

COLTISHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall 13th April 2015

Robert Watson opened the meeting and welcomed all present. **Safety notices were read out.**

1. Apologies

Yvonne Sidebotham and Tracey Lister

2. To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 14th April 2014

Accepted as a true record and signed by Robert Watson as Chairman.

3. Chairman's report

The past year has been busy, without some of the contentious issues faced in previous years. Robert Watson thanked his fellow councillors for their hard work and unfailing support, bringing a host of skills to the council. All put many hours into their role and are prepared to get their hands dirty – literally, sometimes, and all have the best interests of the parish at heart. The clerk was thanked for her work and advice, ensuring that the Council is administered to a high standard. Major projects in the pipeline include a new games area on the old tennis courts, an initiative to have our own PCSO, a Neighbourhood Plan to ensure a greater say in any development and greater share of the Community Infrastructure Levy, and ongoing development of the RAF base. Archiving of historic documents revealed that the issues faced today by our parish are little different from thirty years ago. Development is a necessity, but the Council will do its utmost to prevent the worst excesses, and produce the best outcomes for the village.

4. Police report

There were no crimes in January; The Police warned against spam emails, and thefts of oil from domestic and commercial tanks. There were three crimes in February – one criminal damage, one harassment, and one common assault. Cold calling, spam emails, and shed break-ins were highlighted.

5. County Councillor Tom Garrod

Mr Garrod did not attend the meeting.

6. District Councillor Alan Mallett

The Development Plan consultation period has now passed, and adjustments made. The areas designated for development in Coltishall remain Rectory Road and the scrapyard. Broadland DC continues to trim costs and operate more efficiently. Benefit payments are being scrutinised; the Dept of Work and Pensions wants all applications to be made online, but Broadland DC will continue to offer a face-to-face service which it believes is valuable and effective. Council tax will remain at its present level until 2018.

7. Girl Guides – brought forward from item 10

Lauren and Holly told us that the Guides and Brownies had amalgamated in September, which increased numbers from 2 Guides and 10 Brownies to 8 Guides and 16 Brownies. The catchment area includes Frettenham and Horstead. Lauren has been in Guiding for some eight years, and is now working towards her Adult Leader Qualification. A Bake-off produced interesting results, with flans and tarts from the Guides and biscuits from the Brownies. A visit to the care home in Horstead proved very worthwhile, so a tea-party is planned for later in the year. The Brownies visited Milton Dairy Farm, and a visit from the Happsburgh owls was a great success. The Guides have worked towards new badges, including cook's badge and disability awareness badge, whilst the Brownies are enjoying their efforts to pass their circus performer and sports badges. They are fundraising for Guide Dogs, and plan to learn about world guiding centres. New volunteers are invited to join, especially as their leader is currently injured; help at meetings or the offer of time, skills and help are always welcome. It was suggested that the school might be approached for both new volunteers and new members.

8. HMP Bure

Keith Childerhouse reported that there are two meetings per year. At the March meeting he learned that,

since the extension was completed, there are now circa 640 inmates, putting great pressure on staff, especially as they are sometimes redeployed to other prisons. An aging population within the prison increases the demand on medical services; visits to outside clinic require close supervision from two warders. A retraining programme to prepare prisoners for release appears to be successful, and the prison runs well without any security issues or threats to surrounding villages. It works closely with the Police, and security when entering the prison is extremely tight. The prison has brought employment, and is now considered a benefit to the area.

