

# **COLTISHALL PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011

## **Present**

Chairman John Harding, Doreen Snelling, Michael Spinks, Joe Chapman, Robert Watson, David Smith, Keith Childerhouse, Mark Rischmiller, County Councillor James Carswell, District Councillor Alan Mallett, and 16 guests and parishioners.

Chairman Harding opened the meeting by welcoming all present. Before commencing the meeting John Harding explained that a long-serving councillor, Joe Chapman, would be retiring from the Council. Through his vast knowledge of village history, tradition, and folk lore he had been a guiding light to all. As a keen gardener Joe Chapman had been instrumental in ensuring the success of the allotments association, had served on the Commons Trust and had been committed and enthusiastic in his support of the playing fields and village hall. He had made a great contribution to Coltishall life, ensuring that the heritage and beauty of the village remains a legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Joe Chapman was presented with a tankard with the grateful thanks of all Councillors and on behalf of the parish.

## **1. Apologies**

Apologies were considered and accepted from Mike Warren, Peter Baker, Rachel Thrussell, Peter Croot, Claire Grigson (Girl Guides).

## **2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 20th April 2010.**

These were considered, approved and signed by John Harding as Chairman. Copies were distributed to all present.

## **3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda**

None.

## **4. Chairman's report**

John Harding thanked Nigel Haines and Peter Baker, who have both retired as Councillors, leaving vacancies on the Council. The Parish Plan had highlighted the need for volunteers, both on the Council and to help with a range of village organisations. Councillors have again this year made every effort to maintain the standing of Coltishall as a popular and friendly place to live.

Councillors had attended many meetings outside standard council meetings during the year. Mark Rischmiller had completed an initial training course for new councillors, and Robert Watson and the clerk had both attained the Certificate in Local Council Administration. They were congratulated and thanked for their commitment and achievement. Work should now continue towards Quality Council status, and to consider implementing parishioners' wishes arising from the Parish Plan. Volunteers from the community will be needed to help shape the future of the village. Apathy has been a most discouraging and deflating aspect of society's quest for progress and improvement in the community.

John Harding had enjoyed his time as Chairman, and thanked Doreen Snelling as Vice-Chairman for her unstinting loyalty and as a confidante and respected mentor. He thanked fellow councillors and the clerk for their hard work and support; he has great respect and admiration for councillors, who want the best for Coltishall's inhabitants. Thanks also went to the regular attendees of council meetings whom he hoped would continue to support council meetings.

## **5. Police Report**

Crimes in Coltishall had risen from a total of 25 in March 2009 - March 2010 to 39 in 2010-2011, largely due to an increase in thefts and burglaries. The detection rate had fallen from 32% in 10% over the same period. Safer Neighbourhood meetings are attended by Mike Warren for the Council.

## **6. James Carswell – County Councillor**

Government grants were reduced by £20million this year, and the need for savings forecasted a cut in funding for services of £155million. The Big Conversation provoked a massive response from all sections of Norfolk society on the areas where necessary savings would be the least damaging to the community, and resulted in a reduced overall spend of £60m. Bus services and libraries were protected, and Norfolk County Council pledged to do its utmost to protect core services and the most vulnerable in society. The proposed incinerator is a big issue that cannot be avoided. The problem of landfill must be tackled or a fine of £8-10m will be imposed by the EU. Anaerobic digesters will not provide the solution. James Carswell will continue to press for the gritting of Hautbois Road this coming winter. The Rectory Road one-way scheme is complete, but he is still concerned that the junction of Rectory Road with North Walsham Road is hazardous, especially for traffic turning right out of Rectory Road. The proposed Eco-town at Rackheath would require adequate infrastructure and facilities to allow it to be self-sustaining. James Carswell commended John Harding for his superb work as Chairman, and thanked him for his support. James Carswell wished John well as he retires as Chairman, and will continue to do his utmost to support our community.

## **7. Alan Mallett – District Councillor**

The economic downturn had dominated Broadland DC's attention throughout the year. The Council had always taken a cautious approach to budgeting, and had undertaken a review with the intention of maintaining services without increasing Council Tax this year. The review generated significant savings, boosted by recycling income, to allow a nil increase in Council Tax without affecting services. Broadland DC is amongst the best-performing councils in the country; collection rates are the best in Eastern England and in the top 10% nationally. The Council allowed £2million in Recession Mitigation in 2009, to include assisting Broadland businesses to continue trading, and safeguarding employment.

## **8. HMP Bure – Deputy Governor Tony Jones**

The prison has now been open for 18 months and is fully operational. All areas are occupied, the prison is full to capacity, all staff are trained and have at least two years experience. The prison's key purpose is to protect the public; it offers work-related skills to its offenders in preparation for life after they leave prison when they will hopefully not reoffend. To protect the local community no work placements are arranged in the locality, and offenders are not released into the local area. Any eligible men are re-categorised and moved to the Open Prison Estate. Governor Paul Cawkwell was transferred to HMP Whitemoor last September and Governor Sue Doolan took over from him having previously worked at HMP Blundeston. Mr Jones confirmed that there are to be no job cuts at the prison, despite local rumours to the contrary. The Ministry of Justice has been required to make significant cuts in spending over the next four years, so whilst savings are being made, they will not affect staffing levels at the prison. Plans drawn up for a new 100-bed block within the existing prison boundary were approved, but are on hold during the economic

downturn. An inspection at HMP Bure in September 2010 compared the environment at the prison against key criteria – safety, decency, purposeful activity, and resettlement, and produced an exceptionally good report. The prison aims to be a good neighbour, and will continue to liaise closely with surrounding parishes.

### **9. Colt Jags**

Colt Jags Tricia Frost reported that the Jags now boasts two new squads, with a membership of around 100 children. There are now eight squads, plus a mixed-age girls squad, most of which had enjoyed a successful year with all but two finishing in the top half of their divisions. The football field is in use by 100-150 children over 3-4 nights per week and some weekends. There had been three opportunities for children to play at Carrow Road. The Ladies' Team is second in their league, and hoping for promotion. Three local sponsors have been secured, an end-of year celebratory and fundraising event was held to promote the club and raise funds for the Royal British Legion. A most enjoyable day was had by all, with Charlie Smith presenting trophies, and a cheque for £300 was presented to the British Legion. The top floor of the changing rooms was decorated with the committee working hard to improve facilities and, despite rising costs, fees to members remained the same.

### **10. Broadgrace Church**

John Hindley is the Minister of Broadgrace Church. It is a new church, having begun one year ago. The congregation previously met at the Surrey Chapel, and usually meets weekly in Hoveton, using Coltishall Village hall some ten times a year. Figures show that 93% of the population does not attend church; Broadgrace tries to access a different section of society from worshippers at mainstream churches. The church aims to be community-based, appealing to those for whom mainstream churches are perhaps too formal. Services are based around the family in an informal, friendly atmosphere. It began with around 12 adult members and 6 children, and has steadily grown. John Hindley reported that the Village Hall is a popular meeting-place, and was pleased to have been invited to the meeting.

### **11. Allotments report**

There are 75 plots let, 1 spare, and 7 allocated to the community orchard. Priority is given to parishioners, so a small waiting list exists of about 6 people living in nearby parishes. The allotments committee agreed that the rent should be increased to £10 per plot to accrue a reserve for unexpected expenses. All but 6 rents have been paid. Following the restriction of vehicles on the allotments the badly-rutted track has recovered well, with no further complaints. There was a considerable degree of theft from the allotments last year. Allotment-holders are encouraged to report all thefts and vandalism to the police. PCSO Laura Munro-Oakley made several suggestions to allotment-holders to minimise and combat theft. Some persistent dog owners continue to walk their dogs through the allotments, and allow them to foul on the plots, despite requests in the Marlpit for public-spiritedness. More taps were requested but declined as they would necessitate new pipework under plots, making ploughing difficult. Following a serious complaint about noise from cockerels, the agreement was altered to prohibit cockerels. Most cockerels have been despatched or eaten by the fox, the remaining few have been moved away from housing and must be shut up at night. It was decided to join the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners which offers a range of benefits and advice, including legal advice and guidance on tenancy agreements and insurance.

