

COLTISHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall on 19th April 2010

Present

Chairman John Harding, Doreen Snelling, Michael Spinks, Joe Chapman, Robert Watson, Nigel Haines, David Smith, Mike Warren, Keith Childerhouse, Peter Baker, Mark Rischmiller, Peter Croot, County Councillor James Carswell and 14 Parishioners.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from District Councillor Alan Mallett, Joan Sandford-Cook of the Art Workshop, Kevin Fisher from the cricket club, David Chisnell from the Railway Tavern.

Chairman Harding opened the meeting by welcoming all present.

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 20th April 2009.

These were considered, approved and signed by John Harding as Chairman. Copies were available as required.

3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

John Harding, Doreen Snelling, Robert Watson and Peter Baker declared an interest in the Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity. Michael Spinks declared an interest as a Tree Warden. Michael Spinks and Nigel Haines are Trustees of the Coltishall Commons Management Trust.

4. Chairman's report

A very busy year for councillors and the clerk saw attendance at a range of meetings aside from the scheduled parish meetings. Mark Rischmiller was welcomed as a new councillor, and James Carswell as our new County Councillor.

Concerns included the ongoing unitary question, the many pot-holes resulting from the hard winter, and the future use of the remaining area at the former RAF base. The Ministry of Justice is expected to sell the land within this financial year, and arrange public presentations to inform local parishes of its use.

The prison was eventually named HMP Bure; not the name preferred by the parish. It is now fully open and makes every effort to be a good neighbour. The prison liaison committee maintains good contact to keep surrounding parishes informed.

The parish plan is in its final stages thanks to the volunteers on the Steering Group. Recommendations following from it will reflect the perceived needs and wishes of the community. Achieving those aims will require community involvement and both support and funding from local government and grant funding.

Police statistics indicate that Coltishall has a low crime rate, although it is thought that much low-level crime goes unreported. Speedwatch is ongoing, and despite dwindling numbers of volunteers has achieved great success since its inception, particularly seen in the more frequent appearance of police radar vans. Coltishall was one of the first villages considered for a speed reduction scheme. It was not suitable for Coltishall, but will be taken up by Horstead.

The Rectory Road footpath and one-way proposals would improve pedestrian safety; Paul Gallop from Norfolk County Council was thanked for his patience and guidance with this scheme.

The clerk and Robert Watson have attended CiLCA training to meet local government requirements, and as an essential element towards gaining Quality Status.

Councillors were thanked for their continued dedication and unwavering support for the community and the vast amount of work they voluntarily undertake in the village. The clerk

was thanked for her guidance, and for handling the full audit check required by Mazars Auditors.

5. Rectory Road Proposals

There are concerns that solving the issue of pedestrian safety by installing a footpath without addressing the dangers of crossing the North Walsham Road. The footpath will tie in with the school travel plan and the “Walk to School” initiative. The over-riding concern is for pedestrian safety, especially of children. It is acknowledged that the scheme will increase traffic along Westbourne Road.

6. Police Report

PCSO Laura Munro-Oakley reported a drop in reported crime of some 50% since last year, with 23 recorded crimes. Anti-social behaviour has declined and police continue to patrol the area regularly. Thefts on allotments last year prompted a series of measures to deter thieves. Laura attended assemblies at school to talk on road safety, stranger danger, and courtesy to others at Hallowe'en. An initiative to educate parents about safe and considerate parking was well-received. Homewatch schemes are promoted albeit under a new central administration. Speeding is addressed by police officers and Safer Neighbourhood Teams to advise and enforce limits. Every parish has a Liaison Officer to promote community engagement, tackle local concerns and issues, and provide crime prevention advice to businesses, organisations and parishioners. Laura welcomes invitations to visit organisations and groups to discuss local issues.

7. James Carswell – County Councillor

Concerns in Coltishall centred around speeding and the gritting of Hautbois Road. It is hoped that funding will be available next winter for the latter. Wider issues include the proposed Eco-town at Rackheath, and the economy, both nationally and locally. It will be a challenging year with some 4-5 years of stringent savings envisaged. Internal reorganisations will go some way to protecting front-line services. Much depends on the results of the General Election but careful plans will have to be made to provide adequate services despite funding cuts. James continues to work with ongoing projects such as the prison, the disposal of the remaining land adjacent to the prison, and the proposed wind turbine. He thanked the parish council for its commitment to the community and its help towards him as a new county councillor.

