

FELSTED ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly, held on 26 March 2015
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 Andy Bennett, Richard Freeman, Nicholas Hinde, Kay Milford, John Moore, Alan Thawley and Chris Woodhouse and 12 members of the public.

1. Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor Caroline Scott-Bowden, County Councillor Simon Walsh and Hazel Fox (Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee). 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 2014

Cllr Thawley pointed out that he had attended the meeting so with this amendment the Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman pointed out that this was the last APA before the Parish Council elections on 7 May and he thanked those Councillors who were standing down for the time they had given freely to the village. Although he was continuing after the forthcoming election, a planned future house move meant that the Chairman also took the opportunity to publicly thank Cllr Alan Thawley for his many years' service to both the Felsted Parish and Uttlesford District Council. The Chairman hoped that others would come forward to fill the vacant seats.

He then reported on the Council's activities during the year including:

- The Playing Field car park which was completed in July 2014
- The refurbishment of the Pavilion
- The purchase of replacement notice boards for Willows Green and Bannister Green, a new notice board for Gransmore Green and refurbishment of the 2 remaining notice boards.
- The approval of new byelaws
- The refurbishment and cleaning of the War Memorial to mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

The Chairman then highlighted 2 important events in the village during summer 2014. HM The Queen had visited Felsted School in May and the Tour de France brought many visitors to the village in July. Thanks to a lot of hard work the Events Committee raised many thousands of pounds at this latter event.

Cllr Harvey went on to express his thanks to the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the Village Attendant for all their work during the year and also to all his

fellow Councillors for the time spent on Council duties for the benefit of the village.

The Chairman concluded by thanking the Council for nominating him to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party in May. He was very much looking forward to the event and the opportunity to represent both the Parish Council and the village of Felsted.

4. **Clerk's Financial Report**

The Clerk explained that because of the forthcoming elections the APA was being held earlier this year, before the end of the financial year. All figures were therefore provisional. She gave a summary of the draft year-end figures and highlighted certain items.

The Council began the year with a bank balance of £130,334. The Council's regular expected income had been increased by the receipt of £24,314 in grants this year. £296 had also been received from Tour de France camping fees which had subsequently been donated to the Church Clock Fund.

In addition to its regular expenditure, the Council had spent the following amounts on specific items: £1055 to set up a new website, £1937 on the weekly Green Waste collection at Bannister Green, £5955 on refurbishing the war memorial (less £1050 in grants from UDC), £746 on additional planting around the village, £9181 on refurbishing the pavilion (less £3500 grant from UDC), £1020 on additional parking enforcement visits to improve traffic flow, £3959 on 3 new notice boards and £42,789 on the construction of the playing field car park (less £15,000 grant from ECC CIF).

Expenditure totalled £127,490 making the Council's year-end bank balance £115,174 as planned.

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/Clerk.

Felsted & Ford End District Nursing Association

Mrs Penny Gant reported that no donations had been made during the year.

Memorial Hall Committee

Mrs Hazel Fox (Chair) reported that the Hall remained a central part of the community with a steady stream of hirers.

The Committee had undertaken the following repairs during the year: the replacement of the lighting in the Hall with energy saving LED lights and new wiring, painting of the toilets and passageway, replacement of the hand driers in the toilets and the treating of the stage and hall curtains with fire retardant. The Probation Service Community Payback Team had also cleared overgrown shrubs and painted the car park fence.

A part time caretaker had been employed to undertake small maintenance tasks. Mrs Fox thanked the cleaning team and all 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

Mr Richard Silcock (Chair) reported donations this year to Farleigh Hospice, Felsted Friendship Club, Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Service and Dunmow Blind and Housebound Club. Grants had also been made to 12 residents of the parish.

The Crix Green Trust

Cllr Graham Harvey reported that the Trust had received 1 application for assistance in the last 12 months.

The Mission Hall and the adjacent cottage were being maintained in good order. Plans were being drawn up 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.

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. The Trust is the second oldest in Essex and currently generates an income of approximately £60 p.a. which is periodically given to the Felsted Primary School for the purchase of books.

