

North Runcton Parish Council

Minutes of the North Runcton Annual Parish (Residents) Meeting held at the Village Meeting Place

Tuesday 17th May 2016 7.45pm

Present: Cllr Rick Morrish (Chair), Cllr Kerry Fuller (Vice Chair), Cllr Ann Towler, Cllr Jeremy Fuller, Cllr Paul Yallop, Cllr Gill Sergeant, Cllr Amanda Dobbing, Cllr John Sherry

Bor. Cllr Peter Gidney, Bor. Cllr Bal Anota, County Cllr Toby Coke

17 members of the public were also present

1. Apologies

Cllr Barry Houchen

Additional Agenda Item

Presentation and projector images by Rev. Riaz and Kenneth Matthews – All Saints Church

Mr Matthews gave a brief history of the Church which was designed and re-built by the Local Architect Henry Bell following the collapse of the tower in 1703. All Saints houses treasures like the life size paintings of Mathew, Mark, Luke, John and Christ which, came from Florence in 1901. The marble font at the West door came from St Margaret's in Kings Lynn and George Vancouver and many of his relations were baptised at this font. All Saints continues to serve the village as a place of worship, a place for baptism, confirmation, marriage and to bring comfort to the bereaved, albeit space in the churchyard is now at a premium. The Reverend Riaz and the stalwart efforts of the PCC members, ensures that events such as the famous annual Flower Festival, bring many people to the parish and essential monies to the church.

A huge amount of money is now required to not only to re-roof and dry out the whole building but also to bring the facilities in to the 21st century so it can continue its role as a place of worship but also be used for even more events. The PCC has applied for some help from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, but at most this only likely to represent 50% of the initial £ 200,000 cost.

There followed a discussion as residents suggested fundraising ideas and people and organisations to contact for further help and Mr Mathews will follow up on these.

Cllr Morrish thanked Rev Riaz and Mr Matthews for bringing the plight of the church to the attention of the village.

2. To accept the minutes of the Annual Residents Meeting held 19th May 2015.

The minutes were accepted and signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report

Cllr Morrish read his report as follows;

Last May I gave my first chairman's report and I felt the Council had completed quite a lot of positive work in the previous 12 months - and I was hopeful about the coming year. In fact, to borrow from a local nonagenarian, this year has turned out to be an *annus horribilis* for the Parish Council - and I feel we have expended a large portion of our limited resources achieving very little that can be said to have been beneficial for the community.

At this time we have no idea what the SDA intend to do with their site. However it is still my personal view that whether they - or anyone else - wishes to develop the Runcton Stables site, it will be appropriate for the Parish Council to engage with them and to try to ensure the new residents establish a good working relationship with the community. It is also my view that getting some kind of written agreement about use of the access road to that site is the responsible thing for the Parish Council to pursue.

If there are any positives to take from the last few months - I think it must ultimately be a good thing that more residents are apparently now taking an interest in village affairs; I think Councillors have learnt to work together under adversity – and, a surprising by-product, I thought a Christmas tree on the green was a good idea and I thank those who organised it.

Planning Matters: Apart from the proposed campsite proposals we have learnt this year that developers FW Properties are interested in redeveloping Church Farm. They addressed a parish council meeting in December and are holding a public exhibition this Thursday (5pm-7pm). Their latest plan appears to show 18 detached and semi-detached dwellings around a central open space. We assume a planning application will be forthcoming later in the year.

In March we heard from Middleton Aggregates about their plans to create a new clay pit at the southern edge of the Parish. We asked them to consider a footpath around the site for public benefit and they have provisionally said if they get planning permission they will provide one.

Last November outline consent was granted for a major development at the so-called Morston Point site at the Hardwick Ind Est. This will include a DIY superstore, garden centre, drive through restaurants, a hotel, a car showroom and a 'family' pub. A previously proposed cinema was deleted from the plans – but nothing else has presently been proposed on that part of the site. The site lies wholly within North Runcton. The Parish Council had objected to it on grounds of traffic impact, adverse impact to the town centre and the fact that this site had previously been allocated for employment sector development. The consent notice stipulates that development must commence within 2 years.

The outline application from Hopkins Homes - for 1100 dwellings, a primary school and a local centre at Constitution Hill is still on hold. The last notice shown on the planning portal is from the Highways Agency and is a holding objection related to the need for a full transport assessment. This expires in July. We understand the Borough Council want to get their Local Plan in place before they consider this application further.

