

BLO' NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 12 March 2013 at 7.30pm in Blo' Norton Village Hall.

Those Present: John Barnet-Lamb (Chairman); John Olley; Mike Bristow; Ann Lambert; Richard Edwards; PCSO Laura Key; Dr Jo Pitt; William Nunn; 17 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence. Andrew Aves; Tim Stevenson, PCSO Lynne Dobson
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 3 May 2012 It was asked that LOPH be amended to read LOHP. The minutes were then agreed and signed.
3. Matters Arising.

Walking dogs on leads: Dr Jo Pitt confirmed as Dr Helen Smith had at the previous meeting that no "dogs on leads" signs appeared on the fen. It was expected that when stock were grazing on the fields dogs should be kept on leads, at other times common sense of dog owners was relied upon;

- Broadband: Update Number 9 from NCC dated January 2013 was on our website and Karen O'Kane from the NCC Better Broadband Team had provided the following update to the Parish Council on 4 March. There will be several BBfN (Better Broadband for Norfolk) programme rollout phases and each phase will follow the same sequence of events:
 1. Survey, design and detailed planning
 2. Implementation
 3. Services available from Internet Service Providers (ISPs)BT has started its survey, design and detailed planning work for the first phase of the BBfN rollout and services from ISPs for Phase 1 are due to be available by the end of this year. Once survey, design and detailed planning for each phase is complete, information concerning the areas that will benefit will be made available (for Phase 1 this is expected summer 2013). Information for each subsequent phase will be released approximately every three months. Once services are available from ISPs information on speeds at an individual premises level will be available. The programme will share information regarding the availability of better broadband in the county via the BBfN website (at: www.sayyestobroadband.co.uk) as soon as it can.
- Street Name Clarification – Small Meadow Lane to Broadwater Lane The Parish Council contacted Ben Binder of Breckland Council, who corresponded with Geoffrey Leigh. As a result residents were consulted over the name change and voted against it and therefore the rename process was stopped. Mr Binder did acknowledge the evidence provided by Mr Leigh, although as the residents were not in favour, could not proceed.

Sponsorship of Garboldisham and Blo' Norton News by LOHP The Parish Council had explored this with the editor of the Garboldisham and Blo' Norton News, who confirmed it was not for the distribution of the magazine, but for inserting the LOHP newsletter into the Garboldisham and Blo' Norton News.

4. Chairperson's Report. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and all members of the Parish Council for their support. The Chairman's report is attached to these minutes.

5. Update from PCSO Laura Key, Attleborough SNT The Chairman welcomed PCSO Paura Key to the meeting and invited her to give her report. PCSO Laura Key explained she was attending on behalf of PCSO Lynne Dobson.

Crime Statistics: PCSO Key reported that from 1 March 2012 to 10 March 2013, six crimes had been reported within Blo' Norton. Two were burglary, other than dwellings (hedge trimmer and an attempt where entry gained but nothing taken); one criminal damage (car tyre punctured); one drugs crime (cultivation of cannabis); one violence against person; one theft (a dog).

The Chairman thanked PCSO Key for her report and for the extra police supervision following a recent SNAP meeting and asked for questions. There was a concern about cyclists riding in the quiet lanes of Blo' Norton at speed and it was asked if this could be explored. **ACTION: PARISH COUNCIL**

Speeding in general was then discussed and it was noted that the Highways authority set the speed limit and the Parish Council and Colin Briggs had done some work in this area.

6. Responsible Financial Officer's Report. The Responsible Financial Officer provided an update on Parish Council accounts, having produced a balance sheet for the financial year 2012/13 which had been tabled and is attached, noting the end of year balance was £3192.15. The Chairman thanked the RFO for her report.

7. Leader of Breckland Council Report. The Chair introduced William Nunn, Leader of Breckland Council and Local Councillor for Blo' Norton.

Councillor Nunn confirmed he was attending as Local Councillor and said a number of things had impacted on the village during the year, including the Government's new local planning policy, which would state where people cannot develop as opposed to where they could develop. Therefore consultation would take place with villages in the near future.

Reductions had been made at Breckland Council which included passing on the cost of elections to Parish Councils, although it was noted that the cost of elections should be shared with the Local elections which take place – a parish council would only be expected to pay the full amount (ie £1500) if they had an election outside of the local elections. Also a decision had been made to stop the Breckland Voice magazine.

Breckland Council had put Council Tax up by 7.8% (just under £5 a year for many households which will raise a total of £160,000 across the district). Consultation took place on car parking and those car parks at Attleborough and Theford remain free of charge.

Countywide, a new Councillor, Stephen Askew. Councillor Nunn has spoken to Gary Overland regarding the state of the roads in Blo' Norton. County has found some money for community based projects and the next bidding round is September and an online application is available.

Breckland will reduce the amount of Councillors employed at the next election from 54 to 50.

Councillor Nunn congratulated the village on fighting the Bio Digester and thanked John Barnet-Lamb for his work in this area.

Councillor Nunn spoke about the “Big Switch and Save” which could be accessed at www.bigswitchandsave.co.uk or for help with registration call 0800 098 8994 or for other ways to register call 01362 656870.

8. Report from Andrew Aves re RAF Low Flying Training Unfortunately Andrew Aves had sent his apologies but would attend the next Parish Council meeting to be held in May
9. Report from John Dixon, History Group The Chair welcomed John Dixon to the meeting and invited him to give his report. John Dixon stated that in the last 12 months there had been six external speakers and various outings and events. He encouraged others to join the History Group with membership costing £18 for a family and £12 for an individual. The full report is attached. The Chairman thanked John for his report
10. Report from Tim Stevenson, PCC – Unfortunately Tim Stevenson had to give his apologies. His report is attached
11. Report from Mike Bristow re John Dyer Charity –The Chairman invited Mike Bristow to give his report, which is attached to these minutes. Following questions from the floor it was noted that the criteria for application for the John Dyer Charity is on the Parish Council Website, advertised regularly in the Bugle and application can be in writing or to phone one of the Trustees. The Chairman thanked Mike Bristow for his report.
12. Report from Cheryl Davis re Village Hall – Unfortunately Cheryl Davis had given her apologies, so the Chairman invited John Dixon to give the Village Hall report, which is attached to these minutes. The Chairman thanked John Dixon for his report.
13. Report from War Memorial Trust – The Chairman invited Ann Lambert to give her report, which is attached to these minutes.
14. Report from Dr Jo-Anne Pitt - Little Ouse Headwaters Project. The Chairman introduced Dr Jo-Anne Pitt and invited her to give her report.

LOHP local small charity which owns and leases land around Blo’ Norton to promote access to countryside with wildlife conservation in mind.

Main change in the last year has been the replacement of the old boardwalk with a new one made of recycled plastic – much safer and doesn’t need wire netting. On-going routine maintenance includes grazing on the lows – with rare breed cattle and sheep.

The LOHP are now in their third year of a Heritage Lottery Fund which is being used for the restoration of other sites and beyond our usual land management activities – working with a range of other people

Events that have been held include heritage walks – about 50 people came to that walk and a New Year’s walk in early January. There is an active photography group that take pictures of the fens and the events including fixed point photography to note changes over time, which they were happy to

share with the History group. Recording oral histories from people around the area who have had a long association with the area and Dr Jo-Anne Pitt thanked Jennifer Davey for taking part in this project. All this had been funded by the heritage lottery fund project. A creative arts group were working with Sainsbury Centre for visual arts from the UEA with established and aspiring artists, working towards an exhibition planned for the autumn and this has also been extended to the local primary schools and to anyone else who wishes to get involved. Broadening of activities was as a result of the lottery funding.

In November LOHP were pleased to receive an award from the CPRE Norfolk for landscape work and inaugural Boldeo award for encouraging access to the countryside.

Dr Jo-Anne Pitt thanked John Dixon for continuing to mow the area.

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

15. Any other business.

Boundary on sandpits corner has been moved out – John Olley said he had spoken to highways who said they would explore. The exit in and off the land, before there was hedging on quite a blind corner; it was noted the electrical company would crop the trees. Sue at Breckland council was overseeing this project.

