

**MINUTES OF GREAT BARTON'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 15th APRIL 2013 COMMENCING AT 8.00 PM**

<u>Item.</u>	Members Present : Councillor Philip Reeve in the Chair, together with Councillors Peter Fisk, Andrew Hill, Kate Trevitt, Roger Davison, Matthew Parker, David Mouncey and Maggie Dunn.	<u>Action</u>
<u>1.0</u>	<p>The meeting was attended by 18 members of the public.</p> <p><u>Election of Chairman</u> The clerk proposed the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Philip Reeve to chair the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Kate Trevitt. Everyone present was in agreement with this decision.</p>	
<u>2.0</u>	<p><u>Chairman's welcome and apologies for absence</u></p>	
<u>2.1</u>	<p>Councillor Philip Reeve welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ed Gibson and Derek Troth.</p>	
<u>3.0</u>	<p><u>To approve the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting in 2012</u> All Councillors and members of the public were supplied with a copy of the minutes from the last Annual Parish Meeting. The minutes were then signed as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Mr Adrian Graves, seconded by Councillor Peter Fisk. All councillors who were present at the meeting and some members of the public voted that they were a true record of the last Annual Parish Meeting in 2012.</p>	
<u>4.0</u>	<p><u>Chairman's Report</u></p>	
<u>4.1</u>	<p>Councillor Philip Reeve gave a report from the last year. Thanks were given to Mr Robert Possnett who stood down as a Councillor. A new Councillor, Mrs Maggie Dunn, was appointed. There is still space for 1 new councillor. Thanks were given to all Councillors and to the Clerk for her patience and diligence. Updates were given on the following topics:</p>	
<u>4.2</u>	<p><u>Downing Drive/School Road link footpath</u> The reasons for the path not being completed were given. Comments were requested and especially from the neighbouring residents. This item was raised again at the question and answer session. Councillor Philip Reeve stated that he would like to see a way forward to resolve the issues with the residents so that the path can be completed for the rest of the community. The Sycamore tree, next to the junction of the path with School Lane, has a Tree Protection Order on it.</p>	
<u>4.3</u>	<p><u>Gt Barton Village Hall</u> There were problems with vandalism at the Village Hall during the year. This resulted in the Parish Council conducting an open meeting which highlighted the active areas in the village of 'Neighbourhood Watch'. Thanks were given to Derrick Caley and Ray Stapleton for looking after The Park and Garden Close area. Volunteers were requested through the newsletter, to seek further areas of coverage. To date no responses have been received. The Parish Council remains very supportive of Neighbourhood Watch and would be happy to see it re-established. The Parish Council, the management committee of the Village Hall and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have signed the relevant documents to transfer the Village Hall and car park to freehold. The Playing Field status has been enhanced from 'Possessory' to 'Absolute'. The entrance to the Village Hall through Elms Close has progressed with an individual letter consultation with the residents of the Close and a follow up with Havebury Housing. The funds remain reserved for a scheme. The residents who replied and Havebury Housing would not like to see the island lose its identity and character. The next phase for the Village Hall for a new foyer is underway.</p>	
<u>4.4</u>	<p><u>Youth</u> Although Councillor Derek Troth has tried to fully engage with the youths of the village, to establish a need for youth facilities, no responses have been forthcoming. This will remain an on-going item for the Parish Council.</p>	