The Borough Local Plan is still at examination. The Borough are presently consulting on proposed modifications (consultation ends tomorrow). The modifications include several that relate to the 'West Winch Growth Area' and will affect North Runcton. We have prepared a response. Of particular concern to many West Winch residents is the inclusion of land at Gravelhill which was not previously allocated. If the inspector accepts the Borough modifications, his final recommendations are due out late summer and the Borough hope to have the Local Plan agreed by the end of the year.

The many delays with the Borough Local Plan have also delayed our Neighbourhood Plan. You will remember that the Neighbourhood Plan is being jointly developed by North Runcton and West Winch Parish Councils with the aim of providing additional locally focussed planning policy. Our goal is to help shape the Borough proposals and achieve the best outcome possible for existing and future residents. This year we managed to secure another grant of £4800 from the Department of Communities and Local Government (Community Rights Programme) which has paid for input from our planning advisor to redraft a number of policies in line with consultation comments received last summer. We continue to liaise with Borough officers and it is our goal to submit the final plan to the Borough as soon as they have completed revisions of their own Local Plan. There will then be a 6 week consultation period, an independent examination and finally, a local referendum where we hope all local residents will support the introduction of the Neighbourhood Plan.

VMP and other Parish assets – With Buttercups playgroup, the Art Club, Rainbows and various other groups now using the hall 5, 6 or 7 days a week, it is getting good use. We have a weekly cleaner and an electrician, plumber and fire assessor to monitor the building throughout the year. However there was a roof leak in the foyer this spring and the 30 year old kitchen is on its last legs. We need to invest – and intend this to be a priority for this year.

We now have an independent risk assessor to annually review the VMP and our other assets, and another project which the Parish Council must address soon is the road surface on School Lane.

Finance – For 2015/16 the North Runcton Parish Council account held a balance of £19,630 (of which nearly £2k is money held on behalf of the War Memorial Fund) and nearly £6k is held in a separate Village Meeting Place account. Rachel, our clerk, reported at the AGM that we had operated with a slight surplus

of £936 for the year – partly due to a £750 grant received to support the Council becoming compliant with a new Transparency Code for local government.

For the second year we have had to raise the village precept – partly to cover previously unbudgeted expenses relating to the SDA/School Lane matter. The Council agreed a precept of £15,088 for 2016/2017, including a provision of £4,000 for extra legal and administrative costs and £2,000 for a Parish Poll called by 6 parishioners. So far we only expect to have spent half of those allowances respectively and we hope we can avoid further expense.

Council. This year we have welcomed on board a new Councillor, John Sherry, who has lived in the village for 5 years and is a lecturer in engineering at Bury St Edmunds. We therefore now have our full complement of Councillors. We all attended a Councillor training session in January and several Councillors attended a briefing by Borough officers on changes to the planning system in March. Cllr Sergeant and Rachel attended a seminar on the new transparency code in November and Rachel has attended several other briefings and updates throughout the year and she keeps us abreast of issues that may affect Parish Council procedure. I would like to thank her and all Councillors for their continued support throughout the year.

North Runcton Parish is in a period of great change and the Council will continue to try to represent parishioners to the best of our ability through these challenging times.

4. Borough Councillors Report

Cllr Gidney reported that it had been an interesting year for the Borough especially in terms of planning. On 19th April the Borough announced it had reached its 5 year land supply. There is an appeal ongoing for a development at Heacham which will be a test case for this supply, the outcome is not known at present.

The way in which Parish Council's receive planning applications is going paperless as of 1st June. Parish Councils will no longer receive paper plans and applications; these will need to be viewed online at the Borough Councils planning portal.

The Borough Council has a new leader – Brian Long and a new cabinet have been sworn in. The Mayor for 2016/17 is David Whitby and the Deputy Mayor is Carol Brewer.

Cllr Morrish thanked Cllr Gidney and Cllr Anota for their support during the year.

5. County Councillors Report

Cllr Coke reported that the Conservatives have taken control at Norfolk County Council and there are plans to revert to the cabinet system to make decisions; however this process could take 2-3 years to implement. Discussions continue on the issue of devolution. The £34 million costs for the incinerator has been funded by Norfolk County Council, waste is now exported to Germany and Amsterdam in a bid to save money.

Cllr Morrish thanked Cllr Coke for his assistance and support during the year.

6. Reports from Community Groups

- **Art Club - Denise Coles was unable to attend and sent the following report which was read out by the Clerk;**

The Art Group is now in its ninth year. We meet every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon throughout the year, unless Christmas and Boxing Day coincide with our sessions! Members can join one or both sessions and there are 2 qualifications for membership.

