

BLO' NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 19 May 2015 at 7.30pm in Blo' Norton Village Hall.

Those Present: John Barnet-Lamb (Chairman); Councillors Bristow, Olley, Edwards, Button and 23 members of the public

- 1 Apologies for absence Tim Stevenson and Andrew Aves
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 22 April 2014: Agreed as circulated
- 3 Matters Arising

Map of Parish (paragraph 10e): A parishioner asked about the map of the parish and it was noted that it was pinned to the wall of the village hall. However, it was asked if this could be put on public display, near the church as it was thought this would be referred to by rambles. It was agreed to consider this at the next Parish Council meeting, although first thoughts were that it may not be cost effective to do this. **ACTION: CLERK**
- 4 Chairpersons' Report: The Chair thanked everyone for attending and all members of the Parish Council for their support. Issues in his report included: broadband; Hopton surgery and Sandpits Corner. The Chairman thanked Ann Lambert for all the work she did as a Councillor as she had recently resigned.
- 5 Police Report - PCSO Dion Philips provided a brief overview of 2014, where it was noted that one crime had been recorded. He explained that some other issues reported within Blo' Norton were civil matters, where there was no victim and therefore were not recorded as crime. PCSO Philips also stated that in future issues should be directed to Attleborough SNT as a whole, as now there were only three PCSOs and one Beat Manager as opposed to five PCSOs previously.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Philips for attending the meeting and presenting his report.
- 6 Responsible Financial Officer's report – The Responsible Financial Officer provided an update on Parish Council accounts, having produced a balance sheet for the year 2014/2015. It was noted the .22p was interest received on consolidated stock, which was soon to be redeemed. The Chairman thanked the Responsible Financial Officer for her report.
- 7 Broadband It was noted that both Annette Thorpe, Regional Director of BT and Karen O'Kane had been invited to attend the meeting but were unable to. Those present were disgusted with the service provided as Broadband was almost non-existent in the village and an email of 24 April from Karen O'Kane, Better Broadband for Norfolk team confirmed that Blo' Norton would not receive a fibre upgrade as part of the second Better Broadband for Norfolk rollout. It was felt outrageous that the people of Blo' Norton paid the same amount for broadband as others and received an extremely poor/non-existent service. Following discussion it was proposed by Ann Lambert and seconded by Petal Haskins that the Parish Council lobby our MP, Elizabeth Truss. Marion Chapman-Allen stated she would also take the case up with Breckland Council.

Secretary's Note: Meeting organised with Elizabeth Truss, MP for 19 July

1700 hours, Village Hall]

- 8 Hopton Surgery: It was noted the closure of Hopton Surgery would affect 111 people within the parish which represented 43% of the parish. The Chairman thanked John Dixon and Geoffrey Leigh for attending a meeting in March which Councillor Joanna Spicer had called, where it was stated all options were open. A further meeting was to take place on 1 June at Hopton Chapel. It was noted that Matthew Hancock, MP had handed the petition in. It was noted there appeared to be a development which included a surgery at Hopton behind the village hall and school but money had to come from somewhere and NHS England seemed to want to concentrate the practice in Stanton which was inconvenient for those in Blo' Norton to attend, as there was no public transport. It was felt there was a need to involve Elizabeth Truss, MP and attending meetings to ensure our voice was heard.
[Secretary's Note: Meeting with Elizabeth Truss, MP on 19 July will include a representative from NHS England to discuss this issue]

- 9 Report from Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen: Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen was pleased to report on the work of Breckland Council which included a summary of the financial plan for 2015-2016 on a rolling basis. The key headlines noted were no reduction in services, free parking across Breckland would continue, no increase in council tax; additional investment in services; major capital investment in regeneration and focus on local businesses and housing solutions; income generation to support community investment. The precept remained the lowest council tax in the country, with Band D council tax in Breckland being £69.03 where as in Kings Lyn and West Norfolk Band D was £111.97 and Great Yarmouth £146.48

Councillor Chapman-Allen was pleased to report that she was working closely with Councillor Joanna Spicer and the Community Commissioning Group with regard to keeping a practice in Hopton, as this also affected 400 residents in Garboldisham, and would endeavour to keep the Parish Council informed of progress.

Councillor Chapman-Allen was pleased to report that she would be discussing the Broadband issue with Karen O'Kane and Michael Watton at Breckland and challenge them both of the problems experienced by Blo' Norton residents. She would continue to lobby on behalf of Blo' Norton to ensure that some of the £950k Breckland Council had invested in the programme met the needs of the village.

It was noted that out of the £12m invested by Breckland Council into Icelandic banks over £11m had been recovered and a further £250k should be recovered over the next few years.

It was reported that complaints could now be made to Planning Enforcement on line.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen for her report.