9. RAF Liaison Group

Two to three meetings a year are held, attended by Mike Warren and Keith Childerhouse. The base has been renamed Scottow Enterprise Park, although the heritage site, operated by the Spirit of Coltishall group, retains its original name. The first phase of the solar farm has been commissioned, and much of the site is now let. Vitromite which reprocesses glass, sugar storage, fire service and Police training, and engineering are operational, and a film company has applied for planning permission. It is hoped to open games areas for public access and to community groups. A new access at the north end of the runway will lead traffic away from settlements and allow good access to both the heritage and enterprise areas. Some 95% of traffic travels through Coltishall, so our councillors have been lobbying for a share of the infrastructure fund set aside for this project. The Officers' Mess is being developed for 60-70 flats, and the intention is to preserve the front face. The Sergeants' Mess may also be developed in time. Other facilities including the gym and swimming pool may benefit from a community project to preserve and renovate them, and in due course to market the facilities as a tourist attraction. Heritage Open Days are planned for September, the Battle of Britain pen is to be refurbished, and the Control Tower could be opened to the public with parking spaces nearby. Although the Council was sceptical at first, it does seem that Norfolk County Council has been successful in bringing the base into use, and eventually to generate funds to cover the purchase cost. Tim Edmonds at Norfolk CC works enthusiastically to bring the base into profitable use.

10. Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity

Doreen Snelling reported that the hall and grounds are well-used, and thanked regular hirers for their support. A new ladies team had begun training on the field. The Charity has undertaken significant repairs, some due to vandalism of the cricket pavilion and the Village Hall which resulted in a rain-water leak, damaging the lights and ceiling. Damaged gutters have been replaced. A programme of works included new fire doors, repairs to the hall floor, and to the pavilion shed roof. As cars were being driven onto the fields, lockable bollards have been installed on both fields. No grants are available for maintenance, so funds have been restricted. A group of councillors helped the cleaner remove a large amount of rubbish from the football changing-rooms, and clean them. Doreen Snelling was pleased to report that teams are now treating the rooms with better respect. Windows and doors need to be replaced, the showers need attention, and the rooms will be redecorated. Mel Douglass had resigned from the Charity, and was thanked for his hard work, particularly with the football clubs. Various activities offered by the new games area will be welcome and popular, funded by the Council and a grant from Broadland DC.

11. Reports from village organisations

Allotments. Ken Saville has recently taken over from Rachel Thrussell as chairman, and expects her to hand over the relevant paperwork shortly. He is aware of some outstanding payments and some completed agreement forms. He was wished well in his new role.

Tree Warden. Peter Croot reported that some trees had been cut on the St James side of the Bure Valley railway on safety grounds. He has tagged trees so the grass cutting contractor protects them.

A black walnut tree, planted on Upper Common in memory of Joe Chapman in a ceremony attended by his family and friends, was supplied by Stephen Chesney-Beales of Broadland DC. Peter Croot thanked fellow Tree Warden Michael Spinks for his help in transporting and planting the tree. The tree survey identified a damaged tree on the school boundary, which was removed as a priority, the remaining work being done a few weeks later. Bill Musson assisted Peter Croot in planting trees and hedging at the orchard. Tree Wardens are always happy to offer advice to parishioners, and attend training courses and field trips. Parishioners were reminded that permission for work to trees in conservation areas must be obtained from either the Broads Authority or Broadland DC. Michael Spinks, Brian Abbs, the Parish Council and parishioners were all thanked for their support.

Bowls Club. The season began on Sunday last with a good turnout and some 5 new members. Members now number 24. Fixtures begin at the end of April and continue with 50 games until September. The club plays in 3 leagues, with good results last year including promotion to Division 2 of the year league. A jumble sale on Sunday next should raise valuable funds, and organisers were thanked for their efforts. Ray Thompson thanked Doreen Snelling for arranging cutting of the hedge; the rear of the clubhouse will now be repainted. Cleaning of the interior was done by volunteers from Lloyds Bank as part of a community help scheme. The club was wished well for the new season.

W.I. Judi Howett reported that the W.I. is thriving in Coltishall and Horstead, with 37 members drawn from as far afield as Buxton and Thorpe. A good year included several outings: this year is the centenary so many projects and activities are planned. The village sign, donated by the W.I. many years ago, is to be renovated in May. The W.I. tries to help the community, and undertook a litter-pick recently, collecting 12 bags of litter. The worst areas were in community spaces such as the fields and Village Hall area. There may be another Cakes on the Common fundraising event in the summer.

