

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 16 MAY 2008 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Twenty seven people attended including most of the members of the Parish Council and County Councillor Simon Walsh. Apologies for absence were received, from amongst others, District Councillor Mrs S Schneider and Sally Phillips.

1. MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 25 MAY 2007

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 2008 were reviewed by those present and the Clerk reported that the total balance in the Parish Council's accounts was £18,181.84, which included £12,737 in the Community Project Account and £2,881 in the Building Society Account.

3. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

The Chairman reported on a successful and busy year, the highlights of which are as follows. The village had won the Best Kept Village competition for the second time in three years and were participating in the 2008 competition.

Adam Thomas was doing a sterling job with regard to Highways issues with the VASI signs now installed and having an effect on the traffic speed. Essex County Council has agreed to the extension of the 30mph zone at the village extremities and the changes will be put in place in due course. Deer warning signs had been erected near Bramley Hollow. The roadside bank of the duck pond at Church Farm was subsiding and repairs are scheduled for the forthcoming winter, after which the railings will be refurbished.

After the meeting had given Cllr Simon Walsh a tough time with regard to the footway project along the B1054, a site meeting was arranged with Cllr Norman Hume, Highways & Transportation Cabinet Member, ECC and Cllr Walsh to ensure Cllr Hume was fully aware of the need for this footway. Cllr Hume was most sympathetic and agreed we had a substantial case and has indicated that he will investigate various alternative sources of income that may be utilised.

Mr McCarthy briefly explained the Community Speed Watch programme - a traffic monitoring scheme that is co-ordinated by the police but managed and run by volunteers in the community to address the problem of either real or perceived speeding. Hempstead is currently on the list for the next funding instalment. Mr McCarthy thanked Mr Thomas for a cracking job this year!

Diana Frost had led the field footpaths project during the year. After five years work the realignment looks like it is near the end! Following extensive consultation, numerous issues have been resolved and approval is expected later this year. Once completed, it is planned to hold an inaugural walk and produce a map of the path network in and around the village.

Miss Frost has also been instrumental in liaison with the Parish Path Partnership. Having obtained a small grant in 2007 we were able to contract the cutting of 2,000 metres of path three times in the year. This year the Council have sought to broaden the scope of works, particularly with regard to clearance of undergrowth and the repair of stiles and bridges. Accordingly we sought quotations from a number of contractors and received a price of £2,900 to carry out this work. Miss Frost subsequently met with P3 liaison officer Charlotte Fellingham and has obtained a further grant of £1,550. This work is currently being completed in April/May. Miss Frost was congratulated on this tremendous achievement.

Following the flooding last year, John Sladen had a site meeting with Mr Hunt, District Engineer at UDC and David Haylock to identify where improvements could be made to prevent future flooding. Mr Hunt subsequently liaised with Mr Wheadon of the Environment Agency and compiled a report of the required preventative measures. Following presentation at a Parish Council meeting, copies were sent out to the relevant residents/land owners with a request that they undertake to carry out the recommendations to avoid a recurrence of the flooding. A substantial number of the recommendations have now been carried out although some still require attention - these are being monitored by the Parish Council and the District Engineer. Road

drains are continuously monitored for blockages and the Highways department contacted accordingly. Well done Mr Sladen.

The biggest issue this year with regard to planning matters was the requirement for 10,000 homes in the Uttlesford District. The preferred option is a spread across the district but the Parish Council expressed concerns that considerable infrastructure improvements need to be incorporated.

Refurbishment of the water fountain is going to cost £2,300 and the Parish Council have budgeted half of this sum and Mr Haylock is currently looking for grants to make up the balance. Once obtained, Mark Halls, the contractor, will be instructed to start the work.

The website is going well and we are very pleased with the work done by Brian Kitchen and Helen Philip. Jim Rennie is looking to step down from Neighbourhood Watch, so we are looking for a new co-ordinator.

Alan Weedon reviewed the Air Traffic Control's proposed new flight paths into and out of Stansted but felt that there was little change to Hempstead airspace.

Thanks go to John Cockman, Honorary Internal Auditor for the terrific work he has done in the year including review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which have been adopted in the year.

Finally thanks to my fellow councillors – we've made very good progress in the year – and to Claire Dittrich for a sterling job.

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. However, on the local issue of the footway along the B1054, Cllr Walsh had spoken to Cllr Hume and the project has been put onto the works list. A letter is due out shortly stating that if Hempstead Parish Council can deliver up the land required for the project, Essex County Council will obtain the money. Mr McCarthy replied that the Parish Council were very much up for the work needed to pursue this project.

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr McCarthy thanked Cllr Walsh for his tremendous support and congratulated him on his new position as Cabinet Member for Young People. Questions were then invited from the floor.

Mr Crane asked about the reinstatement of the roads etc after the laying of the new mains between Radwinter and Hempstead. He was concerned about the subsoil being left of the verges, the barriers and signage left behind. The Clerk was to ask Highways who to chase regarding this issue and Cllr Walsh will ask Cllr Hume. Mr Flaxman commented on the proliferation of signs, many of which were extraneous. Miss Frost asked Cllr Walsh if the Fire Service have to come out to flood situations. Cllr Walsh will clarify the position. Mr Smith asked about a local police presence – Mr McCarthy reported that the beat officers had been invited to the April Parish Council meeting but it transpired that both the neighbourhood officer and the area sergeant had moved to different areas but that this will be pursued. However the mobile van still visits the village regularly and we have asked for speed radar checks. Mr Flaxman asked if the Government had a legal right to put in the houses planned for this area. Mr McCarthy replied that the District has planning control but had to work within the framework laid down by Government. Cllr Walsh advised that Essex County Council has led opposition to these plans. Mrs Slee asked if the spoil from ditch clearing could be put on the farmers side of the ditch – the Clerk was asked to check with the Highways department.

Mr McCarthy closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and Cllr Walsh for his support. Mrs Slee thanked the Parish Council for their work this year.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Date:

Chairman: