

LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH
15th May 2018 at 7.30pm in Great Blakenham Village Hall

Present – Wally Binder (Chairman).
Seven members of the public.
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 2017 Annual Meeting of the Parish.
The Clerk read out the Draft Minutes of the 2017 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 the Chairman was pleased to be able to report that the Council is at full strength.
The Chairman thanked the cleaner for his 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 has been installed and is a great improvement on the old equipment. The Chairman thanked County and District Councillor John Field and the Suez UK Trust for their generous contributions towards the costs.
The next major project for the Parish Council will be repairs and improvements for the Village Hall. However, despite many attempts to move this forward, there has been no progress with obtaining a long term lease from the Diocese. The land is rented on a one year licence and this lack of long term security means that the Council is unable to apply for any grants towards the costs.
SnOasis Reserved Matters - the Chairman reported this seems to be dragging on with no end in sight, in spite of the efforts of the SPA. He has attended a number of meetings and is able to assure residents that the SPA takes every opportunity to raise their concerns.
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 put extra strain on resources. Cuts continue in all areas of the Council's work, in spite of efficiency measures. Highways continue to struggle with issues to do with potholes, yellow lines and mud and flooding on the roads. Complaints about potholes have risen sharply.

Suffolk County Council has borrowed £50 million to invest in property, despite the misgivings of some County Councillors. This property can be located anywhere and will not necessarily be in Suffolk. It is intended that the income from these investments will cover the cost of the loan and create extra revenue for the Council.

Housing – the Barham Church Lane development will be represented for approval.

MSDC does not yet have an identified five year supply of land for housing. Ipswich is regarded as a centre of future employment growth. This will lead to greater pressure for more housing on the villages in the “Greater Ipswich” area

5. To receive the Village Hall Report

The Clerk presented the Village Hall report. Despite efforts to promote 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. A regular user is no longer booking so often. As a result, income has gone down. Costs have increased, particularly electricity and the Hall is running at an increasing loss.

The Chairman said that the Parish Council still 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.

A parishioner asked about maintenance of the churchyard. It was confirmed that it would be undertaken by the Community Payback Scheme again this year and there would be no charge for the work.