8. Alan Mallett – District Councillor

Cllr Mallett had provided a report to be read at the meeting. The past year had seen Broadland DC providing a good standard of service despite the Unitary debate. Council Tax increase was restricted to 1.9% without reducing services. The Council received an award for its policy towards employees. Some £2million allocated last year alleviated some of the financial difficulties experienced by Broadland businesses and individuals during the economic downturn. Special provision was made to tackle homelessness. Council Tax collection rates was 99.2%; those who seek to avoid payment are rigorously pursued. The coming year will see the Joint Core Strategy on which residents are urged to make their views known. Expected Government cut-backs have been anticipated in the 4-year Budget Plan which provides for a 20% drop in External Support without material cuts in services.

9. HMP Bure – Governor Paul Cawkwell

HMP Bure opened in two phases : the first opened on 30th November 2009, and the second on 5th April 2010. It employs 286 staff at National pay rates, with a further 24 posts to be filled, and another 100 employed by outside agencies such as the NHS and education providers. This eclipses the number of civilian jobs lost when the RAF base closed.

The liaison committee includes parish and county councillors, and meets bi-monthly. Visits from representatives of local parishes were arranged prior to the prison opening, and a good relationship with the Douglas Bader centre has been established. The prison has links with the North Norfolk Business Forum, and has honoured its promise to provide a bus service for prison visitors from both Norwich termini.

The prison occupies only 32 acres of the total 630, and has no interest in extending its footprint. A new unit within the boundary is planned to house a further 100 prisoners bringing the total to circa 600. The prison will place no restrictions on development of the remaining land, but is concerned that community views should be considered. Planning conditions of the prison included provision for renewable energy. The proposed wind monitoring mast, and subsequent wind turbine, could compromise future use of the land. Other suitable locations or options could be sought, and plans for the temporary wind mast have been deferred by North Norfolk District Council.

A community woodland is to be planted in an area of 32.5 acres.

10. Colt Jags

Tricia Frost reported that the Jags football team was started some nine years ago, and currently uses both the top field and the Village Hall field. There are five youth teams for boys ranging from 8 years old to 13, a girls' team and a ladies section. There are 15 qualified coaches. The Kings Head sponsor the Under 11s team, and jackets for the ladies' squad were provided by Central Garage. The Under 11s will play in the final of their Cup Competition in May, with other teams achieving varying levels of success. The Under 12s, whilst not winning many matches, derive great enjoyment from playing football, and recently won the Aviva prize for most deserving team. Problems with the weather and moles have blighted the pitch this year, but determination won, and all games were eventually played. It is hoped that, with FA support, the teams will grow and build on their reputation for fair play, encouragement and respect.

11. Rev Chris Engelsen

Rev Engelsen thanked the parish council for its donation to the church clock renovations. A further £2000 is still needed to complete the work. He also thanked the council for its donation towards grass cutting. It is hoped to promote community engagement via more village events. As priest-in-charge Rev Engelsen hosts assemblies at school. The lunch club is popular, and means the Church Rooms are now much better used.

12. Allotments report

New allotments have been made to accommodate demand. There are 75 plots let, and one spare, The rent was held at £9.00; most allotment-holders have paid for this year. AllotmentWatch signs have been put up to deter thieving and vandalism. With police help it is hoped that those responsible will take note. Dog-owners persist in allowing their animals to foul on allotments. Some signs are to be put up, but Rachel Thrussell has found some dog-owners to be unhelpful. Fly-tipping is a problem, especially at the Kings Road end. The new pedestrian gate at Rectory Road has allowed the main gate to be locked. A new tap provides water to the new plots. Remedial work has been done to trees near the Kings Road entrance.

13. Cricket club

John Buttifant reported that the square is being tended every week in preparation for the season. The men's team will play in Coltishall every two weeks. The changing rooms and the shed require painting. The club is grateful for the grass cutting, although during wet summers the 10-day cycle is often insufficient.

14. Tree Warden Report

Peter Croot reported that his advice had been sought by several parishioners, and hoped he had been of help. Trees should be inspected regularly to ensure they are safe. Permission for tree works in conservation areas must be obtained, and for work where a Tree Preservation

order exists. A leaflet is available from Broadland DC. The parish is divided between the Broads Authority and Broadland DC. If in doubt, parishioners should contact Broadland DC. The Broads Authority agreed last year to utilise district council schemes to avoid confusion. An offer of help from the Broads Authority to tidy up the orchard was gratefully accepted. An owl box has been installed on Upper Common, and a black poplar planted in memory of Stephen Coman. A tree in memory of Alan Spinks is planned. Trees and hedging are being planted along the Bure Valley Railway path. Peter thanked the Broads Authority, Broadland DC, Coltishall Parish Council, and his fellow tree wardens for their help and support during the past year, and recognised the planting schemes of parishioners which will enhance the beauty of the village.

