

Minutes of Great Oakley Parish Council Annual Assembly

Held at The Village Hall 7.00pm Tuesday 4th June 2019

Present: Mr S Huk – Chairman, Mr J Tierney, Mr M Bush, Mr P Day, County Cllr A Erskine

Apologies for Absence: None

There were twelve members of the public present.

Annual Assemble was opened by Chairman at 7.05pm.

Chairman's Report: I can report that 2019 was a Parish Council Election year. Only one incumbent Councillor and one prospective new member submitted their nomination forms to Tendring District Council by the due date consequently, with only two members, the Council was inquorate and therefore unable to function.

A further ballot was called and on the second occasion one further nomination was received meaning the Council could now function and no election was necessary, the remaining six vacancies can be filled by co-option in due course. Mr Daniels papers were received late, but I understand he will be looking to be co-opted.

Mr Eaton had resigned in July, Mr Spurge, Mrs Mason, Mr Mayman, Mr Keating Mr Bransby and I, for various and differing personal reasons and commitments felt it was time to pass the baton to the next generation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the previous members of the Parish Council for their hard work and support over many years and I wish our successors every success for the future.

I am pleased to say I leave the Council and Village Hall finances in a healthy condition and to ensure the future financial stability of the Council in what could be a volatile year, we increased the Precept this year by 10% to £21,750.00.

It's hard to believe, but TDC's draft Local Plan remains un-adopted and as a consequence we are still seeing speculative applications around the Parish. Mr Thompson's Allotment Field development, has now obtained full permission for the First Phase of 23 houses. Unfortunately, despite our repeated objection, there is now no requirement to construct the long awaited New Village Hall until the occupation of the 25th property, i.e., the beginning of the future Second Phase. It would appear that the associated medical facility has also fallen by the way side as we understand the Clinical Care Group are now not supporting small scale surgeries.

The Maybush Village Hub has gone from strength to strength and they have purchased the adjacent "Red House" for redevelopment and to increase the facilities they can offer. The initial planning application for the redevelopment was refused by TDC, but hopefully a satisfactory solution can be found this year.

The inaugural Tendring Road Rally took place last year and despite expressing our continued objection a second event has since taken place this year. We requested details of where the income from the event had been expended in the District and who had benefited, but received no information.

The new Data Protection Regulations came into force this year and I'm please to say our Clerk successfully undertook the training required. This year we have also updated our Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct to maintain best practice and ensure alignment with wider Local Government practice.

Unfortunately in the summer there were a number of garage thefts in the Parish. We were advised that Essex Police have a scheme whereby villages could have their own dedicated Special Constable for minimal cost. The Special Constable should be a volunteer from the locality and the Parish Council would cover their operating expenses. We have budgeted £2000/year to cover the potential cost of two "Specials" in due course. It may take a couple of years to get up and running and for training; first we need some volunteers.....

It has been suggested we look into having a Christmas tree in the centre of the village; perhaps something for the new Council to pursue?

The Parish Council website continues to provide information to residents and I would like to thank Mr Tierney for his work in this area.

I would like to thank all past and present Councillors, our Clerk, Cllr Bush and Cllr Erskine for their support and the time and effort they have given for the benefit of the Parish.

Highways: I can report that pot holes and eroding verges continue to be an issue. Some local resurfacing works were undertaken this year in Farm Road and Back Lane using an “experimental” system, the results of which can only be described as disappointing.

Parking at the School has improved slightly but continues to be an issue. The railings outside the School, which were damaged some years ago, continue to represent a danger and although some “temporary” repairs have been carried out, are reported on a regular basis.

One residents unauthorised ditch excavations in Beaumont Road have been subject to extensive investigation by Essex County Council and some enforcement action was promised but to date has not taken place.

Restrictions to the availability and use of municipal waste sites has resulted in fly-tipping continuing to occur in the Parish with incidents at The Soils, Pesthouse Lane and at the Burial Ground. In an attempt to deter this, the Parish Council have installed CCTV in various parts of the village in an attempt to gather evidence to identify and prosecute the offenders and I would like to thank Mr Keating for his efforts in this area.

The Parish Council attempted to purchase a Speed Monitoring sign for Stones Green to collect data to support our reports of excess speed, however this was opposed by Highways. Council also looked into installing a waste bin outside the Village Shop but this was opposed by Tendring District Council.

This year Council were able to negotiate favourable terms for the street light maintenance contract and consequently have renewed it for the next five year.

Finance Report: A preliminary Finance Report was presented providing predictions of the out-turn costs at the end of this financial year. The total figure didn't balance due to an unrepresented cheque not being taken into consideration. An amendment will be made by the Clerk.

Church Report: We currently are supported within our benefice of five Parishes by a team of three ministers including our Vicar Rev. Liz Barnes who is assisted by Rev Laura Garnham and Rev Kirsty Emerson who will be finally ordained to the priesthood at the end of this month. Our ministers have been and continue to be engaged in work which might lead to the provision of new or revised forms of worship being added to complement the existing patterns of services and may be attractive to some of the many people who currently find nothing attractive inside our churches. They are also concerned to support Parishioners who cannot or do not attend services at the church due to reasons such as age, infirmity or poor health. In these days we, in this benefice, are currently fortunate to be provided with three ministers serving five Parishes and this luxury will certainly not last many years as the Church of England's availability of clergy resources continues to decline in strength. This is cause for thought on the future nature and form of the whole church as we know it.

Our well-loved Grade 1 listed church building continues to consume significant sums of money. Both maintenance of this approaching one thousand year old structure and occasional alterations to its structure and fittings swallow significant sums of money. This poses a significant challenge in a time of falling financial and other support in many Christian Parishes in our country, not least our own. We are fortunate to have people who regularly or occasionally support the work of our church by giving generously of their time and/or their money regardless of any religious motivation they may or may not have. We are grateful to them for their support and encouragement as we are to all who support our mission and our church.

Village Hall Report: I can report that the Village Hall finances remain sound and the existing Hall continues to be well used. I would like to thank Mrs Julia Turner for her work as Caretaker for the Hall also Mrs Pat Ling

for her fundraising efforts. We have been asked to consider the provision of a shelter for mobility scooters at the Village Hall, again perhaps something the new Parish Council might like to consider.

Long term plans for a New Village Hall are progressing very slowly and Council have sought reassurance from Mr Thompson that it will still be happening in light of recent planning approvals, which he was happy to give. I would like to thank Mr Daniels for his continued work on this project.

Playing Field Report: Our previous maintenance contractor advised us this year that they would no longer be able to undertake the regular inspections of the play equipment. Mr Mayman undertook the necessary training and has since been undertaking the inspections on our behalf for which I would like to express our thanks.

The play equipment on the Recreation Field continues to be well used although the fence surrounding it is in very poor condition. We have secured Section 106 funding to replace the current wooden fencing with a more durable steel fence.

Disappointingly, we have received numerous reports from the Football Club and residents about the extent of dog fouling on the field. We have publicised the issue in “Coast to Coast” but the problem continues. We also sought assistance from the TDC Dog Warden but he felt there was nothing he could do to assist. If the problem persists, Council may be compelled to ban dogs from the field.

In an attempt to work with dog owners, the Parish Council have sought to provide a number of additional bins at the Recreation Field, Burial Ground and Red Barn Lane and this is still on-going.

Hedge trimming at the Recreation Field and the Burial Ground have been undertaken this year and will continue after the bird nesting season.

Our Grass Cutting Contract was due for renewal this year and has now been awarded to a local Contractor.

Annual Assembly Closed at 7.28pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....