

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Little Bealings Parish held at Bealings Village Hall
on Monday, 3 March 2014 at 7.45pm**

Present: Mrs F Rogers, Mrs T Cornish, Mr D Hunter, Mr B Rufford, Mr D Wilson and Mrs M Wilson (all Parish Councillors), Mr P Bellfield (County Councillor), Mr T Fryatt (District Councillor), 10 residents and one owner of land in the parish

In attendance: Mrs C Ramsden, Clerk to the Parish Council

Mrs Rogers, as Chairman of the Parish Council, took the chair and welcomed those present.

Apologies: Dr C Rowe (Parish Councillor) and Mrs J Cook (Tree and Footpath Warden)

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15 April 2013: The minutes were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

Matters Arising from the Minutes: A resident enquired about progress on SCDC's intention to reduce the number of District Councillors. He was advised that the period of public consultation on an electoral boundary review ran until 28 April 2014.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman introduced the Parish, District and County Councillors, including Mr Hunter who had been co-opted during the year. She thanked Councillors, employees (the Clerk and Mr Ball (handyman)) and volunteers (Mrs Cook and Mrs Shaw (webmaster)) for their work for the Council and the parish over the last year.

During the last year the Council had held 11 meetings and been consulted on 16 planning applications. The most contentious had been for use of part of the old Sinks Pit site by Fork Rent plc, which had generated opposition in view of 12 HGVs leaving the site at 5.30am every day. Despite objections SCDC had granted permission and the Parish Council had made formal complaint to SCDC about the way they had handled the application.

A decision on the proposed cabling route for the East Anglian Offshore Windfarm (EAOW) was awaited. Approval was expected, and the Council would try to influence Traffic and Travel Management Plans to minimise the impact of the works.

Although the Admiral's Head was a registered Community Asset and a separate Group had been set up to explore its purchase, it remained closed.

Other issues arising from the Village Review last year and being explored by the Council, were the need for a mains sewer in The Street (which was being pursued via Anglian Water), Speeding traffic (and more speed traps were now operating in the village) and the condition of The Street. The Street was due to be resurfaced in 2015 and the raised kerbstone would be addressed then.

The Council continued its membership of SALC and the Suffolk Preservation Society. The Chairman said it had been a busy year, and the coming year was also expected to be busy.

Other Reports

County Councillor's Report: Mr Bellfield said it was good to see residents attending the APM. He reported:

Elections in 2013: The Conservative Group had a reduced majority following the elections last May, but were still able to carry out their proposals. Council Tax would remain unchanged for the next four years. Savings were still being made, including as a result of producing electricity from waste and ending the Customer Service Direct contract with BT. The highways budget would not be cut and the network looked to be in better condition than in other parts of the country.

Education: Some improvement in Suffolk's poor GCSE and KS2 results had been seen this year, and A level results were above the national average. The move from 3 tier to 2 tier schooling had seen improvement in achievements. £1.5m was to be invested in apprenticeships in Suffolk. A campaign to encourage parents to claim free school meals had also been successful, with schools receiving more funding per qualifying pupil.

Broadband: This was being delivered by SCC successfully and it was now intended that over 95% of residents would have high speed broadband.

Residential Care Homes: Care UK had planning permission for 9 of the 10 new care homes they were to provide.

Rail Travel: SCC had organised a well-attended conference of all interested parties to look at improving services.

Partnership Working: SCC was looking to work with Norfolk County Council, to amalgamate services and save costs.

Street Lights: These had been turned off in some town areas and fears of an increase in crime had been unrealised. Incidents had decreased.

He would be pleased to assist any parishioner who contacted him concerning SCC services.

District Councillor's Report: Mr Fryatt reported:

Planning: It had been a very busy year, and the new Core Strategy was now in place, meaning a new Local Plan, after 10 years of work. Over 1,500 planning applications had been received in the last year and over 700 new homes approved. There were now more planning staff, to look at the site specific allocations arising from the new Local Plan.

Council Tax: SCDC had not increased Council Tax for 4 years, although government funding had decreased. The Council Tax was less for equivalent homes than in other parts of Suffolk and good management had protected services.

Electoral Boundary Review: This was proceeding although the Commission had proposed 42 Councillors not the 43 SCDC had put forward. It would mean more parishes for each District Councillor to visit. He would be pleased to assist any parishioner who contacted him concerning SCDC services.

Police: No police representative was available to attend, but a written report had been received. This showed 14 reported crimes in the parish in the last year, with 3 detected. This was an increase of 4 crimes on the previous year, the increase being criminal damage and arson offences. There were 7 burglary/theft crimes. Current SNT priorities related to parking in Kesgrave, anti-social behaviour in Rushmere and speeding traffic. Speeding was now addressed in a more centralised manner, with local teams undertaking monitoring. This was intended to provide more resources for problem locations. The mobile speed camera van had been deployed in Martlesham Road on four occasions so far this year, and 11 offences recorded. Following concerns about school parking, PSCO Moss had visited the school and spoken about road safety. Residents were encouraged to sign up to Police Direct to receive regular local updates.

Footpaths: In Mrs Cook's absence, the Chairman read her written report. The extreme wet/dry 2014 had seen rapid surface growth on routes. Not all routes were easy to access with cutting equipment, being some way from the road, and Mr Ball was thanked for keeping them well trimmed. The Fynn Valley walk had attracted many walkers, although the winter mud had caused problems, as it had on Footpath No 8a, the Manor Farm track. The Walks Leaflet was still a great asset.

Trees: In Mrs Cook's absence, the Chairman read her written report. Many village trees had suffered during the severe winter storms, but most problems now appear to have been solved.

Women's Institute: In Mrs Cook's absence, the Chairman read her written report. As well as regular monthly meetings, with a variety of speakers, the WI had enjoyed rambles, lunches, coffee mornings, a reading circle and shopping trips. Woolly hats had been produced for seafarers, and tiny hats for premature babies. Donated wool had also been used to knit blanket squares.

Benefice Magazine: A written report had been supplied. Advertising revenue secured by Mr Porter had enabled 10 editions to be provided free to every household in the four parishes during 2013. Donations from the Parish Councils and the WI (£415), had meant a surplus over printing costs (£1,364) of £238 at year end. The editorial team, Mr Carr and his distribution team were all thanked for their work.

Bealings Village Hall Report: Mrs Wilson, the Secretary and Treasurer for the Hall, reported that the Hall had been very busy with regular and ad-hoc bookings. Annual running costs were over £5,000 and, as the Hall was over 60 years old, there was on-going maintenance and repair work. A new flat roof over the snooker room and kitchen would be needed in the next few years and funds were being ring-fenced for this. Some leaks in the main hall were also being monitored. The five year electrical installation check had highlighted work required to meet current standards, which would be carried out soon. It was also hoped to further improve the car park surface. SCDC Services had cut the Playing Field and the Community Payback Team had undertaken tidying work. The latter would be used for painting the wooden play houses this year. The Playing Field had been renovated nearly 7 years ago and was annually inspected by RoSPA to identify improvements and remedial work which was required. SCDC Playspace Fund had helped fund new lines on the Sports Court last year. The Field is used by many families, although the number of subscribers and use of the Sports Court has decreased. The Trustees appreciate the donations from the Parish Councils to annual upkeep of the Hall and Playing Field.

Website:

Mrs Shaw reported that until last year she had been the only one able to update the Little Bealings website. Mrs Wilson was now also trained as Webmaster. Anyone wanting anything added to the site was invited to contact her.

Any Other Business: There were no matters raised.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.