

LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH 8th May 2017

Present – Wally Binder (Chairman).

Thirteen members of the public.

District Councillor Welsby. District and County Councillor Field.

Clerk to the Council - Janet Gobey

1. Welcome.

The Chairman opened the Meeting at 7.30 pm and welcomed everybody to the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Great Blakenham.

2. To approve the Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Parish.

The Clerk read out the Draft Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Parish. These were agreed and the Chairman signed them as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

3. To receive the Chairman's Annual Report.

The Chairman delivered his report.

The Council has held the required number of Meetings and there are no vacancies for Councillors at present.

The Chairman felt that the Council was now much more up to date with technology and hoped that the website was a of benefit to everybody.

The Parish Council has installed two replacement noticeboards and one new one. The boards are in the Common, Little Box Meadow and the Beeches. The Chairman thanked Cllrs Welsby and Field for the financial contribution from their Locality Budget towards the costs and Cllr. Barry Palmer for installing the noticeboards free of charge.

The Chairman also thanked the cleaner for their hard work, particularly in the Village Hall, and the volunteer bookings contact for the Village Hall for the support that he gave to the Hall and to users of it.

The new playground equipment is ready and waiting and should be installed shortly.

The Council is aware that repairs and improvements are required to the Village Hall, but there has been no progress with obtaining a long term lease from Diocese. This means that the Council is unable to apply for any grants towards the costs.

Finally, the Chairman thanked Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work and input during the year.

4. To receive the Reports from District and County Councillors.

Councillor Field presented his Report and handed out copies. A major issue during the year have been reducing budgets. Increasing demand for social care has meant that there has been an increase in that budget. Efficiency drives continue in all areas of the Council's work. Highways are under a lot of pressure with issues to do with potholes, yellow lines, village signs and mud and flooding on the roads. Additionally, there have been problems with Highways contracts. Several local schools have moved or are moving to Academy status. EAW construction work – Cllr. Field has received notice of a number of temporary speed restriction on roads in the area e.g. the B113 in connection with this.

Councillor Welsby congratulated Cllr. Field on retaining his County Council seat. He wished to put on record that Cllr. Field works very hard for the community and has made an important contribution to initiatives such as County's successful drive to reduce bed blocking. Cllr. Welsby discussed the work that is underway to produce the new Five Year Local Plan – currently at the stage of identifying potential development sites. He felt that there had been enough development in the local area and was pleased to see that development sites were also being identified in other areas of the County. Suffolk County Council is in the process of borrowing £50 million to invest in property. It is intended that the income from these investments will cover the cost of the loan and create extra revenue for the Council.

5. To receive the Village Hall Report

The Clerk presented the Village Hall report. Despite efforts to promote the use of the Hall in InTouch and on the website, use of the Hall has decreased this year, with very few bookings in the last few months. As a result, income has dropped. Costs have increased, particularly electricity. Also, some essential maintenance was carried out and the extra costs of this have resulted in the Hall making a loss of £843 in 2016/17.

The Chairman said that the Parish Council regarded the Hall as an essential resource for the Village and that they intended to continue to subsidise it so that it was available for the use of residents, both in the village and in the wider area.

6. Opportunity for parishioners to raise any other relevant matters

It was noted that a resident of the village had presented their apologies for not being able to attend the Meeting and indicated their willingness to be co-opted to the Council if a vacancy should occur.

A member of the public asked to discuss the memorandum from MSDC:

3655/13. EH - Discharge of Conditions 11 and 25. Erection of two greenhouses, associated ancillary infrastructure, provision of a pipeline to the Great Blakenham Energy From Waste Plant and the diversion of a Public Right of Way. (Item 15 on the Agenda for the following Annual Meeting of the Parish). Residents of the Common were clear that the developer should be held to these Conditions, and all others included in the planning permission, and sought the support of the Parish Council in this. They felt that the developer should be made to adhere to the agreement and do not want it to be diluted in any way. There was some concern as to whether there would be an out of hours emergency contact from MSDC if the developer was believed to be breaking the Conditions of the planning permission, but Cllr. Field reassured residents that emergency contacts would be available through Environmental Health. It was agreed that the Council would decide on their response when the item was reached in the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Agenda.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.10 pm with thanks to all concerned.