Tree Warden

Dr Andrew Hynd reported that it had been a quiet year although much work had been undertaken by ECC Highways to trim and flail hedges and prune overhanging branches.

One of the trio of Red Oaks in the playing field would be replaced shortly as it had died. There had been no problems relating to TPO-listed trees.

Footpath Wardens

Mr Malcolm Raggett reported that parish footpaths continued to be in generally good shape.

There continues to be a problem with dog faeces on some paths and continued 'education' of dog walkers is required along with the installation of further dog waste bins.

The blockage of FP80 is still being pursued by ECC despite a lack of co-operation from one of the residents involved.

Byway 64 had been resurfaced as part of the Tour de France event but the surface had proved unsuitable for horse riders. The Parish Council had sanctioned the deposit of a thick layer of mud onto the byway with the intention of cultivating a seedbed for grass sowing but ECC Highways had objected to this and prevented the work from being completed. Extensive discussions had ensued between the Parish Council and ECC and the previous day a local landowner had begun removing the mud with everyone's agreement. It was hoped that a long term and maintainable surface would be applied with co-operation between all parties.

He had met a group of horse rider's in July 2014 and formulated a draft proposal to upgrade several footpaths to bridleways thereby creating a horse friendly, largely off-road ring around the village that would simultaneously improve horse and rider safety and help relieve congestion in the village

centre. Support would be needed from the land owners but it was hoped to pursue this as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

Playing Field Project Group

Cllr Alan Thawley reported that it had been a quiet year for the Group but that the Council had completed the following projects on the playing field: constructed a car park, raised the dip in the footpath to the east of the pavilion to prevent flooding, refurbished the pavilion, introduced new byelaws and they were in the process of taking over responsibility for the CCTV cameras.

6. Felsted Neighbourhood Plan

Roy Ramm (Chair) and Iain Crawford (Vice Chair) of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Group gave a very informative and enthusiastic presentation explaining the purpose of a NP and the steps taken to date by the Group to consult with sections of the community. The next consultation would be with businesses and societies on 27 April followed by the first major public consultation on 9 May in the URC Hall from 10-3pm. They went on to answer several questions from the public and were thanked by the Chairman for the time and effort which they had clearly already put in to this project which is so important for the future of the village.

7. Police Attendance at the meeting

The Clerk reported that the new PCSO Kirsty Smith had been invited to attend the meeting but had had to decline because new police policy precluded her attendance at any individual public meetings. All contact was now to be channelled through the Local Community Meeting system. All those present were very disappointed with this response and it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Chief Constable of Essex Police, Stephen Cavanagh, expressing this dissatisfaction.

8. 2015 Essex Village of the Year and Best Kept Village Competition

The Council invited feedback from residents as to whether Felsted should enter this competition. The new format for the competition meant that the judges will continue to undertake a physical inspection of the village (looking at play areas/notice boards/war memorial/open spaces/hall etc) but they will also study the village profile (community engagement/services/environmental activities etc). After some discussion it was agreed that a number of recent Parish Council projects (public toilets, playing field car park, new notice boards, refurbishment of pavilion and war memorial, Parish Plan and Neighbourhood Plan) would enhance the possibility of the village scoring good marks in the competition. It was therefore agreed that Felsted should enter the competition in 2015.

9. Open Forum

The following matters were raised/discussed :

- a) Parish Plan Actions - A member of the public queried how many of the 'actions' from the Parish Plan had been achieved. The Clerk pointed

out that this matter was reviewed at every Highway Committee meeting and that she had gone through the list point by point at the December meeting of the NP Steering Group. A large number of the actions had in fact been achieved and others were ongoing. It was suggested that this should be better publicised throughout the village (Felsted News/ website)

- b) Proposed meeting with Nick Alston (Essex Police and Crime Commissioner) - A member of the public asked for an update on this proposed meeting. The Chairman explained that this would be a specially convened meeting which would take place after the May elections at a venue yet to be decided.
- c) David Gregory wished to record, on behalf of the public present, their thanks to the Council for all their work over the last 4 year term.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.26pm

Chairman

April 2016