

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 25 MAY 2007 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Twenty three people attended including all the members of the Parish Council and County Councillor Simon Walsh.

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor Mrs S Schneider.

### **1. MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2006**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited them to read the minutes from the previous Annual Parish Meeting. There being no objections, the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **2. FINANCE**

The unaudited accounts for the Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2007 were reviewed by those present and the Clerk reported that the total balance in the Parish Council's accounts was £16,887.83, which included £8,455 in the new Community Project Account and £2,817 in the Building Society Account.

### **3. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COUNCIL**

The Chairman reported on a productive year. Twelve full council meetings during the year, many with key visitors from Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, the Police, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and Ms Vicki Hughes (BAA Stansted's Noise Communications Manager). Precise allocation of responsibilities was determined to include general responsibilities and specific projects with timescales. These have been advertised on the noticeboard and the village website.

Other committee meetings were attended on a regular basis such as the North Area Panel meetings concerned with matters in the north of Uttlesford, Parish Liaison meetings relating to general district matters and West Essex Area Forums dealing with countywide issues.

Our projects in the year included the pursuance of the footway along the B1054 between Mill House Cottages and Harvey Way. Despite being the number 1 ranked footway project it has still not been granted sufficient funding. Our intention is to get the backing of the North Area Panel and to lobby the support of Sir Alan Haselhurst. Davina Millership, Acting ECC Highways Manager for West Area, has been invited to our forthcoming June meeting where we will be asking her what we can do to push this project on. We do wonder why we are the only village not to have a footway on the main road.

Adam Thomas has been appointed to champion all Highways issues and in keeping with attempts at speed reduction he has been liaising with the Highways Department recently and the installation of Vehicle Activated Speed Indicator signs is now imminent. He continues to pursue the issue of speed reduction on the three approaches to the village and currently under consultations is the introduction of a 40mph speed zones along Anso Road, the B1054 from the current 40mph zone at Radwinter and the B1054 towards Steeple Bumpstead as far as Bramley Hollow.

David Haylock is seeking expert advice regarding the refurbishment of the water fountain at the bottom of Church Hill as it is a listed building. The Ring of Trees opposite is looking very good following the work undertaken recently.

Mr McCarthy reported that while the Realignment of Public Rights of Way was still ongoing it was difficult to estimate what the final costs may be. Following some further adjustments, the plans were sent to the Footpaths Association who expressed their satisfaction with the alterations, but the Ramblers Association are still making their decision. Once full agreement has been reached, the plans will be sent to County Council for approval and then the changes will be publicly advertised. Reorganisation at both district and county level have hindered the progress, but the Parish Council continue to pursue this project rigorously.

Diana Frost, with the assistance of David Haylock, has drawn up a comprehensive schedule of footpath cutting work to be carried out by both the Parish Council under the P3 umbrella and by the ECC cutting programme which should have started by 8 May. However, despite being provided with the priorities schedule in November 2006 no cutting had yet taken place and it was hoped that the problems of the previous year's cutting programme or lack of it would not be repeated in 2007. Communication with Robin Wallbank and Nigel Eley indicated a problem with the issue of the contract this year. Diana Frost said that we had "done our job, followed the rules" and still the cutting programme is a disgrace. Cllr Simon Walsh replied that he was embarrassed and apologised. He would contact the new contractor immediately. Mr Jim Rennie felt it was a "bone of contention" that landowners were left out of the loop. Diana Frost stated that the spreadsheets for both P3 and ECC were on the Hempstead village website.

2006 saw Hempstead as runner up in the Best Kept Village competition and every effort was being made for this year's contest.

The village website continues to improve and remain attractive. Thanks going to Helen Philip (Editor) and Brian Kitchen (Technician) for their hard work in maintaining a fantastic site.

The Newcomers Meeting held in June with around 25 newcomers attending. It was a very good evening but Mr McCarthy said it was a shame that not many of them had been seen since at village activities.

The Parish Council continue to support the Stop Stansted Expansion campaign and respond accordingly to consultation papers from UDC, BAA etc.

With regard to the Young People's Initiative, Alison Midgley produced a questionnaire which was distributed in November with a view to establishing the direction of our future plans and possibly obtaining funding from the Big Lottery scheme. The results were forwarded to UDC to be incorporated in their play strategy. It is hoped we will get support from the Community and Leisure Department at UDC.

Bus route No 18 was under threat of removal through lack of use. Mrs Midgley successfully orchestrated a campaign to save this route and the contract was given to a new operator. Continued support of this route is needed and as such the bus timetable is on the village website.

Finally the Chairman thanked everyone for listening and his fellow councillors for their support during the year.

#### **4. REPORT BY THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

Mrs Sue Schneider, Uttlesford District Councillor, was unable to attend the meeting but sent a report that has been uploaded to the website.

#### **5. REPORT BY THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Simon Walsh, Essex County Councillor for Thaxted division, introduced himself and presented his report for the year – a copy of which is on the village website. He confirmed the retention of the No 18 bus route due to the pressure of Hempstead Parish Council and that of a Radwinter parishioner. However, it is still running over subsidy and urged further use of the bus.

Mr Walsh came under considerable pressure due to lack of County action on the footway project. After a protracted discussion he agreed to invite the new Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation, Cllr Norman Hume, with control of £158 million budget, to visit the village and view for himself the conditions that demand a new footway.

#### **6. GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Mr McCarthy then invited questions from the floor. Adam Thomas asked Cllr Walsh why highways maintenance such as verge cutting was contracted to May Gurney when it is done far more efficiently by a local contractor. Cllr Walsh replied that the issue previously was due to insufficient supervision and this

looks to be the problem this year as well. There is an issue of contract not being delivered which needs to be reviewed.

Mrs Slee said she was pleased that the ditches had been cleared but felt that putting the spoil on the roadside made use of the verge very dangerous.

Nigel Smith commented that the Parish Council were doing a sterling job but it seemed that the next step up the ladder there were problems with getting things done – personnel changes, bureaucracy etc. He asked what we could do to resolve this. It seemed that with Essex County Council all the money was spent on the southern districts with little mention of Uttlesford. Cllr Walsh will feedback this sentiment and said there was now an emerging awareness of localism and the need to be sensitive to it.

Diana Frost asked Cllr Walsh if he was able to advise on the meeting hierarchy within the county – he was not able to do this immediately and will endeavour to find out.

Mr McCarthy closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and actively participating. He hoped everyone had enjoyed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Date:

Chairman: