

Earsham Parish Council

Minutes

Of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Wednesday 29th March 2023

Present: Cllrs. Stephen Wood, Jim Bennett, Keith Reeve, Tony Leech, Nick Meade (arrived during the Chairman's report), Richard Randlesome and Peter Goodfellow

Also present: 1 member of the public and Lynda Ling (Parish Clerk)

1. Welcome by the Chairman - The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr. Stephen Wood welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of 2022 - (appendix 1) - The Chairman signed the minutes of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting as a true and correct record. Agreement was proposed by Cllr. Leech and seconded by Cllr. Randlesome.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council – (appendix 2) – Cllr. Wood read out his report which gave an overview of the Parish Council year. Some of the points covered included:-

2022 –

- The May meeting started with the election of chairman and vice-chair with myself and Councillor Randlesome agreeing to stand for the coming year.
- **Speed Watch Group** - The speed watch volunteers have been out and about monitoring the speed at which some of the traffic reaches has raised concern. This has been constantly monitored throughout the year and the Police have been informed where necessary. The council have asked Highways to reduce the speed limit on the Dam from 60mph to 50mph to help the constant speeding into Earsham and Bungay although this at the moment has been refused.
- **Parked Bus** - The ongoing appearance of the green bus has been a constant concern over the years and it appears to have resolved itself by way of the vehicle being allowed to park at the Old Earsham Mill.
- **Defibrillator** - The defibrillator has been in and out of action over the year due to out-of-date pads and needing to be sent away for a software update. The door was also in disrepair it was agreed to purchase a replacement.
- **Jubilee** - The council had organised a picnic on the green for the Sunday 5th June. The Commemorative mugs were a great success with the schoolchildren all receiving one and the rest being purchased by siblings, parents and various other villagers. A commemorative tree was kindly donated and planted to which the council purchased and erected a guard. The tree species was a London Plane tree.
- **Playing Field** - The playing field has never looked so good with the help from Earsham football club and volunteers in the upkeep. The sprinkler system is a great success keeping the pitch looking good and helping the Bowls Club enormously. Due to the continuing success of the football club they may have to look into erecting a fence around the pitch this is currently being looked into.

The council agreed to have the play equipment repaired and treated with preservative this is currently still ongoing and awaiting warmer weather. The football club have managed to get funding for the purchase of 2 metal 5 aside practise nets which have been a great addition.

An additional Rubbish Bin was also purchased and located at the Princess Way end of the field.

The track leading to the field is always in need of constant repair and I would like to thank councillor Bennett for helping us out with pothole repairs.

- **Allotments** - The allotments Rules and Regulations are currently under scrutiny. An allotment holders committee has been organised by the allotment holders and everyone seems pleased with the ongoing arrangements.
- **Street Lighting** - All of the lanterns have now been replaced by LED versions greatly reducing our payments. 4 new columns have had to be replaced due to corrosion and vehicle damage.
- **Septembers Meeting** – September's meeting started with a minutes silence due to the passing of the late HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Proclamation of King Charles III.
- **Ditchingham Shed Group** - The Ditchingham men's shed group has relocated to The Wetland Centre on the Old Harleston Road and we wish them success with their ongoing work.
- **Village Magazine** - The Village Magazine was in danger of folding due to the current Editor standing down. We are happy to say that a new Editor has been found and would like to thank Rachel Gunton and all of those involved in the production and delivering of this much needed village source of information. We wish Debbie from Marina Arts at the Old Mill all the best and urge everyone to try and help support her as best they can.
- **Emergency Plan** - This is still ongoing with our Clerk Lynda sourcing information from South Norfolk Council. This will mainly be to cover the problem which may arise with any future Flooding.
- **Tree Planting** - Earsham Estate have been carrying out tree planting although due to the dry summer some may now need replacing, possibly on the playing field.
- **Commemorative Plaque** - The position and design for the commemorative plaque are still under discussion with Highways and local builders.
- **Village Hall** - The Village Hall committee are keen to make some alterations with access decorating and various maintenance issues. They are also hoping to bring the Village Fete and Car Boot sale back this year after a long absence due to Covid restrictions.
- **Village Handyman** - The council has looked into the possibilities of maybe engaging someone to carry out various jobs as they arise, although this then bring its own problems with Insurance and any possible damage etc. if incurred. We are still keen for this to be a possibility as it would keep the village looking good.
- **Millennium Film** - The Film is undergoing editing and a decision on how best to make it accessible to parishioners is still under debate.
- **Mindfulness** - Throughout the year we have various complaints about litter and overgrown hedges etc. we please ask parishioners to help keep paths clear and if your hedge or trees are making it dangerous to access them then please cut them back. Also if you see any rubbish and it is safe to pick it up please do so. We are very fortunate to have 3 resident litter pickers who are out once a week so please help them out! A big thank you goes out to Bryan, Phil and John.

I would like to thank again everyone for their help and especially Lynda our Clerk who we would be lost without! All of the councillors for their ongoing work and those of you who help out behind the scenes. It is with regret that as I am no longer a member of the parish that I shall be standing down from all duties. I have thoroughly enjoyed my years both in the village and on the council and I wish you all the best for the future.

4. End of year report by the Clerk/RFO – (appendix 3) - The Clerk submitted a report to councillor's ahead of the meeting, the main points covered included –

- The Parish Council increased the precept to £54.85 per annum on a Band D property for 2022/23, which gives a total precept income to the Parish Council of £16,072.
- Although the accounts have not been finalised yet, it is looking as though the budget has held up very well over the last 12 months despite some unplanned expenditure in the form of a third speed machine and brackets, and two new litter bins.
- Total income for the year was £24,181 which includes the precept, utility bills from both the Football and Bowls Clubs, and reclaimed VAT.
- Expenditure this financial year has seen an increase on previous year's due to the increase in utilities and wages on top of a general increase in prices which affects everyone. There is an approximate spend of £29,658 for wages, HMRC, dog bin emptying service, skip hire, brown bin annual cost, water, electricity, insurance, subscriptions, village hall works, stationery, printer ink etc. One of the larger spends this year was £5808 + VAT on new streetlighting columns.
- CIL Monies currently being held amount to £555.16 for the Parish Council with a further amount of £2087.13 being held as ringfenced money for play equipment (not CIL). The ringfenced pot for the Clerk's Gratuity Pension stands at £3285 at 31st March 2023.

5. Report from County Councillor Barry Stone - (Appendix 4) – Cllr. Stone's annual report had been presented at the last Parish Council meeting

Report from District Councillors – (Appendix 5) - Cllr. Bernard's annual review document had been submitted prior to the meeting.

Peter Goodfellow – Chairman of Earsham Football Club – (Appendix 6) submitted his report prior to the meeting and commented that Earsham FC are financially secure unlike many Norfolk Clubs and teams that have folded in the last few years.

Bowls Club report was read out by the Chairman – (Appendix 7)

Village Hall Management report was read out by Cllr. Leech – (Appendix 8)

Earsham Trust report was read out by the Chairman (Appendix 9)

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 19.30pm

**** All reports are available for viewing by request to the clerk**

Signed ... A. Leech

Date 29th May 2024