### **12. Cricket club**

Kevin Fisher reported that the Third team plays at Coltishall, with the First and Second teams based at Barton Turf. There are 3 senior sides, and 4 age-group sides. It is hoped to increase numbers, although lack of time and money is always an issue. The aim is to improve facilities for age-group members to attract younger team-members. Mr Fisher thanked the Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity for its continued support and for maintaining

good conditions. Although few players live in Coltishall, they all enjoy cricket at Coltishall and appreciate the facilities available. He asked for volunteers to help in the running of the club.

### **13. Tree Warden Report**

Peter Croot had provided a report to be read at the meeting. He was pleased with the planting of trees along the Bure Valley railway which he hoped would be enjoyed by all in future years. He had been able to give advice to many parishioners on a range of tree-related matters including the felling of trees. A planting scheme proposed by a parishioner had not been approved despite Mr Croot's enthusiasm for it; he hoped it would not deter others from making plans to improve the environment. He had attended the Tree Warden Conference in Suffolk which he found most useful, and had built a good rapport with local tree surgeons to the benefit of all. Two rare native black poplars had been planted on Upper Common, one on Remembrance Sunday last year as a dedication to all servicemen and women, past, present, and those still to come. He and Michael Spinks thanked the Coltishall Commons Management Trust for their co-operation with the planting. The Community Orchard continues to thrive with valued advice from a member of the Broads Authority. An article about the Orchard was published by the EDP recently. Peter Croot, on behalf of the tree Wardens, thanked all who have supported them in their work to create and maintain an environment which we are all privileged to enjoy.

### **14. CETAG**

This group was set up by 11 parish councils to fight against the proposed eco-town at the former RAF Coltishall. The campaign included meetings with many relevant parties including the then Housing Minister Caroline Flint, who was less than welcoming, and with enterprises interested in purchasing the site. CETAG and the Task Group worked directly with the Ministry of Justice, owners of the site, to obtain the best outcome for the community, and TAG Aviation are now working with the MoJ and North Norfolk District Council on the final details of a contract which, it is hoped, will result in a good outcome for all surrounding communities. Once the sale is complete it is intended to create a liaison group, similar to that for HMP Bure, to address any local concerns and issues. A planning requirement of HMP Bure was the provision of renewable energy. The proposed wind turbine had been given planning approval, but was on hold as a result of TAG Aviation's bid.

### **15. Youth Forum**

Youth Club continues to be popular with some 66 local youngsters aged from 10 - 16, who enjoy the opportunity to meet with friends and take part in activities. As a result, funds from subscriptions remain healthy. A summer outing is again planned this year, and there will be a Christmas party. The downside of its increased membership is that there is a great need for helpers. A plea was made for volunteers to help existing leaders in maintaining this important village facility. The Annual General Meeting is on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

### **16. Planning**

There had been 26 applications during the year; no objections to 24, and 2 objections.

Garages - 4

Extensions - 8, including a conservatory and an annexe. 1 objection

Solar panels and solar lights - 2

Demolition and replacement of 3 sheds - 1

Replacement wall - 1

Demolition of garages and construction of 2 dwellings - 1

Demolition of barn and construction of storage and office - 1

Change of use from agricultural to 4 dwellings - 1

Change of use from office to tea rooms - 1

Wind monitoring mast - 1

Construction of porch - 1

Replacement quay heading - 1  
Felling of oak tree - 1  
Change of signage - 1 objection

