

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING HELD IN THE MEMORIAL ROOM AT THE VILLAGE HALL MARTHAM ON THURSDAY MAY 10TH AT 20HRS.

*Mike Huke presiding as Chairman
Pat Devlin - clerk*

Together with 22 members of the public, eight parish councillors and PC Cook

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance.

1. The minutes of the previous annual village meeting having been circulated were then confirmed as a true record.
Proposed Mrs G Moore, seconded Mr Porter
2. The Chairman then gave his annual report saying that the Parish Council had been actively working toward improving village life and managing its assets. Much “back office” work had been carried out to ensure correct policies were in place.
All parish assets had been reviewed and had resulted in all street furniture and Parish owned bus shelters being redecorated. The village sign on the Green had needed extensive repairs but was now reinstated, although it would probably be advisable to take a fibreglass casting of it at some stage.
The allotments continued with full tenancy and a waiting list.
Recycling had been given high priority and had resulted in improved facilities and a good income for the village. The employment of contract cleaners had improved the general appearance of the village. Four new welcoming signs had been erected at each entrance to the village, these were the results of designs by school year groups and village residents.
The new play area complex had been opened by the Mayoress last June, a culmination of 18 months hard work and was proving a successful facility.
The council had experienced a difficult employment issue with the former clerk Lisa Harold which had resulted in a £10,000 out of court settlement. The issues had arisen out of a revision of employment contract. He explained that the council were shocked when the clerk after a lengthy period of paid leave then resigned and issued these proceedings. The council took legal advice on this matter which unfortunately invalidated their insurance cover, the former clerk having insurance to cover her claim. The decision to settle out of court was not unanimous but the majority of councillors were concerned that the costs could have more than doubled if the council had gone to tribunal.
He explained that the additional burden for this settlement was £3.44 for each household for one year, the difference was being met out of parish reserves. It was envisaged reducing the parish rate to the former level next year. He explained that during this time two temporary clerks and a new clerk in waiting had been employed on the same terms with no concerns.
He asked that the Parish Council’s achievements during the year should not be overshadowed by this one issue. Overall 2006/2007 had been an extremely successful year.
The council intended to continue being active in improving the whole village with investigations into Christmas Lighting, improved footpath mapping, and additional Activities to compliment the visit of the Fair in May.

3. The Chairman then introduced the clerk designate, Peter Dawson, who would join the Parish Council early July.
He then thanked the current temporary clerk Pat Devlin for her work during her contract period.
The Chairman then opened the meeting for questions from the floor.
Mr Porter asked about the speed reductions on Back Lane. He was informed that this was in hand and that the scheme would be implemented as soon as most building work was completed and monies collected. He further asked about the possibility of a zebra crossing at the Medical Centre. There was no crossing planned at present, these were subject to usage measurements to prove need. The Chairman did then explain the the Parish Council had negotiated lighting for the path leading to the Medical Centre although the Parish would have to pay for the running costs once installed.
Mr Brian Newman asked whether any funding for the village signs had been sought from the Rural Projects Fund. None had, but the chairman explained that most of the project had been funded from outside sources including the Carnival.
Mr Brian Newman then asked whether a flashing 30mph sign could be installed near to the Medical Centre as it was a fast road and needed some sort of traffic control. The Chairman explained that it would almost certainly have to be funded by the Parish which would mean through the parish rate.
Mr Gordon Curtis asked why the Personnel matter was not brought to the village. It was explained that once the settlement had been made a statement had been put on the village notice boards and the matter brought to the annual meeting. The meeting was once again told that the parish had learnt a difficult lesson but had put policies in place to ensure that nothing like this would happen again.
Mr Curtis then went on to ask whether the Parish Council was in charge of the parish staithe. It was explained that staithe belonged to the parish but was run by a trust as it was registered as a charity. He asked why the money was not used in the village. All monies went to the trust and they were allowed to use a percentage of those monies for the general upkeep and improvement, which had been done during the last four years. It was asked whether the village had any other income except the precept. The Fair paid a rent for using the Village Green, all other village organisations had free use. There was also a minimal income from the allotments after payment of the rent to the County Council.
Christine Kirby asked for details of the incident with the clerk. It was explained that the Parish Council were not prepared to go into detail only to say she had resigned saying that the Parish Council had made things too difficult for her continue.
Mr Newman asked whether the parish now had insurance cover for this type of event. It was explained that the cover had always been there and would continue to be and should there be any reason for legal advice the insurance company would now be the first contact.
Cllr Jordan then clarified that the claim entered by the former clerk was for Constructive Dismissal.
The Chairman then took the opportunity to explain that the Parish Council were helping as much as possible to provide a new building for the scouts. This would be on the land at Staithe Road which would also be an open green area for residents.
Mr Newman asked what would happen to the old building. He was told that it belonged to the church.

There being no further business the Chairman then closed the meeting at 20.45hrs

Signed..... Dated.....