

**FELSTED ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly, held on**  
**26 April 2018 at 7:00 pm in the URC Hall, Stebbing Road, Felsted**

**Present:** Councillor Graham Harvey (Parish Council Chairman), Diane Smith (Parish Clerk), Councillors Andy Bennett, Richard Freeman, Alan Mackrill, Frances Marshall and Malcolm Radley, District Councillor Alan Mills, Roy Ramm (Chairman of Felsted NP Steering Group), Malcolm Raggett (Footpath Warden) and 5 members of the public.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Nicholas Hinde. John Moore and Peter Rose. Apologies had also been received from Hazel Fox, Richard Silcock and Dr Andrew Hynd. Cllr Harvey began the meeting by welcoming those present, but expressed some disappointment that more members of the public were not in attendance..

**2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 13 April 2017**

The Minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

**3. Chairman's Report**

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

- Pressure from developers to build in the village increased dramatically over the last year with a large development approved adjacent to the parish boundary at Willows Green and another proposed near Gransmore Green (West of Braintree Garden Community). The PC continues to fight these proposals and object to other applications within the village because of their impact on already stretched resources such as the doctor's surgery, primary school and traffic congestion.
- The flightpath noise issue from Stansted Airport continues and a planning application is now being considered by UDC to increase passenger numbers at the airport to 43 million. This will increase the number of flights and the associated noise problems, for Felsted.
- The PC has had responsibility for the upkeep of the churchyard for nearly a year and the contract for the maintenance work was awarded to JCM Services. James Mead and his employees carry out the grass cutting and tree work to the highest standard, not only in the churchyard but also throughout the playing fields and open spaces around the village.
- The highlight of the year was the transfer of the Nature Area, on land between Felsted and Flitch Green, to the PC just a few weeks ago. The transferred area includes Felsted Fen which is already recognised as a special area for wildlife. Plans are underway to make the site secure and begin the long journey of transforming it into a Nature Area.
- The Assistant Clerk Peter Watson would be retiring towards the end of the year after 13 years of service to the village and the Council will be looking for a new Assistant Clerk to support Diane Smith. The Chairman thanked Peter for all his work for the Council and also thanked Diane Smith for doing a first class job.
- The Chairman ended by welcoming a new Councillor, Alan Mackrill and a new Youth Representative, Ella-Rae Coleby, and expressing his thanks to his fellow Councillors for all their hard work during the year.

**4. Clerk's Financial Report**

The Clerk explained that the Auditor was still verifying the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018 but she gave a summary of the draft year-end figures and highlighted certain items.

The PC opening bank balance on 1 April 2017 was £133,075.

**Income:** The PC received a Precept of £70,000 plus regular income from allotment and playing field rents (£1403 and £500 respectively). This year they also received grants totalling £1700. These consisted of £1200 from UDC Community Project Grant (towards the cost of new safety surfacing under the swings at Bannister Green and Willows Green play areas) and £500 from District Councillor Mills towards the cost of youth equipment (a table tennis table). Other income included £286.20 from Felsted Youth Club following its official closure. This would be spent on youth facilities. Income (excluding VAT) totalled £79,897.

**Expenditure:** In addition to regular expenditure the Council has spent: £5233 on new safety surfacing at Willows Green and Bannister Green play areas (including the £1200 Grant detailed above), £5843 on the Neighbourhood Plan project, £2442 on the popular Green Waste skips at Bannister Green and £2533 on extensive tree works and hedge cutting around the village. £5076 was spent on general grass cutting plus £1427 on grass cutting and maintenance at the churchyard (a new responsibility for the PC since the churchyard was officially 'closed' in May 2017). The playpark was topped up at the Playing Field at a cost of £3426 and a new beacon was erected costing £1120. A total of £1104 was spent on training for the Clerk and Councillors, £878 on refurbishing the War Memorial and £549 on planting daffodils and the flower tubs. Expenditure (excluding VAT) totalled £76,435. The closing balance is £136,537.