<p><u>4.5</u></p>	<p><u>Bowls Club</u> With the ambition to expand and update facilities at the Bowls Club, the Thanksgiving Fund (Village Hall) and the Parish Council are working to ensure the documentation between both parties is up to date.</p>	
<p><u>4.6</u></p>	<p><u>Emergency Response Plan</u> The Annual Residents Guide is printed in the winter issue of the newsletter. Thanks were given to John Roe for taking over leadership of the team and to all those involved.</p>	
<p><u>4.7</u></p>	<p><u>Jubilee Bench</u> Thanks were given to John Maxwell for organising the bench to mark the Queen’s jubilee.</p>	
<p><u>4.8</u></p>	<p><u>Playground</u> A well used facility. The soft area around the climbing frame has been replaced this year at a cost of £3,300.00.</p>	
<p><u>4.9</u></p>	<p><u>Cox Lane</u> Liaison with Havebury continues to provide the balance of a country lane with an acceptable road surface. It has been suggested that restricting the ability of vehicles to use only dedicated parking places may reduce the speed and volume of traffic. Comments were welcomed.</p>	
<p><u>4.10</u></p>	<p><u>Street Litter – cleaning</u> The council is conscious of the state of the countryside within the village. The A143 and School Road are under a 6 weekly sweep by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, which is free to the village. Due to the cost of emptying litter and dog bins, these have been rationalised to be cost effective. The annual bill being £1,300. Another review will be undertaken in the summer.</p>	
<p><u>4.11</u></p>	<p><u>Grants to organisations</u> An unprecedented number of grant requests came before the Council this year, totally £16,000. The assessment centres on the financial status of the group, the numbers of beneficiary parishioners, the target age sector and the case put forward. The following grant cheques were then presented: Gt Barton Scout group £740 for camping equipment; £1,000 Allotment Association to assist in setting up costs and principally towards the costs of the container; Gt Barton Bowls Club £1,500 to assist in the replacement of their bespoke scarifier and Gt Barton Village Hall £2,000, to come out of general reserves, for a new foyer which will provide a unified entrance to the 3 main meeting places. This amounted to total grants of £5,240. The Parish Council are delighted to assist groups within the village and would encourage anybody to start the process by contacting the Clerk.</p>	
<p><u>4.12</u></p>	<p><u>Planning</u> The number of applications has started to increase , from 34 the previous year to 45 this year. The Parish Council contributed to a government consultation around the design and access for planning applications. They recommended that this process should NOT be related only to developments of over 10 properties.</p>	
<p><u>4.13</u></p>	<p><u>Parish Plan</u> Many issues have been identified and completed including East Barton Road footpath to Ice Pits Wood; facilitating energy saving schemes; sites have been researched for a re-cycling centre and the council are keen to expand their ‘green credentials’ but a suitable site has not been yet been found; promotion towards the youth of the village is centred through assistance as shown with support to the Scout Association; thanks to the Woodland Group for creating a link out of Elms Wood to the A143 linking towards Ice Pits Wood and facilitating a circular walk. Input was requested for the placement of dropped kerbs for mobility machines and buggies.</p>	
<p><u>4.14</u></p>	<p><u>Affordable Housing</u> The input towards affordable housing now relies upon the site suitability and the objectives for the village. Funding has been secured for a small development and this is subject to more detailed discussions with the landowner before the Council and other interested parties can take on and debate the detail;</p>	
<p><u>4.15</u></p>	<p><u>Street Lighting</u> No negative reports had been received following St Edmundsbury Borough Council’s decision to manage street lighting by turning off lights between midnight and 5.30am.</p>	

<u>4.16</u>	<p><u>Air Quality</u> The Air Quality Management Order along The Street has now been revoked.</p>														
<u>4.17</u>	<p><u>Icepits Wood</u> The Parish Council still has an option on the 22 acres of Icepits Wood. A valuation from Suffolk County Council has not yet been received. When the time arises a consultation, on the best way of acquiring and managing this asset, will take place.</p>														
<u>4.18</u>	<p><u>Allotments</u> Suffolk County Council made available a 1 acre site on Green Lane for the provision of allotments following contact from the Allotment Association. A 5 year tenancy agreement was offered. The area has now been fenced and a container supplied for storage.</p>														
<u>4.19</u>	<p><u>Newsletter</u> The newsletter occupies 8% of precept and over the last 5 years the costs have risen by 15%. There have been discussions to stabilise or reduce costs including reducing publications to 3 per annum, allowing advertising and reducing the number of pages by putting constant data on the website.</p>														
<u>4.20</u>	<p><u>Precept</u> The precept was increased by 5% which is similar to last year. The contributions are eased by assistance from St Edmundsbury Borough Council. It was discussed in Council that to ignore rising costs would make for significant increases in future years, even more so as support from St Edmundsbury Borough Council declines. Admin has risen by 40% over the last 5 years due to an ever increasing burden from central government.</p>														
<u>4.21</u>	<p><u>Audit Report</u> The auditors gave an unqualified report and thanks were given to the clerk.</p>														
<u>4.22</u>	<p><u>Financial report for the year</u> The Clerk gave the bank balances for the year:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Current A/C</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£11,353.52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bonus Saver</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£39,197.44</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 50,550.96</td> </tr> </table>	Current A/C	£11,353.52	Bonus Saver	£39,197.44			TOTAL	£ 50,550.96						
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<u>4.24</u>	<p><u>Other matters</u> The village and Parish Council websites have been combined. The Suffolk Code of Conduct and General Power of competence have been adopted. Bus route 304, the collection service for Thurston Upper School was changed to ensure large buses did not mount the pavement along School Road. Councillor Derek Troth remains a vital link between the council and the school, as we proceed towards a 2 tier system. Along with Suffolk County Council, the Parish Council is continuing to seek traffic management in School Road to ensure the safety of the pupils and minimise nuisance to residents. Councillor Andrew Hill initiated a review of the A143 with Suffolk County Council on safety. Councillor Andrew Hill is overseeing options regarding replacement or restoration of the village sign. An update on the Vision 2031 consultation was given.</p>														