### **17. Fete**

David Chisnell had been pleased with the success of last year's fete, and had planned another this year. It is to be held on the cricket field on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, before the children begin school holidays. Last year's stall-holders will be returning, and there will be some new ones, to provide interest and entertainment for all. Stalls will be around the cricket square to encourage visits to all stalls and to protect the cricket square. A folk group will tour around the grounds to lend a countrified atmosphere to the day. A mobile catering service will be in the tennis courts, with teas and cakes available in the hall, and there will be a family disco in the evening. It was noted that the fete had been extremely popular as a community event and as an opportunity for friends to meet up for a pleasant afternoon. The proceeds from last year were donated to the church clock, although David Chisnell explained that the Railway Tavern as sponsor of the event had made a loss in order to fulfil the promise of £1000 to the church. A voting slip would be printed in the Marlpit requesting suggestions for the beneficiary of this year's proceeds after expenses. A local charity or project such as the War Memorial would be most likely, as it is difficult for village causes to generate funds.

### **18. Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity (CAST)**

The Annual General Meeting is on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The Charity is gradually upgrading the Village Hall, and maintenance is on schedule. Heating is the main issue, and is to be upgraded during the summer. A grant from the parish council will help towards the renovations of several parish facilities. Improvements made will, it is hoped, attract new users. A quiz-night is to be held to raise funds for ongoing work. The Charity tries to support other groups, but necessary maintenance cannot be ignored, so rates may have to be increased. The football field is to be reseeded, following a delivery of soil for the goalmouths, as soon as the goalposts are down. John Harding asked for more Trustees to come forward, especially from the parish council.

### **19. Parking in the village centre.**

Keith Childerhouse said that parking in the village was at a premium, given the extent of double yellow lines and the shortage of designated parking spaces. He hoped to prompt discussion so that a workable solution could be found. He suggested that Upper Common by the Salvation Army could be stripped of grass and hard-surfaced for additional parking. Following discussion, it was accepted that the area is Common over which there are legal restrictions, and that cattle must have access to the ESA marshland. The area had been used temporarily by the builders of Tavern Court as an expedient to the work, provided that the use was for a very limited time and that the area was returned to its previous good condition. It was thought that many shop-owners had parking facilities for their own vehicles behind their premises, but preferred instead to use on-road spaces, or the area in front of the Salvation Army hall. Residents of Tavern Court had also taken to parking their cars there without permission so to do, and vehicles were often parked there all day in spite of the two-hour restriction. This reduced the visitor parking and consequently visitor footfall, and discouraged visitors from coming to the village centre. The yellow lines could not be reduced, as they protected sight-lines for traffic. The road behind the War Memorial is a public right of way, and vehicles may park there provided the exits are kept clear. This is a major issue, and requires much discussion and thought. Nigel Noble said that the Coltishall Commons Management Trust would consider the matter, but use of this green area in the village for parking would be a retrograde step, and an alternative should be found.

### **Bowls Club – not on the agenda**

Ray Thompson emphasised the need for the bowls club to attract new and younger members to safeguard the continuity of the club. The new fence was almost complete, thanks to a grant

from the parish council to the Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity and donations from three club members. The summer season had begun on 17<sup>th</sup> April, and the club looked forward to another enjoyable year. At the Annual General Meeting the Chairman had reported on a successful year when over 50 league and cup games were played. The Captain Tony Elvin had won the National Over-60s singles cup, and was congratulated. The club took part in several social events, and had participated in the village fete. It continues to be largely self-funding through modest membership fees and fundraising events, and relies on members, especially Brian Bell, to maintain the green. Mr Bell was concerned that some drivers were a little careless when parking and might damage the new fence. He suggested that a row of bollards or sleepers could protect it; current legislation is to be checked for guidance.

Alan Mallett congratulated the retiring Chairman of the Parish Council, John Harding, on the exemplary manner in which he had led the council over the past four years. John had inspired councillors, and had brought both the council and the village forward through his dedication and hard work. Mr Mallett said that John was a great example of committed leadership, and would be a hard act to follow. Councillors agreed wholeheartedly, and there was a round of applause.

John Harding thanked Mr Mallett and councillors for their kind words, and reminded the meeting that there were vacancies for councillors, and asked anyone interested to contact the clerk.

Meeting closed 9.20 pm. Next meeting is the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.