

FELSTED ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly, held on 24 April 2014 at 7:30 pm in the URC Hall, Stebbing Road, Felsted

Present: Councillor Graham Harvey (Parish Council Chairman), the Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk, Councillors Richard Freeman, Fiona Hitchcock and John Moore and 5 members of the public.

1. Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillors Nicholas Hinde, Peter Rose, Alan Thawley and Chris Woodhouse and County Councillor Simon Walsh. Cllr Harvey began the meeting by introducing those members of the Parish Council who were present.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 24 April 2013

The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on the Council's activities during the year including

- The 1000th Parish Council meeting celebrations held on 4 December 2013
- The swapping of roles by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk in August 2013
- The recent resignation of Cllr Corinne Walker leaving the Council with 2 vacant seats. However 2 applicants had recently come forward so it was hoped that the Council would be back to full strength very shortly.
- The Council had continued to carry out its regular work around the village including grass cutting, street light maintenance, reporting potholes and commenting on all local planning applications
- They had also completed the following projects in the last year: the compilation of a Felsted Parish Plan, the extension of the water supply at the allotments and improvements to the allotment access track, the conversion of 2 redundant telephone kiosks to successful Book Boxes, the re-introduction of monthly Police surgeries, the purchase of 2 additional salt bins, the relocation of the flag pole, repairs to play equipment and topping up of the playbark and the planting of 105 free saplings provided by The Woodland Trust.
- The Council had embarked on other projects which were still ongoing, namely: the construction of a car park within the playing field (the start of this had been delayed by the very wet winter weather), the approval of new byelaws, the purchase of 3 new notice boards and the refurbishment of the remaining notice boards and lastly, the consideration of the need for further public toilets in the centre of the village.

Cllr Harvey ended with thanks to the Clerk and Assistant Clerk and to all his fellow Councillors. He also thanked those members of the public who regularly attend Council meetings and take an active interest in village life.

4. **Clerk's Financial Report**

The Clerk explained that the Auditor was still verifying the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014 but she gave a summary of the draft year-end figures and highlighted certain items.

The Council began the year with a bank balance of £124,529. The Council's expected income had been increased by the receipt of £6350 in grants this year plus £540 from the hire of the MUGA and a total of £2584 in allotment rents which included the collection of outstanding arrears.

In addition to its regular expenditure, the Council had spent the following amounts on specific items: £5500 on legal representation at the Enodis Enquiry, £2546 on the weekly Green Waste collection at Bannister Green (the UDC subsidy of this service having been drastically reduced), £1325 on re-lining the drains to the new public toilets in the playing field, £1130 repairing potholes in Bury Chase car park, £5195 installing an additional water supply to the allotments, £6990 on resurfacing the access track to the allotments, £3079 on topping up the playpark in the play area and £1377 on expenses for the 1000th meeting.

The Council's year-end bank balance of £130,334 was higher than expected because of the delay in completing and therefore paying for the playing field car park project, which was now due to commence on 28 April 2014.

5. **Reports by the Parish Council's representatives on other bodies**

The full reports were available at the meeting and were read by their authors or by the Chairman.

Felsted & Ford End District Nursing Association

Mrs Penny Gant reported that donations had been agreed for £350 to Farleigh Hospice, £200 to Dunmow Blind and Housebound Club, £150 to Dunmow and District Stroke Club and £100 to Uttlesford Crossroads.

Memorial Hall Committee

Mrs Hazel Fox reported on the repairs that the Committee had undertaken during the year, including the refurbishment of the wall panelling and the wooden floor and the resurfacing of the stage floor. The guttering had been replaced following a major leak in the bar area and the damaged bar area made good. The car park had also been re-lined and signed and new disabled parking bays had been created at the front of the hall.

Instead of employing a caretaker, the Hall now employs additional cleaners who are consequently able to maintain very high standards. Mrs Fox thanked the cleaners and her committee members for their tireless work and commitment to the Memorial Hall and also thanked the hirers who use the hall on a regular basis and thus enable it to function as a central part of the village.

Felsted United Charities

Mrs Penny Gant reported donations this year to Farleigh Hospice, Felsted Friendship Club, Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Service, Dunmow Stroke Club and Dunmow Blind Club. Grants had also been made to 13 residents of the parish.