<p><u>4.25</u></p>	<p>At the end of the report, Councillor Philip Reeve asked the audience the following questions: (1) How important is it to our community to finish the School Lane/Downing Drive linked footpath? (2) Do we progress with the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme? (3) Do we examine traffic calming on Cox Lane? Restrict the ability of vehicles to move off the lane and thus only use dedicated passing places? (4) How do we save costs for the Newsletter? What content is required? (5) Are you supportive of a precept increase and the majority then provided back as grant assistance in these austere times?</p>	
<p><u>4.26</u></p>	<p>Replies to the clerk please or join us at our Parish Council meeting on 20th May 2013. Councillors were thanked again along with village volunteers including the Village Hall Management Committee, Peter Turner, Peter Fisk; Ed Gibson for editing the newsletter; Derek Troth as school governor and youth co-ordinator; Peter Fisk and David Mouncey as tree wardens and Councillors Peter Fisk, Andrew Hill, Roger Davison and David Mouncey on the planning committee.</p>	
<p><u>5.0</u></p>	<p><u>Report from County Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger</u></p>	
<p><u>5.1</u></p>	<p>County Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger gave a report on Suffolk County Council's budget savings of £25 million and the protection of front-line services; the future of Suffolk's libraries; education and the 'raising the bar' initiative; Suffolk's residential care homes; the growth strategy for Suffolk; broadband speeds; the official start of construction of Suffolk's energy-from waste facility; mobile speed activated signs and potholes.</p>	
<p><u>5.2</u></p>	<p>Councillor Hopfensperger's locality budget has been used to support the Allotment Association with funding for fencing, the parish council to help provide funding to improve access to the village hall and the Gt Barton Scouts with their hut.</p>	
<p><u>6.0</u></p>	<p><u>Report from Borough Councillor Sarah Broughton</u></p>	
<p><u>6.0</u></p>	<p>Councillor Sarah Broughton reported that St Edmundsbury Borough Council has frozen council tax again for the 3rd year running; Good progress is being made on the St Edmundsbury Borough Council/Forest Heath shared services project; Council Tax Benefit has reduced by 10%. This has been done by changing the type of support given; A localised council tax support scheme will be introduced; the level of funding for Parish Council's to help towards administration and other expenses, has been maintained, despite the cutbacks; long term vision remains a priority; the Theatre Royal and the Apex are looking to work together and the textile re-cycling scheme has been successful.</p>	
<p><u>7.0</u></p>	<p><u>Presentation from Mrs Sarah Rees, Head Teacher, Gt Barton Primary School</u></p>	
<p><u>7.0</u></p>	<p>Mrs Sarah Rees gave information on the timeline for changing to the 2 tier system. Building work started in March to construct 2 further classrooms for years 5 and 6. September 2013 will see the first intake of year 5 pupils. Details of the reasons for change were given. Benefits for the community included raised attainment for children, only 1 change of school, larger school with a wider range of staff experience, enhanced facilities for local children and the possible addition of a sports field. An updated travel plan will be published shortly. There were discussions on the continued parking problems on School Road. Mrs Rees offered to set up a meeting with local residents to answer any questions, if there was sufficient interest.</p>	
<p><u>8.0</u></p>	<p><u>Report on Affordable Housing</u></p>	
<p><u>8.0</u></p>	<p>The ex-chairman of Cockfield Parish Council, Mr Robin Morley and the clerk gave their experiences of affordable housing projects in Cockfield. These included: an open meeting to consult with residents; the parish council attending all planning meetings relating to the development and being very 'hands on'; the increase in enthusiasm once building work starts; 1 bed properties have facilities to extend into the attic; obtaining the right site for the village; providing opportunities and changing/enhancing lives; all houses filled with people with a local connection; no funds were provided by the Parish Council and S106 agreement to maintain local connection rights.</p>	
<p><u>9.0</u></p>	<p><u>Village Matters (residents questions and comments)</u></p>	
<p><u>9.1</u></p>	<p>Councillor Philip Reeve confirmed that there was no link between the allotments and the new fencing on Green Lane.</p>	

<p><u>9.2</u></p>	<p>Financial information available on the website will be updated.</p>	
<p><u>9.3</u></p>	<p>Litter in the village was discussed and volunteers for a litter pick requested. The Council will discuss this further.</p>	
<p><u>9.4</u></p>	<p>Other items raised included completion of the School Lane/Downing Drive linked footpath, saving newsletter costs and what content is required. The Parish Council would like feedback on this so that the ideas can be debated.</p>	
<p><u>9.5</u></p>	<p>Issues were raised with the pill box on East Barton Road and who is responsible for it.</p>	
<p><u>10.0</u></p>	<p><u>Chairman's thanks</u></p>	
	<p>Thanks were given to Councillor Sarah Broughton, Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger, and everyone giving presentations.</p>	
	<p>The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 10.30 pm and refreshments were served.</p>	
	<p>Sign & Print name</p>	
	<p>Date</p>	
	<p>CHAIRMAN OF THIS MEETING. Signed as confirmation that they are a true record.</p>	