

# Minutes of Great Oakley Parish Council Annual Assembly Held at the Village Hall 7.00pm Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**Present:** Mr S Huk – Chairman, Mr T Spurge – Vice Chairman, Mr B Eaton, Miss N Booth, Mr N Daniels, District Cllr T Howard, Mr D Brown

**Apologies for Absence:** Mr J Tierney, Mr M Keating, Mr M Bransby, County Cllr A Erskine, Mrs J Mason

There was one member of the public present.

Annual Assembly was opened by Chairman at 7.00pm.

**Chairman's Report:** Chairman reported that 2015 was a Parish Council Election year. Four incumbent Councillors submitted their nomination forms to Tendring District Council by the due date which meant no election was necessary as there were five vacancies which could be filled by co-option. Mr Mayman decided not to continue on the Council and Chairman took the opportunity to thank him for his efforts and support whilst with us. The remaining four members were subsequently co-opted along with Mr Keating who applied for the remaining vacancy.

Having had to increase the Precept last year we were able to hold it at the same level for next year at £19,755 and are confident we will be able to meet our commitments and maintain the levels of service to our community.

TDC's Draft Local Plan remains un-adopted and as a consequence we have seen some limited speculative applications around the Parish. A public exhibition was held in April where residents were able to view Mr Thompson's Allotment Field development, which was submitted in July and discussed at a Public Meeting in September consisting of outline planning permission for 51 dwellings and full planning permission for public open space, a village hall, doctors surgery and village shop. In January TDC granted approval for the village hall, car parking and surgery with outline for the housing including the provision that there can be no more than 33% of housing built without the village hall.

In April we were all surprised by the closure of the Maybush but with the hard work of local residents led by Mark Godfrey it has now been purchased and is open for business again. I'm pleased to say that the Parish Council were able to assist by supporting the Maybush being listed as a Community Asset to prevent its early sale for residential development and by providing a small grant towards printing costs and providing the Village Hall for meetings. Congratulations to Mark and all involved and we wish you well.

We have replaced the village sign destroyed in the 2013 winter storms with a steel sign based upon a design from Mrs Tina Daniels and manufactured by local craftsmen at Stowe Forge.

A new bench seat has also been installed on the Triangle at Stones Green.

The Parish Council website continues to provide information to residents and Chairman thanked Mr Tierney for his work in this area.

Chairman thanked all Councillors, Clerk and Cllr Erskine for their support and time and effort they have given for the benefit of the Parish.

**Transport Report:** Mr Brown provided an information leaflet on local services. There will be changes on the 10<sup>th</sup> April. The 104 will be re-numbered 102 and will now go through Dedham hourly. There are reports that signage at bus stops is not clear. Chairman thanked Mr Brown.

**Finance Report:** A preliminary report has been prepared and circulated with no questions. This is available to view upon request.

**Highways:** Chairman reported that despite another mild winter, numerous pot holes around the Parish continue to be an issue and we seem to be constantly reporting them to ECC Highways, with limited response.

Parking at the school continues to be an issue with vehicles continuing to cause an obstruction to the footpath and we are currently working with the school and Highways to have railings installed either side of the road to physically prevent this.

Fly-tipping has occurred in the Parish with incidents at The Soils, Pesthouse Lane and at the Old Burial Ground. In May, Miss Booth caught the person who has been regularly fly tipping at the old burial ground and reported them.

In May the annual visit flagged up 9 street lights which are in need of urgent repair or replacement and having decided to replace the oldest street lights in the Parish, this work is on-going.

**Pre-School Report:** Oakey Dokeys Pre-School Limited (a public company and registered charity) celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on its current site in the grounds of All Saints Primary School in October last year. In the last decade they have grown from a village Pre-School set up to support the intake of the village school to a thriving pre-school in their own right, currently with 56 children on their register.

They now offer 8 sessions per week, and the register is already full for the academic year 2016/17.

**Church Report:** The ecclesiastical parish of All Saints, Great Oakley is involved in a process of significant change. Historically we have been part of a benefice, or group of parishes, with the parishes of Wix and Wrabness. All Saints Great Oakley, Wrabness and Wix, along with the neighbouring parishes of Beaumont-cum-moze and Tendring will now form a new benefice, this is part of a strategy to provide parishes with the support of ordained ministers who will be drawn from a greatly diminished pool of candidates.

Our parish has spent the majority of the last decade without an appointed minister to provide a spiritual and practical lead. The inability of the Church of England to provide a minister for our benefice over these past years has not prevented our parishes remaining very active. The burden of carrying this activity has been carried by our Churchwardens and other individuals who make tremendous voluntary contributions of time and energy. Our parish has over many years received generous support from Reverend Philip Palmer who has voluntarily given us the benefit of his advice and guidance whilst working diligently to lead services and the spiritual life in our church. We also benefitted for a year and a half from having reverend Francis Mason as our 'Community Priest'.

At the annual meetings of the ecclesiastical parish, it is intended to elect a couple of Churchwardens as they do each year. After many years of service one of our long serving Churchwardens, Mrs Janet Little died suddenly during the last year. Janet was for some years Chair of Governors for the village primary school and was rarely absent from any church service or school event and she will be greatly missed in both the school and the parish.

**Village Hall Report:** Chairman reported that we completed the replacement of the Village Hall floor this year at a cost of £4,750, half paid for by fund-raising led by Pat Ling and the remainder via grant funding. Chairman thanked Pat and everyone involved in raising these funds.

Periodically we review the current fees for the use of the Village Hall and after due consideration it was agreed to keep them the same for next year.

Although the Village Hall finances remain sound, we have placed an advertisement in 'Coast to Coast' to see if we can attract new users to the hall.

Disappointingly, one of the hall heaters was broken during a New Year Party which was held in the hall. Consequently we will be compelled to take a deposit under similar circumstances in the future to cover any damage caused.

Chairman thanked Mrs Julia Turner for her work as Caretaker for the hall.

Our long term plans for a new Village Hall are progressing with planning permission now in place. Final details are still to be agreed with Peter Thompson but progress looks promising. Chairman thanked Mr Nick Daniels for his continued work on this project.

Mrs Ling asked if existing users of the hall will still be able to have their usual slot in the new hall. Chairman is confident that regular users of the hall will be offered their usual slot first.

**Playing Field Report:** Chairman reported that the play equipment on the Recreation Field continues to be well used, although there have been disappointing reports of alcohol consumption in the area with bottles being left behind.

In June the Bungalow on School Road which abuts the Recreation Field boundary experienced a fire leaving the property in a dangerous condition, requiring us to secure the boundaries which TDC addressed promptly.

Our grass cutting contract was due for renewal this year and it was agreed to renew with the current contractor. We have also requested our contractor to reduce the height of the Recreation Field hedge so the new village sign is more prominent/visible.

There being no further questions, Chairman closed Annual Assembly at 7.24pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....