The Crix Green Trust

Cllr Graham Harvey reported that the Trust had received 2 applications for assistance in the last 12 months.

The Mission Hall and the adjacent cottage were being maintained in good order. The Trust had obtained estimates for a small extension, to increase the size of the kitchen and toilets, in the hope that this would make the building more attractive to hirers and increase its use by the community. A wedding had taken place at the Mission Hall this year with a marquee being erected in the grounds for the Wedding Reception.

The Boteler Education Foundation

Cllr Harvey reported that the Trust had not met during the last 12 months due to the very small income generated by the invested funds. No donations had been made.

Tree Warden

Dr Andrew Hynd reported that 2013-14 had been a year of destruction and regeneration for trees in the parish. Autumn storms had felled many roadside hedge and copse stands but many of the storm victims were dead or diseased so needed removal anyway.

A specimen small leaved lime had been planted in the playing field and 105 native whip saplings from The Woodland Trust had been planted around the mound in the main playing field and in groups in Willows Green playing field.

[Cllr Harvey expressed his gratitude to Dr Hynd for all the work that he had undertaken in his capacity as Tree Warden for the village]

Footpath Wardens

Messrs Malcolm Raggett and Nick Pollard had taken over from Bryan Grimshaw as Footpath Wardens. They detailed the main long-running issues that were being dealt with by ECC, namely Footpath 80 (blocked – pursuing restoration of original route), Footpath 22 (blocked by fencing – application received to divert), Footpath 108 (obstructed by tennis court), Footpath 84 (permissive diversion onto field headland) and Footpath 103 (no longer exists as a separate path).

Considerable routine maintenance work had been carried out by ECC and others. As a result a total of 7 footbridges have been replaced on Footpaths 59, 10, 83, 15 and 24. Vegetation has been cleared from the footbridge on FP118 and from FP 17 and Milch Hill Lane has been cleared of fallen trees. Finger posts and way markers have been replaced/re-set on Footpaths 106, 13, 81, 82, 83, 84, 71 and 44 and the plantings have been topped up on FP 64.

They went on to highlight problems that were being experienced with dog fouling on paths and the associated disposal of plastic wrapped excrement in nearby hedgerows. They suggested that an article should be placed in the next parish Newsletter encouraging responsible disposal of dog excrement in one of the many bins provided specifically for this purpose.

[It was agreed that the Clerk should place an article in the magazine as suggested]

Playing Field Project Group

Cllr Alan Thawley reported that a second Sustainability Grant, arising from successful completion of the landscaping project, was used to fund part of the second Dog Show in September.

The public toilets continued to provide a vital service to visitors to the playing field and the much needed car park project is about to commence along with repairs to the dip in the footpath just east of the pavilion.

Improvements to the football pitch surface have been undertaken with labour being provided by the football clubs to minimise cost. The bark surface to the playground has been replaced and the surrounding edges upgraded and he added his thanks to The Woodland Trust for providing the tree saplings that were planted around the mound and at Willows Green Playing Field.

He also thanked everyone who had been involved in any of these projects to improve the playing fields in Felsted.

6. Open Forum

The following matters were raised/discussed :

- a) Overhanging hedge at Brick House Farm, Cock Green – This was a danger to traffic and it was agreed to report the matter again to ECC Highways.
- b) Overgrown hedges in Station Road (near Felsted sign) and Braintree Road (opposite Felmoor Farm) – It was agreed to also report these to ECC Highways.
- c) It was noted that in the future, the Interface magazine may only be produced on a quarterly basis instead of the present monthly editions.
- d) A member of the public commented on how much time the Clerk and Asst Clerk devoted to Council work and the sterling job that they both did.
- e) It was noted that the Queen's visit to Felsted on 6 May 2014 would result in a number of very temporary road closures/restrictions.
- f) Tour de France on 7 July 2014 – The next meeting of the Events Committee was being held on 9 May 2014 in the Memorial Hall and it was hoped that volunteers would come forward to oversee car parking arrangements on 7 July.
- g) Local cycle ride event – It was agreed to ask the organisers not to spray paint directions onto the roads this year because of problems that ensued last year.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.20pm

Chairman

April 2015