

Radwinter Annual Parish Meeting Minutes of the Meeting 16 April 2012 Held in the Village Hall at 7.45pm.

Present:

Cllrs S Graves (Ch); M Halls; K Shoolheifer; K Thompson, with the Clerk, R A Jones in attendance and C/Cllr S Walsh, D/Cllr S Howells, Lady Suzanne Walker, James Briggs, David Emberson, Michael Southgate, John Whitehead.

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllrs Boyden, Duck & Moore.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting:

Having been circulated they were approved and signed by the Chairman at the PC AGM in May 2011.

3. Chairman's report:

Stephen Graves stated that this was his first full year in office, and that the principal concern had been the setting up of the Village Hall Charity as a separate entity. This has now been completed and he is an ex-officio Trustee and Cllr Katharine Shoolheifer is the appointed Council representative. Much work has been undertaken to get it functioning in the best interests of the village. At the election last May Andrew Jarvis resigned which was a great loss, but fortunately he has been replaced by Ken Thompson who is proving a valued member.

The government's 'localism' agenda has provided scope for UDC to consider our Community Plan as part of their rejuvenated housing programme, which is reported later. As a separate project we now have planning consent for a new sports pavilion, thanks to much extra work by Ray.

Following complaints the situation regarding noise from the bottle bank was investigated and trials made of differing locations but without success; this resulted in the removal of the facility.

Last year for the Royal Wedding we funded and Cllrs Vicky Boyden and Eileen Duck organised with Plow 2 a very successful and happy event. We are hoping to hold an even better event for the Jubilee with some help from the District Councillor's housing bonus pot.

Finally it is no secret that there has been some antagonisms within the Council which caused me to hand in my resignation; however I have been persuaded to withdraw this until the AGM when I shall consider my future. I was not the only casualty of this situation since it caused Ray Jones to hand in his resignation as Clerk, and I wish to record our thanks to Ray for all which he has done and for the support he has given to me in my period of office.

4. Financial Report:

The RFO/Clerk reported that this has been a difficult year due to the restructuring of the finances due to the loss of income from the village hall complex. This loss was compounded by the need to ensure the good condition of the cottages prior to

handing over the the VH Charity and the refurbishment of Walden Road Cottage. On examination it was felt that with some economies the loss could be contained except for the subvention to the Recreation ground of £3000, and it was agreed that the precept would need to be raised to cover this, which even so is still only average for an Uttlesford parish. Our expenditure of £16,317 compared with an income of £14,854, gives a loss of £1,464 which has to be met from our reserves of £35,000. Although these reserves may seem high it should be remembered that we are likely to be called for match funding for the pavilion and a contribution towards the development associated with the community plan.

5A. County Councillor's report:

Cllr Simon Walsh reported on a difficult financial year with cuts of £90M, but with the council tax held. This has caused some restructuring but with minimal effect overall. There is a new highways contract with Ringway Jacobs which should be much more cost-effective when linked with a restructured Local Highways Panel. Improvements have been achieved in children's services and in adult social care. We are participating in the Olympics and our venues have been completed on time and within budget. He is Chair of the Economic Development, Environment, Highways scrutiny committee and also serve on the Police Authority which has had a major reorganisation with forthcoming elections for Police and Crime Commissioners.

5B District Councillor's report:

Cllr Simon Howells gave his first report since his election in May. He confirmed that the council tax has been frozen, the lowest in Essex. We have absorbed government cuts without major reduction in services and some increase to the voluntary sector. Mention was made of the high recycling rate and the further improvements in hand. On planning, there is a major consultation as 'Local Development Framework' which will set the pattern for 15 years. The council is continuing to provide social housing; it already owns ~3000 which it has bought with a loan of £88.4M. In future it will retain all of the rental income.

5C. Community Plan Development:

Stephen Graves reported on the history of the scheme since 2003 to investigate the housing needs in the village. This led to the Parish Plan in 2005, and then to the development of the Community Plan in association with two landowners. This will provide for ~40 houses to the east of East View Close and linking to Bridgefoot. A Housing Needs Survey has been carried out by Councillors on behalf of RCCE of which the results are awaited. As part of the Section 106 agreement currently being negotiated there will be ~40% of social housing, together with possibly a preschool, improvements to school classrooms, a football pitch adjacent to the Rec with access from Walden Road and improved facilities on the Rec, together with allotments and public open space alongside the Pant. Before submission of the planning application there will be a public consultation and exhibition in the village hall. If this scheme is adopted it is probable that there will be no further major development allowed in the village for 15 years.

5D Highways:

Katharine Shoolheifer has kindly agreed to provide this report in absence of one from Cllrs Moore and Duck. She notes that following the cold spell in December 2010 many of our roads were in a poor state of repair with large potholes. Despite many approaches from the Council and individuals it was September before any improvement was made. Even so, following the bad weather this winter the condition of the road surfaces has again deteriorated. Prior to the winter 3 only of our salt bins were refilled and the other 2 missed. They did clear the high path as requested, and eventually repair the footbridge at Bridgefoot. Many complaints have been made to ECC Highways and to our C/Cllr regarding the poor service which we receive from them, and it is hoped that with the new contractor and restructuring of the department there will be some improvement. There are still several outstanding items. We have been informed that there is to be a review of speed limits on minor roads, and we are requesting that Maple Lane, Water Lane and the Plough crossroads should be included.

5E Recreation Ground:

Mark Halls stated that the Council continue to support the management committee both by participation, finance and input to the pavilion project. We are currently refurbishing the car-park.

5F Village Hall Charity:

Katharine Shoolheifer as the Council representative on the Board of Trustees reported that their inaugural meeting was held on 14th April 2011 and since then they have held monthly meetings. These have been mainly concerned with the establishment of the charity, but have also had to deal with the flooding of the hall in July 2011 which caused a significant problem, including the need for a separate electrical supply to the Post Office; they have also initiated improvements to the cottages. A professional structural survey and insurance valuation have been carried out to programme for long-term maintenance.

5G Footpaths report:

Mark Halls reported that most of the paths are in good condition and have been checked by ECC Highways for way marking, etc. The path alongside the Pant at Princes Well is slipping into the river, but this is a natural cause and cannot be rectified.

5H Publicity:

Katharine Shoolheifer reported that July 2011 saw the launch of 'The Radwinter Times'. This is edited, produced and distributed by James Briggs, and funded by the Council. It has proved an excellent way to communicate local issues and events to the community. A welcome pack has been produced and is available on email, and shortly in a printed format.

Thanks were extended to James Briggs and his distributors for their hard work and enthusiasm.

David Mann is also thanked for maintaining the village website.

We also continue to provide quarterly reports for Ambo.

Suzanne Walker is thanked for looking after the village noticeboard for several years;

this is now being looked after by David Emberson, who holds the keys as well as Clare in the Post Office.

6. Questions:

The Chairman requested questions from the floor to any of the speakers. After a brief discussion the meeting was closed at 9.10pm

Copies of the papers may be obtained from the Parish Clerk