Pig farm development It was noted that walls had been built to a metre high

Boundary posts at Redgrave Road past sugar beet pad: There were approximately ten but only three remain, please explore replacement

Flooding at school cottage and low fields – The Chairman reported on a site visit by Gary Overland at Breckland Council which had taken place that afternoon. Breckland Council would organise some work and the Parish Council would write to local landowners.

Fence outside Elm Cottage – The Parish Council understood that it was the owner's intention to replace the fence.

Sandpits corner – it was thought this was not surveyors land but parish land and sold for £45 between 1968-1975

Telephone Lines: Dr Jo-Anne Pitt asked if others were having problems with their telephone lines – as she has had no phone line for four weeks – although a temporary fix had been put in place, she remained without Broadband. No one else reported such problems

30mph signs for village – It was asked that the Parish Council revisit the Slow down in our village signs
ACTION: PARISH CLERK

Good evening.

My name is John Barnet-Lamb; I am Chair of Blo Norton Parish Council.

With me as members of the council are: John Olley as deputy Chairperson, Mike Bristow, Ann Lambert and Richard Edwards.

With us also is our Clerk Michelle Collins has been looking after us all now for four years.

Firstly I wish to report on the precept. As from 2013 Breckland will no longer pay for the cost of an election to any Parish Council and that of course includes Blo Norton. As a result of this Blo Norton along with all other Parishes will have to have in reserve the monies require to hold an election to wit about £1500. The only way that money can be raised is by increasing the precept and that is what we have been forced to do. Over the next three years the money raised by this increase will be put aside to pay for an election. If however there is no election due to not enough people standing then the cost of registering those persons as Councillors will be in the region of £50. I could not possibly comment on the implications of moving the cost of an election so close to those who wish to exercise their democratic right to stand for election.

The last year has seen a large part of the village galvanised in its opposition to the instillation of a bio digester and generator at Willow Farm on Clay Hall Lane. Together with Smallworth, the village organised several meeting both here and on site, had meetings with the press and our MP. The result was refusal of planning permission by Norfolk CC. I would like to thank all who worked so hard to ensure that Norfolk was left in no doubt as to our village's opposition to this proposal and I would especially like to thank William Nunn for his invaluable help and advice. It was his knowledge that was fundamental in recognising that the figures quoted by Active Technologies were bogus. I would worn the meeting that I feel that this issue is only delayed and that we will have to fight this all over again against a company that will have learnt from its mistakes.

Regrettably, once again, we have had problems with abusive young people around the Village Hall. Ann Lambert used her considerable powers of persuasion at the Norfolk SNAP meeting to have the area prioritised for policing with the result that we had many visits by police patrols with a dramatic improvement of the situation. The cynical amongst us might consider that returning to the days when one regularly saw a policeman on the beat in the village as a matter of course might improve things! Still on the subject of policing, there was an attempted break in on Fen Road and several people have noticed a 'white van' driving slowly and indeed stopping both on Fen Rd and The Street on more than on occasion in the early hours of the morning. Also there have been thefts of produce on sale in the village and at least two cases of thefts from fruit trees. I cannot emphasise enough that if you see anything at all that causes you concern, phone the police. We may complain about policing but if we do not do everything in our power to help the police then we are at fault.

I am very pleased to confirm that the War Memorial Trust is now set up and will in future oversee the maintainance of the Memorial.

The breakdown of several footpaths in the village because they are being used by horses is a cause for concern and notices have be erected on one path informing riders that these are not for use by horses. The state of the roads in and around the village continues to deteriorate. The break down of the verges by heavy vehicles, the damage to the surface of the lanes by the weight of vehicles they were never intended to support and the seemingly total lack of any care for these lanes by some HGV drivers appals the Parish Council. The severe flooding on Church Lane has been the cause of much correspondence with Norfolk Highways. As too, the state of Hubbards lane. I have in fact today meet with an engineer from Norfolk Highways to discuss the state of these lanes and what can be done.

