

Minutes of Sible Hedingham Annual Parish Assembly Meeting Held in the Village Hall, Parkfields, Sible Hedingham on Tuesday 21st May at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs G Jefferson (Chairman), B Gardener, J Fennelly, F Ranson, S Metson, T Nash, B Young, County Cllr D Finch, Mrs G McCoyd (clerk) and 24 members of public.

1. Chairman's Welcome

Cllr G Jefferson said good evening and thank you all for coming out this evening for the Annual Parish Assembly. As you may or not be aware my name is Gillian Jefferson, former Vice-Chair and now your new Chair of Sible Hedingham Parish Council. Stephen Metson is the new Vice-Chair and our other Councillors are Barry Young, John Fennelly, Bev Gardener, Tim Nash, Ferg Ranson, Jed Stopher and Lisa Heywood. Before we get going there are a few housekeeping matters to bring to your attention. Please note there is no fire drill planned so if an alarm sounds the emergency exits are located to the sides and rear of the hall and everyone should please assemble by foot and wait at the assembly point at the top of the hill in Parkfields. Vehicles should not be removed from the car park as they may obstruct the arrival of emergency vehicles. Toilets are located off the internal lobby to the side of the hall. Agendas are available and we will now move onto the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

District Cllr H Johnson (another meeting), Cllr L Heywood (business)

3 To confirm the minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly held Tuesday 22nd May 2018

The minutes of 22nd May 2018 were confirmed by those present and duly signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 Matters arising from those minutes

There were no matters arising.

5 Essex County Council Report (Mr D Finch)

Cllr D Finch said it was disappointing to see the numbers of residents attending the Annual Parish Assembly had dropped over the years, he asked everyone to encourage their neighbours to attend as it was important to see the work of a vibrant Parish Council.

The full report from Cllr David Finch is attached to the minutes kept in the Parish Office. He highlighted the following areas:

Essex County Council is the most effective/efficient Council of its size in the country and ranks seventh overall, this result is drawn from an analysis of performance in six key areas: children's social care, older people, disability, health and social care, housing and homelessness, waste and recycling.

Reports of potholes decreased by 45% in Essex between 2015-2017

Regarding the Broadband rollout 115,000 properties have been enabled, phase 2 of the rollout continues and delivery will reach its peak over the next nine months.

ECC Probation service has been ranked outstanding by HM Inspectorate of Probation.

Children's services have been rated outstanding by Ofsted

ECC have submitted more than £500m of infrastructure bids to support infrastructure improvements in Essex; ECC strives through this process to win funding for key infrastructure upgrades ahead of new developments being built.

Cllr David Finch answered the following questions:

With regard to the Broadband rollout when would the rest of Sible Hedingham be finished? He was uncertain as to the timeline for this.

What was the infrastructure plans for the proposed development of the A120? ECC is lobbying for housing infrastructure bids to fund infrastructure developments.

Roads are gridlocked, what can ECC do? ECC are investing substantial amounts of money into road and potholes repairs. Regarding the A131 improvement work has been carried out on roundabouts but it was a fact that there is an increasing amount of cars on the highway. There is a need for more flexible working.

If there is no infrastructure in place will housing still go ahead or can it be stopped? BDC are responsible for giving permission to housing developments in this area.

ECC are committed to combat loneliness and keep children safe and yet there is the threat of library closures? The consultation has finished with over 21,000 responses being received, they are now being analysed and the Cabinet will review the evaluation in July. In Sible Hedingham visitors to the library had dropped by 35%

Where do you stand on the issue of the library service? If the library is useful and of value to the Community it should stay open

6 Braintree District Council Reports

Cllr G Jefferson read out the following report from Cllr H Johnson

My apologies for my non attendance today. I have always fully supported the parish councils during my terms of office and in all their endeavours. After my recent re- election as your

District Councillor for the Conservative party I look forward to many years of working with you all. The Heddinghams are villages with great historical backgrounds, look around, and see the many blue plaques.

We have a constantly growing population evidenced by many new homes being built. We should make great efforts to ensure the new residents are made welcome and part of our parishes.

I am always available to discuss any matters of interest or concern directly via telephone, email etc., and will continue to support the many local organisations of which I am a member. Don't forget our two health walks which I lead, Tuesday's from Sible and Thursday's from Castle, all very welcome.

Cllr. Hylton Johnson.

In the absence of Cllr J Beavis no report was given.

7 Parish Council Report.

Cllr G Jefferson gave the following report

As the new Chair it falls to me to present our report for the last twelve months and indicate our plans for the next twelve.

I would first like to mention John Skittrall who died earlier this year having served on the Parish Council for many years. Acknowledgement should also be given to all other former Councillors who decided not to put themselves forward for election, including Ron Volkwyn for his service as a Councillor and most recently as Chair, and Liz Parkin for her valued contributions. It is a huge commitment to be a Councillor and it should be remembered that your Parish Councillors do this as volunteers. The Parish Council is only as good as the sum total of all its component parts so I am thankful and buoyed by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by all the Councillors who have stayed and those who have been community spirited enough to be co-opted. Whilst there are vacancies, they are filling fast so anyone interested should make themselves known to Glenda our Parish Clerk.