- 10 Report from John Dixon, History Group – The Chairman welcomed John Dixon to the meeting and invited him to give his report. John Dixon reported that the History Group continued to provide a lively programme for a range of interests in the history of our locality and these included the theme of war and its impact locally. An interesting talk about the Pulham Pigs from Brian Carr, following by

Peter Barrall's well received reminiscences of his time in Thelnetham as an evacuee and a visit to Flixton Aviation Museum which covered military aircraft over a large part of the last century.

The Chairman thanked John Dixon for his report.

- 11 Report from Mike Bristow re John Dyer Charity: The Chairman invited Mike Bristow to give his report. Mike Bristow reported the John Dyer Charity was for school children in Blo' Norton and Kenninghall and was the income from investments and is divided annually, two thirds to Kenninghall and a third to Blo' Norton. The opening balance for the annual accounts for 2014 was £530.77, it was noted grants made during the year for Blo' Norton totalled £260 and following income received the closing balance was £465.37.

The Chairman thanked Mike Bristow for his report.

- 12 Report from Colin Biggs re Village Hall: The Chairman welcomed Colin Biggs to the meeting. Colin was pleased to report that during the last 12 months the following events had been held: Village Yard Sale; Village Produce Show; a joint event with Blo' Norton War Memorial Trust 1940s night. Events this year included a Pudding night and a village quiz night with bankers and mash and on behalf of the Village Hall Committee Colin thanked all those who had supported such events, not only by attending but planning, organising, donating raffle prizes and money. He thanked the Parish Council who had made generous donations to the Village Hall and Topps Tiles of Thetford for donating floor tiles and grouting for the bar storage area. Colin continued to explain projects planned for the following year which included improving the bar storage area, refurbishment of the village hall kitchen and the toilet facilities as it was felt this was aid with grants from other agencies in the future. He also thanked the village hall committee for their hard work in making everything happen.

The Chairman thanked Colin Biggs for his report.

- 13 Report from Ann Lambert re War Memorial Trust: The Chairman invited Ann Lambert to provide her report. Ann was pleased to report that a number of events had been held to raise money for the War Memorial Trust including the Angel Roof talk, joint 40s night with the village hall. It had been agreed that some of the maintenance for the war memorial would be undertaken by the Committee with a professional clean when required.

The Chairman thanked Ann Lambert for her report.

- 14 Report from Dr Jo-Anne Pitt re Little Ouse Headwaters Project.: The Chairman invited Dr Jo-Anne Pitt to provide an update. Dr Jo-Anne Pitt was pleased to report that the brief highlights in last 12 months included the purchase of new land in Thelnetham – which was the area that joined Thelnetham fen. This added to the block of land and pretty much covered by trees and part of it will become a fen – it was noted the land was purchased with the help of the heritage lottery grant. It would be known as New Fen and it was hoped local schools would benefit from this purchase and it would support the provision of the newsletter – work will continue over the next year or so to complete. It was noted that the capital works had been completed and tree work at Blo' Norton fen and shallow foot drains at bottom of Lows which would encourage wetter area for birds. John Dixon was thanked for assistance with cutting paths. It was noted that monthly checks took place on all sites re tree and path

condition. A member of the audience asked about the amount of ragwort which appeared and it was noted this was usually dug up and would be checked. The LOHP AGM was an excellent turn out and talk re ash die back disease which we monitor affected trees. At the AGM a change in the constitution was initiated in the way trustees were nominated and Dr Pitt would write formally to the Parish Council with regard to this.

Various events had taken place over the year including a walk which was attended by over 60 people. It was stated that events were now advertised on Twitter as well as the website. It was noted there was funding for approximately another two/three issues of the newsletter, and depending upon fund raising depended if further copies would be produced. Mrs Davey suggested that lower grade paper could be used which may be cheaper and this would be explored.

It was noted from the audience that there still appeared to be problems on the fens with loose dogs and it was asked if more permanent signs could be erected. This would be explored.

The Chairman thanked Dr Jo-Ann Pitt for her report.

- 15 Report from Tim Stevenson re PCC: The Chairman read out the report from Tim Stevenson.
- 16 Report from Andrew Aves re Close Air Support Training The Chairman reported that Andrew Aves had sent his apologies but asked it be mentioned that on 1 and 2 June major exercise involving helicopters airplanes and soldiers jumping out of helicopters. Timing of the training was at 1030 1230 and 1430 hours
- 17 Any Other Business

Vandalism – Village Hall: John Dixon reported that a number of acts of vandalism had taken place including the inspection drain being filled with rubble and stopping flow from kitchen and toilets; he asked for everyone to keep a watchful eye and to report anything suspicious to the police on 101 asking for it to be reported to Graham Parfitt, or in an emergency to ring 999.

Septic Tank problems – Fen Road: It was noted this was an ongoing problem and the householder had been in liaison with Environmental Health. It was noted that work would be completed as soon as the weather improved.

The meeting closed at 2121 hours