## 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 Clerk.

### **Memorial Hall Committee**

Hazel Fox provided a brief history of the many changes which had occurred to the Memorial Hall from its purchase in 1922 to the present day. Improvement works were ongoing and the Committee Room had been upgraded during 2017. The Felsted Pantomime Group had raised funds for the Hall at their pantomime in January and with another play in the middle of the year.

The Committee had welcomed Alan Mackrill to replace Anna McNicoll as the PC representative but were sad to lose Wendy and Reg Bentall who had resigned after many years of devoted service to the Memorial Hall. Hazel Fox thanked all the committee members for their tireless work and total commitment to the Memorial Hall.

### **Felsted United Charities**

Richard Silcock reported that donations had been made to Farleigh Hospice, Felsted Friendship Club, Marie Curie and Dunmow Blind and Housebound Club. Grants had also been made to 11 residents of the parish and a grant was made to the Citizen's Advice Bureaux to assist a parishioner.

### **The Crix Green Trust**

Cllr Graham Harvey reported that the Trust had made two grants via Felsted Primary School to support local children and education. The Mission Hall and the adjacent cottage were being maintained in good order and plans had been submitted to UDC to build an extension on the side of the building to provide modern toilet and kitchen facilities.

### **The Boteler Education Foundation**

Cllr Harvey reported that the Trust had met once during the last 12 months due to the very small income generated by the invested funds. No donations had been made during the year. It was noted that the Trust was the second oldest Trust in Essex.

### **Tree Warden**

Dr Andrew Hynd reported that the parish trees were, in the main in good health. The unusually cold and wet weather in Spring had delayed bud-burst by about 2 weeks but there had been no significant losses of trees.

### **Footpath Warden**

Malcolm Raggett reported that the parish footpaths and bridleways were generally in good order with most landowners maintaining the rights of way on their property. There were exceptions but these were thankfully few.

There have been a number of applications by landowners to re-route paths in the past year. The application to re-route Footpath 80 at Causeway End has been approved but unfortunately the new owner has not created the new route before blocking off access to what is currently a building site. ECC is aware of this and it is expected to be a temporary blockage.

### **Playing Field Project Group**

Cllr Malcolm Radley reported that the Group had not met in recent years because in practise the Council had largely taken over responsibility for the playing field. It has therefore been agreed that the Group should be wound up and that any remaining funds should be

transferred to the PC for the provision of additional facilities in the playing field.

**6. Felsted Neighbourhood Plan**

Roy Ramm reported that the NP process is reaching its conclusion. Important public consultation events were held on 13 and 14 April and he urged anyone who was unable to attend these events to visit the NP website and read the full script of the presentation given at the events. He thanked the PC for publicising these events on their website and generally 'spreading the word' which resulted in a very good public attendance. The NP Group were hoping to submit the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan to UDC as soon as possible for its Pre-Submission Consultation. However they were currently seeking an urgent meeting with UDC to obtain vital information on housing allocation figures before the Plan could be finalised.

The Chairman thanked Roy Ramm and all the members of the Felsted NP Steering Group for their hard work.

**7. Open Forum**

The following matters were raised/discussed :

- a) Future vacancies for Parish Councillors – The Chairman informed those present that PC elections would be held in 2020 and that it was likely that a number of existing Councillors may not seek re-election. The Council currently had a very mature age demographic and the Chairman encouraged younger members of the community, with an interest in Council matters, to start to get involved with a view to seeking election in 2 years time.
- b) NP Community Hub – Roy Ramm explained in greater detail why the NP Group had reluctantly decided to abandon the proposal for a Community Hub. Three potential sites for a CH had been identified but issues with all of them would delay the submission and approval of the NP. Increasing pressure from developers meant that the primary objective must be to control development by getting the NP approved as soon as possible and so the CH idea had been abandoned for the time being.
- c) Nature Reserve – The Chairman provided more details of the transfer of the land and explained that Enodis had provided £161,000 for the PC to develop and maintain the Nature Area over the next 20+ years. Any funds remaining at the end of this time period would need to be returned to Enodis.

Cllr Andy Bennett thanked the Chairman for all his work on behalf of the parish. David Dempsey wished to record his thanks to all the Parish Councillors for the work that they do for the village, all of which is voluntary.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 7.41pm

Chairman .....

April 2019