Attached to the back of your agendas you should find a list compiled by Glenda of some of the various duties and responsibilities the Parish Council have undertaken on your behalf. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her hard work and professionalism. Whilst Glenda is a valuable resource for us all, if you have email access you can also report lighting and potholes directly to Essex County Council.

Our thanks is also extended to Jane Richardson and James Sheldon who carry out much of the day to day work and additional maintenance around the village with valued support from Kevin Shears and John Brooks.

The ongoing litter-picking was once again topped up by carrying out two litter pick events with Councillors, Scouts, Guides and residents helping to make these a success. It would be great to see the number of residents involved increase so we can cover more ground. We will aim to publicise these better to try and increase the numbers involved. We will be setting the dates for this September and March 2020 next month so watch out for the announcement on Facebook and in the minutes so you can add it to your diaries.

Whilst I am thanking people I would like to extend The Council's thanks to Sandra and Janet for their hard work and time in helping the village have and keep beautiful spaces and particularly for their work on Reflection Corner at the bottom of Gray's Hall Meadow.

The Recreation Ground is due to have the Timber Trail reinstated soon and a number of trees and hedging plants have been planted. With regards to the hedge by the Football Ground, this is on the Agenda for discussion at the Monday 10th June Council Meeting. Please save your comments and questions for that meeting, we would welcome your attendance.

We are still awaiting news about the New Medical Centre site near the entrance to Earls Garden; we will continue to support the local GPs in their plan to open it. The Village Hub is complete and beginning to be rented out by BDC who will continue to own and run it.

Unfortunately we are also waiting a date for the hand-over of Poppy Park that includes the old Nat West Bank building, along with the play area in Earls Garden and the final section of the Riverside Walk. We were reassured by Hylton Johnson at the May Parish Council Meeting that this is in hand and the current barrier fencing will be removed and the Riverside Walk be completely opened up in the near future. Once these areas have been handed over they will obviously be a focus for us going forward.

After its inaugural success last year, Heditude will once again entertain us, this year on Saturday 8th June.

We are currently exploring the possibility of buying the services of a dedicated Special Constable for the village, possibly sharing the cost and time with Castle Hedingham.

We are also continuing our discussions about providing an additional defibrillator machine site or sites around the village. If we proceed there will be open training and information sessions for anyone interested in attending. These will be publicised in the usual way on noticeboards, website and Facebook. We are currently investigating reports about the machine outside the Co-op.

We are hopeful to make more use of our digital presence for those of you who prefer to find out about matters using technology, and want to hear about what we are doing direct from us.

The first of the two greatest Parish Council highlights for the last twelve months for me was the Village Afternoon Tea Party in support of the Royal British Legion at the start of Poppy Fortnight. I would like to again thank all those who volunteered and gave their time and donations. Particularly those on the hardworking Tea Party working group; the Co-op, Fiona and Paul Earey; the Village Hall Committee; and the WI and many other individuals who donated cakes, funds and displays to make the event such a success.

The second was the switch on of the Christmas Tree Lights. Once again the event was attended by well over 250 people, including the choir, pupils and staff from St Peters Primary School and a brass band from Hedingham School. Many thanks once more to the Co-op, Stephen and Victoria Metson, Jean and Robert Fuller, Chris Jenkins, Fiona and Paul Earey, Splinters, Concept Signs and finally Kevin Shears for his hard work, time and effort in both putting the surround in place and the tree up, and then taking it down in January.

Both were fantastic community events that were very well attended and greatly enjoyed by all. With the Hedingham Branch of the RBL, Smile of Arran, Essex Air Ambulance and the Thursday Club being grateful for the much needed funds received. A card and letter of thanks are here for you to see if you wish.

8 Community Agent Report

With that I would have introduced Jane Laken to give her Community Agent Report, but unfortunately Jane has sent her apologies because the funding has been withdrawn for agents to attend official meetings.

She has asked that I inform you that she is still your Community Agent and funded until March 2021 and currently working within Drs Surgeries. The service is continuing as normal for now so please make contact with her if you need to. She also added that the Thursday Club is still going thanks to the donations they have received.

9 Displays and Written Reports.

The meeting adjourned for refreshments and an opportunity to view display stands. Written reports and displays were provided by the following organisations:

British Legion, Friends of Alderford Mill, Heritage Society, Guides, Heditude, Library, Baptist Church, and Hedingham History Group.

Following the break the meeting resumed.

10 Public Question Time.

Cllr G Jefferson answered the following question:

Are the new Cllrs listed on the website? Yes the names and email addresses are on there.

Cllr J Fennelly said the Reflection Pond looks lovely, well done Sandra and Janet, would you like any donations for it. Sandra and Janet would accept donations.

11 Chairman's Address

Once again thank you all for taking your time out this evening to attend provide displays and many thanks to the Guide for their help with the refreshments. (The guides were presented with a token gift as a thank you)

We look forward to seeing you all at our various meetings, activities and events in the future.

Good night and a safe journey home.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm