deal with the desperate housing shortage in our region, as well as helping local companies with premises. The initial work will be carried out in Thetford as part of the regeneration of Riverside, but along with this a number of houses will be built at Mileham, and Attleborough. It is anticipated that a rolling programme of housing development will continue on a variety of council owned land in consultation with local residents.

During the year the Council introduced a new waste programme with recycling at its centre. After some initial teething problems the programme is going well and proving to be a success. The Council hope that with the proposed installation of new equipment at the Recycling Centres a greater number of recycling options will be available to residents of Rockland.

My priorities are still:

1. To help people who need care or protection and have no one else to provide it.
2. To achieve best value for money and balance the books.
3. To help bring new jobs and future prosperity.
4. To build more homes to meet increasing demand for people to reside in their local area.

Shared Services

Breckland remained with South Holland to share services and Chief Executive. The shared services are saving each council thousands of pounds and are enabling them to move forward with improvements in services, and development in housing, retail, and small business units.

Despite the difficult times Breckland has sought to extend and develop various activities and events for residents and young people.

These have included: Dancing at Litcham High School, Badminton for over 60s at Dereham Leisure Centre, and also at Swaffham. Netball at Swaffham, Nordic Walking at Watton Sports Centre, Riding at Eden Meadows Riding School and Middle Harling, Indoor Bowls at The Brick Indoor Bowls Club, Swimming lessons at Eccles Hall School, Indoor Cricket at Dereham, Archery at Garboldisham, plus various group walks throughout the county.

Arts activities have included Poetry events, Breckland Arts Trail, and Breckland Book Festival.

Internet – Better Broadband for Norfolk Programme.

The technical solution that will be rolled out has been broadly agreed – because unlike the old copper based cabinets, new, fibre optic cabinets require power – a major consideration in rural areas. Detailed planning is underway for what will be the first of several phases across Norfolk. Full deployment is expected mid 2015.

The Big Switch – Collective Switching Scheme (for Gas and Electricity).

This is an initiative in which County and District councils have joined forces to reduce primary fuel costs for the people of Norfolk. Almost 10,000, signed up, 2,800 from Breckland, and the average saving per customer was in the region of £115. The opportunity to join the Switch and Save scheme has again been offered and almost 1,600 residents throughout the district have signed up.

New Planning Policies.

Two of the coalition government's stated aims have been to simplify planning laws and to encourage greater community involvement in planning matters.

At national level more than one thousand pages of planning law would be reduced to 58 pages under the Draft National Policy Framework. However, this draft has already caused considerable controversy with claims that "it would seriously weaken the protection for the countryside" being expressed by organisations such as the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and the National Trust. It could also weaken the protection of the historic heritage (at a time when the future of the county archaeology service is under review). However, NPPF has been in operation now for over a year and things have become a little clearer with the Government issuing updates and guidelines

At district level Breckland has to establish how many jobs and homes need to be provided in the authority up to 2031. At appropriate stages the council is required to consult on the plan with parish and town councils and the public. Early indications are that up to 12,000 new jobs may need to be provided. Also up to 24,400 new homes may need to be provided. This figure included some 3,732 homes already built, as the plan covers the period from 2006. The figure also includes a further 7,178 homes, for which planning permission has already been given since 2006. Up to a further 13,300 homes may need to be provided making a total of 24,400. I emphasise the word "may" as the plan is still being updated due to recent changes in legislation.

At Parish level Councils have been encouraged to start preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, Local Plan, Village Appraisal – whatever residents feel they want to engage in. These plans will involve local communities in planning for their future development. When a plan is in place, subject to conforming to national policies, it will become part of the District Plan; then planning decisions relating to that parish will have to be made in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan. An alternative to this is a local development order which allows a parish to grant planning permission to specific sites.

Boundary Review

Update: The Commission have accepted the case presented by Breckland Council who will now go ahead with plans to reduce the number of councillors by 4 and adjust the number of councillors representing certain wards. Furthermore, by now most residents are well aware that the Boundary Commission has added Mileham Hermitage Ward. As a result the population of the Ward is now in the region of 2,200. – an increase of 12%.

What I've been up to

As your District Councillor I have been working hard supporting residents and Parishes in the Ward and dealing with various issues that have arisen during the year. Examples are listed below:

Identifying and dealing with instances of illegal fly-tipping.

Identifying and reporting cases of ignoring/breaking local planning rules.

Reporting and monitoring cases of vermin infestations.

Helping speed up and resolve a number of planning issues.

Giving help and advice to residents on a variety of issues.

Supporting Parishes and village groups in grant applications.

Gaining help from the Council for residents in need.

Working with enforcement to deal with issues of concern to residents.
Regularly attending and reporting to Parish meetings.
Dealing with issues and concerns raised by Parishes.
Supported village functions and Coffee Mornings.
Visiting villages during weekends – meeting and greeting residents.
96% attendance at Breckland Council meetings and committees where I am a member or Chairman, plus other committees out of interest as part of my role as Executive Member for Assets.
Attended 90% of training opportunities, plus 2 day weekend sessions at Warwick and Cambridge.

For 2015/2016

As residents of the Ward are already aware I am readily available on the phone, respond quickly to emails and am reliable in dealing with issues. I am however; keen to explore other opportunities to improve my effectiveness as a Councillor.

As I mentioned in my last report it is my intention to approach editors of the various Parish Magazines to see if I can include a regular article updating and informing residents of what is happening in their area. I have also held a number of on-line surgery utilising Direct Messaging, Facetime and Skype where residents can have an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns. I must admit, however, that this has not been as successful as I might have wished, but it is my intention to try it again during the coming months.

Trevor Carter

Hermitage Ward

5. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman presented his report.

Planning:

Fourways Oxwick Road-demolition of existing bungalow-construction of new 3 bed bungalow and garage-permission granted.

Grange Farm Barn-proposed garage-Permission.

Oakdene Hurdle Lane-removal of agricultural restriction-Refused

Heater House School Road-convert garage into bathroom and en-suite-Permission

Old barn Oxwick Road-demolition of existing bungalow and replace with new dwelling-permission

Church Farm Oxwick Road-erection of farm office and workers facilities-permission

The Local plan had been discussed and the response was no change to the previous consultation-no settlement boundary, no large scale development but perhaps an individual dwelling would be considered.

Highways:

The increasing number of passing places had been reported on Whissonsett Road causing problems. There were three water leaks and the Parish Council had complained about the time taken to repair.

Sam 2 sign purchased in conjunction with other local parishes and has been in position twice in Brisley Rd. Horningtoft. The first time had identified a speeding problem mainly from the Fakenham Road direction., and the second time generally showed vehicles below the speed limit.

Finance:

Precept set at £2000.

General:

The Parish Council had purchased display boards and donated to the Heritage Society who used them to good effect when they staged a very successful World War 1 event. Our thanks to Councillor Chapman and Heather Gooch. The Parish Council replied to the CPRE light pollution survey stating that it had no intention to install street lighting and also concern about the intrusive lighting in certain parts of the village.

Thanks to County Councilors Mark Kiddle Morris, District Councillor Trevor Carter and Clerk Bryan Leigh.

6. PCSO Report.

No report had been received.

7. Charity Trustees Report.

The Clerk read out the report.

Horningtoft Eleemosynary Charity

Financial Year End 31 March 2014

Gross Income £ 237

Gross Expenditure £ 210

Balance carried forward £ 458

The trustees remain the same and are Pauline Chapman, Heather Gooch and Liz Logan and they are willing to stand for a further term and ask that this is confirmed and recorded in the minutes by the new Parish Council when elected May.

In the year ending March 2014 we made awards to two residents for help with heating costs and education books, however this year to date we have not had any request for assistance and not made any donations. So please, everyone, try and think of anyone who may need some extra help or has medical expenses, travel costs, high heating bills or similar then tell us. This money is for Horningtoft residents who have lived in the village for twelve months. and we need to use it.

Please contact Pauline Chapman, Heather Gooch or Liz Logan with any ideas.

8. Parochial Church Council Report.

Olive Tuck presented the report.

We have had a busy year raising money to keep the church going, but with lots of help managed to pay the quota of £3500 and have money to do repairs. Work starts in April on the west wall, bell and gate pillars and also in hand is new Led lights at the back of the church.

The fund raising was a beetle drive, afternoon teas, WW1 exhibition, rounders match, harvest supper and quiz, Christmas bazaar and Bonus ball.

Our two 8.30a.m. services have been well attended ranging from 8 to 17 last Sunday, we are very fortunate to have Rev. Robin, and Richard and Wendy to play the organ.

We have not had a churchwarden but all pulled together, hopefully someone will come forward this AGM.

Mrs cook bequeathed the church a piece of land which is in the hands of church registrar and Mr Cook.

We are hoping to take down the pine trees each side of the entrance, as they are getting so large branches hit the roof when windy.

There are two funds, 1 for the fabric and 1 for general.

The AGM is on 19 March in the church and it would be encouraging for us to see more people attend, all are welcome.

9. Heritage Society Report.

The Clerk read out the report.

After a quiet 2013, 2014 could not have been more different, a decision was not made until early in the year to hold a WW1 exhibition in the church. Our first taster, mini exhibition, to display the type of information available, was at afternoon teas held at the home of Olive Tuck on 11th May. We then decided to include, not just those on the Roll of Honour board, but also relatives of village families past and present who fought in WW1. A vast quantity of

information, including many pictures and memorabilia were lent to us by the descendants of the families.

The Society was successful with an application to Breckland for a grant of £500 towards the project. The grant together with Heritage Society funds, gave us the means to provide a marquee £50 and toilet £60. We also purchased a table top display board for £102. Paper, inks, stationery £376 and subscriptions to research sites £56, soon accounted for the rest of the money. Thank you to the Parish Council for purchasing a new set of display boards for the Society, which are lightweight and very easy to take down and reassemble.

We spent many hours, days and weeks researching and assembling all the information and helping each other produce what we believe was a very informative exhibition.

The exhibition was over the weekend of 19th & 20th July. Other members of the village provided teas, cakes, light lunches, raffle and tombola. The exhibition was busy both days, making it so worth while and a very good fund raiser for the church, with 10% going to the Royal British Legion.

On the Thursday before the event a call was received from Radio Norfolk, wishing to feature us on Treasure Quest on the Sunday morning. The clues led them to Thomas Annison and Miles Riches the two soldiers from Horningtoft who died in WW1.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the weekend so successful.

Heather Gooch Chairperson

Pauline Chapman Secretary & Treasurer

10. Any Other Business.

The Village Walk will be on 3 April starting at 1030 at the top of Thumb Lane..

The meeting closed at 1940