15. Coltishall Commons Management Trust

James Wheeler had resigned from the Trust, and a new chairman is to be appointed. Nigel Noble reported that the work of the Trust continued, all commons were in good condition, and repairs to the car park at Lower Common were in hand. A bench in memory of Stephen Coman had been donated by his family for Upper Common, and a further bench had been purchased by Mrs Minturn in memory of her father for Lower Common. Parking at Upper Common by residents of Tavern Court was a problem, and posts on Upper Common were frequently knocked down by vehicles.

It was agreed to send a letter of appreciation to James Wheeler on behalf of the Parish Council.

Bowls Club – not on the agenda

Ray Thompson reported that the bowls club was self-supporting, and although it had existed for some 60 years, was now short of members. Members play in three leagues, so return matches provide an opportunity to showcase the village to visitors. A new fence is required; an initial estimate of £4000 was considered excessive. It is thought that materials alone would cost about £2000, volunteers would provide the labour to reduce costs. Funding used to be provided from membership of the Social Club; Mr Thompson asked for a financial contribution towards costs.

16. Youth Forum

The Forum is now in its third year, and continues to be successful. Numbers declined somewhat in 2009, so the lower age limit was reduced to nine. Attendance is now 20-30 weekly, and the club remains open during half-terms. Ten volunteers give of their time to ensure the club remains successful.

17. Planning summary for 2009-10

Applications for new buildings – 6 – no objections
Applications for extensions – 9 – 8 no objections, 1 objection
Applications for leisure buildings – 3 – no objections
Application for wind monitoring mast – no objection
Application for new shop sign – 1 – no objection
Application for change of retail use – 1 – no objection
Application for garages – 4 – 1 no objection, 3 objections

18. Playground

Repairs had been carried out to the rocking horse and see-saw to comply with current safety recommendations. Preliminary enquiries are being made with a view to extending the play area by reducing the area of the tennis courts by four sections. Scope for tennis, five-a-side football, netball etc would be incorporated into a Multi-user games area. Section 106 monies would be used in the initial stages, with grant funding being sourced for the MUGA. Advice on the area needed for a five-a-side pitch will be sought.

19. Village Fete

Dave Smith gave a broad overview in Mr Chisnell's absence. The event is planned for 31st July, to take place across four sites – Lower Common, Church field, cricket pitch and football pitch. Proceeds would go to the church clock appeal. Information on likely events to be held at each location was available, but more specific information on the arrangements for, inter alia, safety, risk assessments, first aid, parking, insurance, and administration was not available. Mr Chisnell has not formed a committee, nor provided written event plans to any of the village organisations affected by the proposed fete. It appears that there are as yet no details about who is responsible for the various aspects of the fete. It was pointed out that an event of this nature would require a huge commitment in time and effort, without any guarantee of financial success. It was agreed that a fete would be excellent, if all legal and safety criteria were addressed and arrangements made within the time frame.

British Legion – not on the agenda

Despite appeals for new members the Coltishall branch was faced with closure. Dispensation was given to remain open on condition that new members were found, and funds raised to support it.

Short mat bowls – not on agenda

The club won the Norfolk County Cup this year by beating local rivals Hevingham, and has done well in league matches. New members are always welcome – currently the age range is from 15-80, and beginners can enter a league to gain experience. The new season begins in September.

20. Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity (CAST)

Necessary repairs to buildings will be carried out as soon as funding is available. A wheelchair ramp to the rear door is complete, thanks to the Coltishall and Horstead Pre-school who obtained the necessary grant. The aprons at both car parks are to be improved in the near future. The Norwich and Coltishall Wanderers cricket team played home matches at Coltishall last season, and it is hoped that after-match teas can be served in the lounge this season. A further cricket team could be accommodated, and would be encouraged. Two senior football pitches were marked out on the football field, and two on the village hall field. They were used by four adult and two junior teams. Training facilities were used by four adult teams and five junior squads. Some upgrading of floodlights will be necessary in the short term, with an extension of floodlights planned. Mole damage and freezing weather placed strain on fixtures, but all will shortly be completed.

CAST has raised sufficient funds to meet its financial commitments, but current income does not allow for major capital investment. Income from the Post Office is ring-fenced for general maintenance. Some improvement work will be done by volunteers whilst other necessary safety and repair work such as the upgrade of the heating system requires specialist knowledge. Tea dances and the film club were cancelled due to lack of community support, although various local organisations, village events and private functions continue to bring revenue through bookings. Sue Baker was thanked for her record and minute keeping.

Meeting closed 9.40 pm. Next meeting is the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 10th May 2010 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.