

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Tuesday 23th May 2017 at  
THE VILLAGE HALL, Humber Doucy Lane at 7.30pm**

---

CHAIRMAN: Mr P Richings

PARISH COUNCILLORS: Mr D Francis, Mr P Richings, Mr R Nunn, Mrs C Gower, Mrs B Richardson-Todd, Mr B Ward, Mr J Wright, Mr R Whiting

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 13 members of public.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: Mr R Whiting

COUNTY COUNCILLORS: Mr R Whiting

OTHERS PRESENT: Mrs S Stannard - Asst Clerk; Mr R McCabe from Wel Medical.

APOLOGIES: Parish Councillors, Mrs S Todd (family commitment), Mr Westrup (Holiday), Mr M Newton (another commitment)  
District Councillors Ms S Dean (work commitment), Mrs M Brown (unwell), Clerk Mr M Bentley (family bereavement), PCSO Mr Mike Sarbutts

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted as detailed above.

**2. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON Tuesday 24 May 2016 at Village Hall**

These were made available to all present. Mrs Richardson-Todd proposed that the minutes be accepted, seconded by Ms Gower with all in favour. The minutes were duly signed as a correct record with no alterations.

**Matters arising:** - None

**3. DEFIBRILLATOR DEMONSTRATION – RICKY McCABE FROM WEL MEDICAL**

Mr Richings introduced Mr McCabe and he provided a demonstration regarding the use of the IPAD SP1 Defibrillator. The Chairman thanked Mr McCabe for the interesting demonstration. Mr McCabe left the meeting.

**4. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR**

**Parish Council Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017** – Copies of the Parish Council approved and as yet un-audited accounts were distributed to all present. The accounts have been audited and passed by the Internal Auditor but not yet by the External Auditor. The Chairman and Asst Clerk to the Council explained the various expenditures and incomes and noted variances on the previous year.

**RECEIPTS:** Of note were:- Total receipts at £165,735 was only £187 more than the previous year (£165,548). Burial receipts were up by £4,692 at £27,779. The Council had gratefully received a total of £8,126 in grant money compared to £32,825 the previous year. Interestingly the year before that was £8,259. The peak last year (2016) was caused by grants of £19k from the SCDC Sports/Play Space fund towards play area improvements.

A VAT Refund at £20,705 was the amount re-claimed for 2015/16 transactions, an increase of £15,166 on the previous year – attributed to expenditure on cemetery extension build.

**PAYMENTS:** 'Total payments' for the year at £159,772 were down from £206,887 the previous year. This was accounted for by the expenditure on the cemetery extension construction and major play area work the previous year.

Thus total cash assets at the bank were £153,141, at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 an increase of £16,838 on the previous year. Of those cash assets £95,629 was Earmarked Reserves. Unusually the year ended with almost £11,000 of cheques not reconciled (Cleared) and that amount is included in the Earmarked Reserve value stated. As a result the cash assets at the bank were inflated out of context by the larger than normal unreconciled amount.

The end of year balance in the general account was £2,887 less than the amount at the end of the previous year, whilst the cemetery current account balance ended the year £19,705 better off than the previous year, partly thanks to nearly £12,000 VAT refund paid into that account. The cemetery account was also boosted by

a number of people paying for Exclusive Rights of Burial in advance of passing away. The Business Premium account remained static with a meagre £20.28 of interest paid in.

No questions were asked.

The members present accepted the Parish Council Financial Accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

**5. POLICE REPORT – THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM**

PCSO Mike Sarbutts were unable to attend. A short written report was distributed.

Mr Richings provided feedback regarding funding for the PCSO by Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council. Comments were made about theft of oil at The Street; youths on mopeds in The Street; rogue trading; and a question was asked about how active the neighbourhood watch scheme is; the possibility of looking into designating Lamberts Lane as a Quiet Lane and reporting the signpost at The Street/ Playford Lane.

**6. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS and QUESTIONS**

**County Councillors and District Councillors** – Mr Whiting provided a verbal report as a county and district councillor.

**7. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Mr Richings provided a written report looking back on his year as Chairman of the Parish Council. The full report is attached to these minutes at **Annex 1** and would also be placed on the parish website.

Mr Richings thanked the PCSO Mr Mike Sarbutts, Mr Andrew Duncan (Registrar at the Cemetery), volunteers that look after the play areas and distribute newsletters, contractors, councillors, retired councillors, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk. Mr Richings also indicated that there is currently a councillor vacancy and that the Clerk will be retiring at the end of the year.

**8. OPEN FORUM**

There were one questions.

**9. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and raising points of concern.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm and tea and coffee was served.

ooOOOoo

## Annex 1 – Chairmans Report

### Chairman's report to Rushmere St. Andrew Annual Parish Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Each year in March, the Annual Council Tax Bill drops through your letterbox. The statement allocates monies to Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council and Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner. The smallest amount goes to the Parish Council and for the year 2017/18, a total of £112,000 Precept is taken from all households and equates to £44.19 for a Band D property.

How is this spent? Clearly, from year to year, projects will vary, but a significant amount in each year's allocation is for recurring items.

Administrative expenses take up a significant proportion with salaries for our Clerk & Assistant Clerk, office rent, room hire charges, insurance and audit premiums, stationery, telephone costs all eating into the budget. For the 1<sup>st</sup> time ever, in 2016 we moved from a home based clerking service into a formal office environment and this required a 'one-off' expenditure to kit things out. Typically in any year, the Parish Council holds around 40 meetings and each needs a clerking service to record the minutes and carry out actions determined by the Council. The Parish Council looks after well over 200 assets within the Parish ranging from land ownership, play and gym equipment, doggy bins, grit bins, seats, noticeboards and any defects reported / maintenance required need action arranging via our staff.

From a planning perspective, as Statutory Consultees, we looked at 68 planning applications made within the Parish in 2016/17. Nothing major here, they ranged from 6 new-build houses, through extensions down to dropped down kerbs. We have also looked further afield to review the impact upon the Parish from developments at Henley Gate (1100 properties), Martlesham (140) and Bell Lane (300+). In 2017/18, the long-awaited Adastral Park (2000?) application looks to be imminent.

A significant commitment each year is to pay off a loan taken out when the very well-used Tower Hall was constructed. The light at the end of the tunnel is starting to appear – the £21K+ annual commitment will end in 2024.

Crime Prevention makes a significant dent into our expenses. Over the past few years, in conjunction with Kesgrave Town Council, we have match funded a Police Community Support Officer whereby the police paid half of the cost, KTC paid a third & the Parish paid a sixth. With regards to 2017/18, the Police decided to withdraw their financial support and so the only option available was that of a fully funded one. After very careful consideration, Council took

the decision to take up the offer and £12K went into the Budget for a third / two third basis split between Ourselves and KTC.

Maintenance of open spaces features significantly in our regular expenditure outgoings. We make significant contributions towards maintenance of the Mill Stream & Sandlings Local Nature Reserves. Litter clearance, general repairs and RoSPA inspections for our 5 play areas, along with pond, allotment and ground maintenance take up about £20K per annum of our budget.

Whilst we hold the asset, the Parish Council Lawn Cemetery is run as a self-contained business. Clearly ground, grass cutting hedge and vegetation maintenance is an ongoing expense but is funded from burial and memorial charges. During the past year, additional plots have been prepared for use and created a new area for 'ashes scattering'. Whilst we have made significant expenditure over the past few years to provide a major extension, this exercise has been 'cost neutral' as far as the Council Tax is concerned.

Looking at the above expenditure, the Precept figure has had significant chunks taken out of it. However, it's not as bad as it sounds! The Parish Council is often in a situation where it can "speculate to accumulate" or find grants available to spend locally. Our grateful thanks go to our County & District Councillors for putting significant monies our way to provide facilities – the Parish Council contribution in many cases extending only to the administrative costs in carrying out the project management.

Taking the fully funded projects first: During the year the 'Jubilee Walk' around the Mill Stream and Sandlings area was refurbished with new signage, a new leaflet produced and a Community event provided on the opening day which also combined to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of HM The Queen. A Community Speedwatch group is being set up, the equipment has been purchased and volunteer training is imminent. Three defibrillators have been purchased and will be located at Broke Hall Shops, Tower Hall & the Baptist Church. At Tower Hall Play Area, a new piece of 'toddler' equipment was provided. With £2,000 from the Parish Council & £1,000 SCC Locality Grant, we were able to provide a concrete edge to the highway to allow residents to avoid walking across a muddy verge to access vehicles in Holly Lane. In the Broke Hall & Bixley Farm areas, funding has been agreed to provide drop down kerbs in various locations to make it easier for pedestrians, especially on home-to-school journeys.

In 2017/18, no significant projects are planned – although minor enhancements to the play areas are likely. We are currently in the process of acquiring a

narrow piece of land stretching between The Street and the Parish Council owned grounds of Ipswich School Sports Centre.

### **Retirement of Jean Potter**

New Year's Eve heralded the retirement of Jean Potter, our Assistant Clerk. Over the previous three months, she passed over the reins to Sylvia Stannard. Over recent years Jean has provided us with great service. Her knowledge of identifying pots of money, and persuasive powers, has been invaluable in allowing us to give more to the Parish than the Precept would afford. On the Newsletter side, she and husband Rob have gathered copy and produced the Newsletter. During her period in charge, not only has editorial content been gathered but the organisation and arrangement of advertising has significantly reduced the costs of our twice-yearly publication. At the Cemetery, considerable effort has gone into maintaining good relations with contractors both on day-to-day maintenance issues and also the development of the extension. Significant effort went into arranging quotations for presentation to Council and, once accepted, keeping a watchful eye that all was well. In a similar vein, significant challenges and works at the allotments have similarly been handled. Our play areas have also benefited from Jean's watchful eye. Many of the enhancements which have taken place are as a result of Jean identifying funds available from third parties. Again management of contractors carrying out day-to-day and new work has been carried out to a high standard. We are pleased links with the Parish will continue as she will still be wearing her Parish Halls hat! On behalf of the Parish Council, we wish you a very happy retirement

Phil Richings – Parish Council Chairman