

Minutes of Great Oakley Parish Council Annual Assembly

Held at The Village Hall 7.00pm Tuesday 20th March 2018

Present: Mr S Huk – Chairman, Mr T Spurge – Vice Chairman, Mr J Tierney, Mrs J Mason, Mr B Eaton.

Apologies for Absence: Mr C Mayman, Mr N Daniels, Mr M Keating, Mr M Bransby, District Cllr M Bush, County Cllr A Erskine

There were eleven members of the public present.

Annual Assembly was opened by Chairman at 7.00pm.

Chairman's Report: Chairman said he was pleased to be able to note that since the Maybush re-opened last year as a "Community Hub", it has gone from strength to strength and has now successfully purchased the adjacent "Red House" with the intention of providing additional services and facilities. To support these endeavours, the Parish Council allowed the installation of an advertising sign on one of the lamp posts adjacent to the War Memorial and Councillors continue to wish them well.

Mr Chris Mayman was co-opted on to the Council this year and Councillors welcome him.

Despite rising costs, the Parish Council have been able to hold the level of the Precept second year at £19,755 and at the same time not increase the Village Hall Hire costs or the Burial Ground fees.

The lych gates at the Burial Ground finally succumbed in the Autumn. Council will look into options for replacing them.

Tendring District Council issued their revised Local Plan in the summer. The only impact for our Parish was the deletion of the Building Development Boundary around Stones Green, despite previous commitments that it would be maintained.

In the summer Council were made aware of the proposals for a "Tendring Stage Rally" to take place on Sunday 22nd April, this year. At that time, one of the proposed stages would have gone from Tendring Green, through Stones Green, past Great Oakley Church then towards Wix. After expressing Council's concerns, the route has been revised so only passes the edge of Stones Green, however due to the noise, pollution, disruption and risk to life and property, Council have maintained their objections to this event and will continue to do so.

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

The Parish Council's Standing Orders were updated this year to reflect current best practice and new Data Protection Regulations are coming into force in May and Council are working to ensure we comply.

Consultation on proposed Electoral Reform was announced in the summer, the impact for our Parish being the suggestion of a single District Councillor for Great and Little Oakley and Wix.

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

Public Transport Report: Mr Brown our Transport Representative reported that copies of bus time tables are available at The Maybush, the village shop, Primary School and Doctors Surgery. There doesn't appear to be any foreseeable changes to the services at this time. X15 is the fastest service to Colchester via the University. The 102/103/104 seeing no changes. The Sunday Service (102) via Dedham could be of interest to some for a pleasant day trip.

Highways: Chairman reported that the railings outside the Primary School were damaged more than a year ago and have repeatedly been reported but still to no avail. Parking at the School continues to be an issue.

The road through Stones Green was resurfaced at the beginning of the year, however due to an increase in level, this has resulted in flooding to a number of properties in wet weather and Council continue to pursue a resolution with Highways.

Numerous pot holes around the Parish continue to be an issue and are reported on a regular basis.

Parking in Farm Road has become something of an issue with some residents due to the success of the Maybush and Council are looking into a potential solution in conjunction with Mr Thompson to provide an area of off road parking off of Farm Road.

Council were approached by Harwich & District Speedwatch who would like to extend the civilian use of Speed Guns into our area, requesting Councils support and seeking volunteers which Council were happy to give.

Council have received notification of proposed Highways works in Farm Road, Back Lane and Queen Street, sometime in the next 18 months. Further notice will be given nearer the time but it was pointed out that Highways now have the powers to remove vehicles if and when required to carry out their works.

Fly Tipping continues to be a problem, aggravated by the restrictions of what householders can dispose of at the Civic Amenity Sites and has occurred at The Soils, Colchester Road, Stones Green, The Avenue, Stones Green Road, Farm Road and Pesthouse Lane. In an attempt to stop this, Council have undertaken the installation of CCTV cameras at a number of points in the Parish with some positive results already seen. Chairman thanked Mr Keating for his hard work in this area and for looking after Public Rights of Way in the Parish.

Finance Report: A preliminary Finance Report was presented providing predictions of the out-turn at the end of this financial year. This is available to view by appointment with the Clerk.

Pre-School Report: There is no report available.

Church Report: Mr Tierney reported that during the past twelve months our Ecclesiastical Parish of All Saints has seen the continuance of some significant changes in our area. Historic legal changes to the arrangement of local benefices, i.e. groupings of parishes, are now officially completed and enshrined in law.

Thanks to some of the changes, Great Oakley now has a “Vicar”, Reverend Liz Barnes, rather than a “Priest-in Charge” and she is resident in the Rectory.

The Church choir sings regularly to support Sunday and other services in our Parish Church, joining with choir members from neighbouring parishes to provide choirs when requested for weddings and funerals.

The full report is available via our Clerk.

Village Hall Report: We had a presentation from “Village Makers” on the latest proposals for the Allotment Field development. The buildings are to be sold “off plan” and pre-fabricated in Poland. When 20 houses have been sold build work will commence on the New Village Hall. This is contrary to the information we previously received and Council are pursuing it with the Landowner and Tendring District Council planning.

Considerable concern was also raised about the amount of parking available for the New Village Hall which is also being raised.

Council secured a reduction in the standing charge for the gas tank to the current Village Hall and a reduced gas price.

The Post Office will remain in the Village Hall for the foreseeable future, following a meeting with the Postmaster and a monthly donation being secured to help with heating costs. A new security screen is due to be installed.

The Art Club requested permission to display some of their work in the Village Hall and Council were happy to support this.

Mrs Ling and others continue to support the hall and other causes with their fund raising events and Chairman thanked them for their efforts.

Chairman also thanked Mrs Turner for all her hard work as Caretaker.

A Parishioner asked Chairman about the ownership of the New Village Hall having heard rumours that the Parish Council would be renting it. Chairman explained that nothing had been finally agreed to date, but in previous discussions the expectation was that the Parish Council would own the new hall. He assured all present that the proposed arrangements for the new hall and the potential disposal of the old premises would be made public before anything was formally agreed.

Playing Field Report: Chairman reported that the play equipment on the Recreation Field continues to be well used, however our maintenance contractor has had to discontinue that service and we are currently seeking an alternative provider.

The village football team continue to make good use of the pitch although we have received some complaints about litter on the field after matches. Council has raised this with the club and are confident it will be satisfactorily resolved.

This year we have had the Recreation Field hedges and those at the Burial Ground trimmed. The hedges adjacent to the Church are also to be done as soon as the ground conditions improve sufficiently after this winter's exceptionally wet weather.

The grass cutting contracts are due to be renewed this year and are currently out for Tender.

A new waste bin has been installed in Stones Green, also suitable for dog waste.

A Parishioner asked if Council will be responsible for the maintenance of the proposed "green areas" at the Allotment Field Development and Chairman confirmed that we would not.

A Parishioner requested a bin/dog waste bin at Red Barn Lane. Another Parishioner requested that Council meeting dates be put into Coast to Coast.

Chairman closed Annual Assembly at 7.40pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....