1 Enthusiasm

2 Bringing cakes on your birthday

What can you buy today for £2? Not even a cup of coffee at some places. But here, every Wednesday and Thursday £2 will buy good company, tea, coffee, biscuits and on birthdays, homemade cakes. This is in addition to painting!

Each year calendars are printed from members' artwork and sold to members at cost, These calendars are posted to friends and relations worldwide, so North Runcton Art group is known in Australia, America and Germany for example. We enjoy a global reputation!

There is an annual exhibition over a weekend in November. Admission is free; tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits are available; there are pictures to enjoy and buy; cards jewellery and crafts. Two luxury hampers are raffle prizes. In 2015, we attracted over 100 visitors.

As Organiser, modesty prevents me from saying just how very successful we are. We could be regarded as the cultural icon on North Runcton. Wednesday is rather full and there are a few places available for Thursday. My contact number is on the notice board here in the hall. Please get in touch if you would like to meet us.

- **Buttercups - Linda Creed was unable to attend the meeting and sent this report which was read out by Cllr Morrish;**

We now have 28 children on our register compared with 17 when we first moved to the VMP in January 2015. We have set a maximum of 18 per session to ensure safety and quality of provision.

- We broke even in January 2016 and have since been making a small profit which will help us ride out the autumn term when numbers will be lower (10 children are leaving to start school). It normally takes a while to rebuild the numbers as it depends on children in the area reaching 2 years of age or moving into the area.
- A grant of £5,000 from the Local Authority has allowed us to replace a lot of our tired equipment and to provide more resources for the courtyard.
- Fundraising has been very successful. We employ a Music Man for half an hour a week by courtesy of the Rotary Club. A bingo session at West Winch raised £625 which is also being channelled in equipment.
- Parents and local people have been very supportive and helped out in a number of different ways, such as assembling new items and taking away packaging and Rick has fitted items to the walls in courtyard for us.
- In November we were a finalist in the Lynn News Pre-school of the Year competition.
- Children and parents are happy with our setting and the rural location is a real bonus, allowing children to be taken for walks to observe the flora and fauna and the changing seasons.

Parking has been a contentious issue from time to time but we are doing our best to ensure our parents and staff only park in the allotted area.

Lastly I would like to say thank to Rachel and Rick, Buttercups has been made to feel very welcome and any issues with the hall have been sorted effectively and in double quick time.

- **Hopes Charity**

Cllr Kerry Fuller and Anna Gunn explained that the charity's mission is to provide relief to the elderly and those suffering poverty within the village. Funding comes from the hire of a piece of land owned by the charity and dividends from some investments. The committee have offered to assist the elderly with transportation to attend village events such as the harvest supper and flower festival. Any ideas on ways to donate the money they charity holds would be welcomed.

7. Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) – a presentation from Cllr Bal Anota

Cllr Anota explained that a VAS sign was purchased by Gayton Parish Council following issues with speeding in the village. The sign displays the speed limit and the data collection box records the number of vehicles, the time, number of vehicles per hour and speed of vehicles. This data is extracted via a laptop and the PDF file sent to Norfolk County Council. Locations for the signs are set by NCC and are in place for 4 week periods. The battery life lasts an average of 3/4 weeks. Approximate costs for a sign and data recorder are £3,400 with poles and brackets an additional £170. Several poles and sets of brackets are recommended so that the recorder can be moved around easily. Assume the total cost will be around £5000. There is grant funding available from the parish partnership scheme and WREN. The VAS has

reduced speeding in Gayton at some locations and data collected by the Parish Council has been analysed by NCC reinforcing their case that there is an issue with speeding in the village. It was noted that speed gates were tried in Gayton but were not successful in reducing the speed of vehicles.

8. Event to mark the Queens Birthday

The Parish Council has been awarded a grant of £150 to support the costs of holding a traditional tea party in the village. Cllr Dobbing and Cllr Sergeant put forward some ideas to hold the tea party on The Green with refreshments and games. A date of 2nd July was proposed, to start around 3pm, more information to follow.

9. Ideas Session

Comments and ideas discussed for the Parish Council to take forward for the coming year;

VMP - Renovation of the foyer area and refit of the kitchen.

Bus Shelter on the Green – Clean and white wash

Evening talks – during the winter months a speaker to attend the VMP to give talks of interest

Open Gardens Day – possibly organise this for summer 2017, with a view to helping with fundraising for the Church repairs

The meeting closed at 9.05pm and refreshments were served.

Signed

XXth May 2017