Whilst we have every right to expect outside agencies to play their part in maintaining our village we ourselves can make a major difference. We can ensure that we drive carefully at reasonably speeds. We can respect footpaths. We can remember as home owners and land owners we are responsible for the maintainance of drainage ditches that abut our property and without that maintainance there will be

more flooding. We can repair our fence when it falls into the roadway and trim back our hedge when it obscures vision and we can report pot holes to Norfolk both by phone and on line.

Finally I wish to once again give my thanks to all the members of the Parish Council for their time and efforts on behalf of the village and a very special thank you to Michelle, our Clerk, without whom, I for one, would be lost. Thank you.

PCC Report from Tim Stevenson

I can report that the Parish Church Council remains active as custodians of our Parish Church. We have just had our quinquennial inspection (the 5 year survey of the building). A number of urgent matters have been identified, particularly rendering safe the trees outside the Churchyard. That is being attended to although I have to say not without obstruction and rather unfortunate officialdom from Breckland District Council. We will however overcome those matters and, as we have set out, try to ensure that the Parish Church survives and prospers in our community.

I have to report with some sadness that the Reverend John Bull who has been looking after the Parish on a part time basis has now decided finally to retire. I understand that the Diocese will be looking for a replacement. We will keep our fingers crossed for somebody who has managed to fit in as well as John has managed. He will be missed.

We are always pleased to welcome new members of our congregation. Please tell parishioners that they are always welcome at our services and social events, or indeed just to visit our wonderful building and reflect in the context of something that has been about for over 800 years.

Kind regards

Tim Stevenson

John Dyer Charity Report to Annual Village Meeting 2013

The John Dyer Charity was set up in 1828 for the benefit of school children in Kenninghall and Blo' Norton; Kenninghall receives $\frac{2}{3}$ of the income and Blo' Norton receives $\frac{1}{3}$. We have two bank accounts at Barclays Bank at Attleborough, one for the whole charity and a second account to store the Blo' Norton part for use under Blo' Norton control. Let me deal with the main charity account first.

On January 1st last year the balance at the bank account 60343951 was £464.54 with cheques outstanding for the 2011 division of income £462, leaving a remaining balance of £2.54.

During 2012 quarterly dividends were received from the Charities Investment Funds, £152.40 in February, £87.43 in May, £101.67 in August and again £101.67 in November. In addition two six monthly dividends were received from the Charity's 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ % War Stock, 89 pence in both June and December. These make a total of £447.49. The Charity trustees will be asked to approve at our AGM a division of 2012 income to give Kenninghall £298 and Blo' Norton £149, leaving 49 pence at the bank.

The main investment has been valued by the Charities Investment Fund as at December 31st 2012 at £10,274.82 and the Government War Stock is £50.

Kenninghall has a school and uses all of its part of the income for its school. Our part is kept at Barclays Bank Attleborough, account 23155013.

On January 1st 2012 we had £870.62, with two cheques outstanding. An income cheque paid in during January, £154 and a cheque outstanding for a grant, £100; when these were paid in and out we had £924.62. The proposed income division for 2012 would allow us £149, giving £1073.62. One grant has just been made, £50, leaving in £1023.62.

We hope that children and teenagers who are at school, or their parents and guardians, will consider applying for grants towards worthwhile expenses, such as, sport, fees, education and other expenses. It may be that a larger project may emerge for benefit of the youngsters to which this could be a good contribution.

Mike Bristow

Blo' Norton Local History Group

2012 has been an ambitious year for Blo' Norton Local History Group with six external speakers on a range of subjects. These started with Derek Palgrave talking on the role of our ancestors in the development of rural technology. Steven Govier told us about the discovery of the Hoxne Treasure. Sheila Wright gave an interesting presentation on village schools with a very personal view based on her own experience as a teacher in such a school.

Members visited West Stow to see interpretations of what a Saxon village might have looked like. Another visit to the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum followed a talk about the group at the village hall. Some members got together to clean and sort the "finds" from the field walk at the DMV last year. There was an awful lot of stone for someone's drive! But the weather allowed the activity to take place outside. And the weather held for the members "get together" afternoon tea at The Old Case.

Charlotte Paton gave a fascinating account of her journey to research the life of Fred Rolfe, self-styled "King of the Norfolk Poachers". This was followed by Monica Place talking about Richard Cobbold's Wortham. It even included a 21st Century technological bodge when the projector could not be made to show the film on the truth about the Norfolk poacher, Fred Rolfe! (Rescheduled to the AGM.)

We have started 2013 with a talk on the Angel roofs in East Anglia. Members only are having a special session this month at Diss Library on using the computer for family history research. In April Jenny Vere will give a talk on the Lopham linen industry. On Sunday afternoon 19 May, we are having another guided walk around the village. Later in the year we shall be visiting Eye, finding out about Victorian rural women, how to develop a village map project and our usual film show. The AGM is on 16 December.

We need recruit more members to be able to continue ambitious programmes and everyone can help in this! So please try to persuade friends and neighbours to join us. Membership costs £18 for a family and £12 for an individual. Most meetings are open to visitors at £3.00 per person.

Blo' Norton Village Hall

Blo' Norton has now very few facilities left in the parish – no school, post office or pub. There are really only two places for people to meet for community activities: St Andrew's church and the village hall. For a variety of reasons, the church is restricted in what it can offer and not everyone feels comfortable about meeting there. The village hall, on the other hand, provides somewhere for public, social and private occasions. Without the village hall, where would elections, parish council meetings, the harvest supper, 18th birthday parties, Pilates classes, the Local History Group and this Annual Parish Meeting assemble in the village?

This introduction is to try to encourage parishioners to value the village hall and get involved in its running and maintenance. Over the past year, the committee has had to cancel a fund-raising Summer Fete because of lack of volunteers to help run it. The bar has been opened on a regular basis but was not supported enough to make it worthwhile.

We have, however had successful events including: a St George's Day Quiz with bangers and mash; a yard sale, although disappointing numbers compared with last time; a pumpkin festival; a Christmas Decoration Coffee Morning kindly organised by Jennifer Davey (not a committee member); and a Burns Night thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Financially, we are comfortable at present with a reasonably full oil tank and over £3,000 in the bank. £1,500 of this is in the renovations fund. This is despite having work done in the ladies and gent's toilets to the wash basins, and continuing repairs to the heating system (more needed there).

Our main problem is that the committee is too small – we are only six and need at least another two, or a group of people to organise and run events – and we have no chairman. Because of this, we made a decision that we would generally try to put on larger activities to raise funds rather a lots of small ones that take lots of effort for small returns.

We have also been unable to make bids for funding to renovate the hall including installing disabled toilets because we are too stretched to undertake the work needed. This is unfortunate because in the present difficult economic climate, funding has been made available for this type of work for three years (now two), and the Norfolk County Council scheme has also been restarted for the short term.

So please try to find time to support the village hall and to join the committee or organise events. Jennifer Davey's coffee morning was very helpful for us raising useful funds without the committee having to do lots of extra work.

Contact Cheryl Davis (Hon Sec) or any other committee member if you can are willing to join the committee, chair it, or help organise events.

John Dixon (Hon Treasurer)

BLO NORTON WAR MEMORIAL TRUST REPORT

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 12/03/2013 GIVEN BY ANN LAMBERT

The War Memorial Trust was set up following an open village meeting early last year. Its primary aim is to ensure sufficient funds are always available for the future maintenance of the War Memorial.

The Memorial was cleaned and repainted last year using up the money held by the PCC, with a top up from the Parish council.

We now have to ensure we raise money for future maintenance.

The Trust Fund had a tremendous start with a donation of £644 raised by Mrs. Cathy Hosier who arranged and financed a Curry Night. I'm sure the village will join me in saying "Thank you so much" to Cathy and those who supported her on that evening.

Fundraising events planned for this year are a Coffee morning at the end of May and a Beetle Drive late October, dates of which yet to be confirmed, but will be advertised. Donations can be made at any time to one of the Trustees, currently me, Joan, John and Sandra. 'Every little helps'. We are in process of seeking Charitable Status, which if successful, will increase the value of any donations received from a taxpayer via Giftaid.

The AGM will be held at 7.30pm. on Tuesday 02/04/2013 to which all are invited.