Short mat bowls. The club plays in two leagues and three cup tournaments, but is short of members. They have hired the hall for 30 years, and were in the past a strong and successful club with talented players. The Guides had been invited to a roll-up to encourage young players but have not so far taken up the offer. An open day for all village activities was suggested. Doreen Snelling was thanked for the new heating system in the hall, and for her help.

Cricket. Kevin Fisher reported that the season is to begin on 2nd May. There are 4 Saturday teams, one of which plays in Coltishall. Main successes in 2014 were with the youth teams, with the Under 15s crowned champions of Norfolk. The Over 40s will play mid-week. This was Kevin Fisher's 20th year; he was congratulated, and said he was thankful to be involved in such a great village, thanking particularly John Harding for his support.

British Legion. This year had been quiet, funds were improving, and a couple of new members had joined, but membership was still low so only four meetings had been held during the year. The Annual Dinner welcomed 28 guests, and a visit to the poppy factory with the Women's section proved interesting. It is staffed by ex-servicemen, many disabled, and is invaluable in providing employment and encouraging ex-servicemen back to work. Bob Jennings had no information on local ex-servicemen or their dependents who might be in need of financial help, and asked to be told of any who could be helped. He thanked the Parish Council for its support.

12. Sanders bus service.

As the temporary stop at Upper Common is unpopular with drivers, buses will now stop at the Pharmacy. Yellow zig-zag lines are only enforceable outside schools, so the Council will continue to press for double yellow lines at the Rectory Road/Church Street junction in the hope that the bus service will be restored; any request to Highways takes 2-3 years to action. Obstruction of the Highway is an offence, but has not been addressed by the Police, and although Highways can force owners to trim their trees they have not. Doreen Snelling was asked to establish whether parking and trees caused the suspension of the service, or if financial viability was the main factor. Mr Sanders had said that the route could be reinstated. Parishioners were concerned that the Pharmacy stop will not be approved by Highways because of the congestion caused by stationary buses; the nearest bus stop would then be in Horstead.

13. Planning.

During 2014-15 there were no objections to 16 extensions, 7 improvements to existing dwellings, 2 new dwellings and one barn conversion, and 10 grounds/garden works. The Council objected to three applications. Broadland DC's development plan had been amended to remove the obligation on developers to achieve planning permission stage within 2-3 years, and commence building within five years thereafter.

14. Other matters.

Games Area. Work will commence in April/May on construction of a games area to replace the former tennis courts, with a new fence. It will be suitable for a range of informal games to satisfy all age groups. The Council was obliged to replace the fencing on safety grounds, and intended that positive action to provide better facilities for the village would encourage use of the area by all ages and abilities. Earth removed will be used to create a grassed bund. Grant funding from Broadland DC will supplement monies ring-fenced by the Council, and from the increased precept. A grand opening day is to be planned.

PCSO. Villages had been invited to part-fund a dedicated PCSO. As there would be insufficient work in Coltishall, Horstead had been invited to join with us, and were considering the proposal. The cost would be £16782 split between the villages. The Council is keen to proceed with this initiative, as a dedicated PCSO would give welcome reassurance to parishioners, particularly the elderly, and be able to tackle any anti-social behaviour in an efficient and timely manner.

Neighbourhood Plan. The ability to have a greater influence on development in the village, and the greater financial benefit derived from having a Plan, persuaded the Council that it should undertake a Plan. Parishioners will be invited to use their skills to produce this document.

Robert Watson thanked guests for attending the meeting, and councillors for their support and hard work during the past year.

**Meeting closed at 9.20pm. Next meeting is the Annual Parish Council Meeting on
Monday 11th May 2015 in the Village Hall Lounge at 7.30pm**