

Clerk: Vikki Howard 3, Rectory Road, Little Oakley, Harwich, Essex. CO12 5JX

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**Present:** Cllr Howard, Cllr Cullen, Cllr Wrycraft, Cllr Griggs, Cllr Steer and Cllr Griffiths

**Also present:** Sam Rowley NHW and 1 member of the public

**14/001A Chairman's introduction**

Cllr Howard opened the meeting with a brief introduction

**14/002A Apologies of absence**

**14/003A Signing of the minutes from 3rd April 2013**

The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, were resolved as true and correct.

**Proposed:** Cllr Wrycraft

**Seconded:** Cllr Steer

**14/004A Chairman's report**

Cllr Howard read out the chairman's report (see appendix 1)

**14/005A Finance report**

The Clerk read out the finance report (see appendix 2)

**14/006A Public speaking**

There were no public questions

**End of Meeting.** (19:17)

## **Appendix 1 - Chairman's report 2014**

The past year has been a mixture of the routine issues that the Parish Council handle, and the progression of some significant projects that have come to fruition throughout the year.

### **Bus Shelters**

We have seen the routine maintenance of bus shelters. This included repairs to the bus shelter at the end of Seaview Avenue which was fitted with marine ply to the interior to strengthen, protect and prolong its life.

### **Playground**

We replaced the aging spring elephant in the playground with a new spring tractor.

### **Parish Street lighting**

We have begun to address our aging streetlights and where further repairs are either impractical or not economic in the longer term we are looking to replace lights with modern equivalents. The first LED light has now been installed in Clacton Road, and many residents have commented positively about this. Another LED light is due to be installed in Harwich Road to replace another broken light. I hope to see this evolve into a gradual rolling programme of replacement with LED lighting. Ironically, our small Parish is leading the way on this at a time when Essex County Council are turning the majority of their street lights off. While Essex County Council have turned off their lights in our Parish, I would like to assure residents that our Parish owned lights on Clacton road, Harwich road, Rectory road and Mayes Lane have and will remain on.

### **Little Oakley Neighbourhood Watch**

While lighting the streets where we own the lights will help with the safety of our community, I hope that the support that we are giving to the independently run Little Oakley Neighbourhood Watch will further improve community safety and improve community spirit. Many thanks must go to Sam Rowley for setting this up and to the clerk for her assistance with this.

### **Footpath Project**

The largest project of the year was the surfacing of the footpath between Oakridge and Little Oakley Memorial Club. This was a large project that had been stalled for many years due to bureaucracy.

In the last year, the Parish Council managed to secure the relevant permissions and to obtain the commitment of Essex County Council public rights of way to enable the project to proceed.

After a great deal of planning including the marking out and channeling of the path, the week-end for the work to take place arrived, and we expected the path to take two days to surface. In reality, the path lining was laid and 200 tonnes of road planings were laid and levelled in less than one day on the 350m footpath

This would not have been possible without the massive amount of help from the local community.

Special thanks must go to Andrew Cullen for providing tractors, trailers and drivers for the day and for him arranging for other local people to provide heavy equipment for channeling and loading, unloading etc. The mini digger provided by Mr Strachan made an enormous difference as without this, the 200 tonnes of road planings would have needed to be shovelled by hand. Thanks must also be extended to the Memorial Club for providing a room to be used as an operations and refreshments centre for the day and for providing their roller to carry out the initial compaction of the path. The donations of refreshments for the day by local people enabled the workers to maintain momentum.

Thanks must be extended to the clerk for her relentless chasing of people to make sure that everything was in place and her negotiations to get everything delivered on time and for the best value.

Last but not least, thanks has to go to the many members of the local community that turned out on the day and to those who also volunteered their time for the second day that never was. Their hard work laying the lining, raking, and levelling planings in shifts made the whole project possible.

The massive commitment in terms of time, effort and equipment from the local community not only made the whole project possible, but also enabled Essex County Council Public Rights of Way to fund the cost of the planings, the lining and rakes etc.

As a result the whole project was delivered at almost no cost to the Parish Council.

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The project is a credit to the local community and will hopefully serve the village well for many years to come.

### **Bins**

We are currently planning to install two bins on footpaths regularly used by local walkers and dog owners. These are intended to reduce dog fouling and to reduce the amount of litter that is dropped by people using the footpaths.

### **Notice board project**

In order to keep the public better informed about upcoming meetings and other matters, we have purchased two additional oak notice boards for the village. These hold four sheets of A4 each to increase our ability to provide information and were made locally. They have now been installed on the greenswards at the entrance to Oakridge and at Bayview Crescent beside the bench by the village sign.

The majority of the funding for this was secured from the Community Initiative Fund and as such costs to the Parish Council and ultimately local residents was minimised.

### **Highways**

#### Potholes & Chippings

We continue to suffer from the usual issues with pot holes and problems with loose chippings from surface dressing. Our biggest problem with the surface dressing put down by Essex County Council continues to be in Mayes Lane where the surface failed to take 2 years ago. Last year was a little better when they renewed the surface dressing again. After the initial period of chippings being thrown up the road surface settled down until the late autumn when the surface dressing began coming loose again. Pot holes continue to be an issue with many more appearing over the winter and with the filling put in by jet packs coming out again. We will be reporting these to Essex County Council and monitoring their repair closely.

### **Parking**

Parking continues to cause problems at various points in the village. This continues to be a difficult matter to address as the root cause is the increased number of vehicles per household over the years with no additional parking space. This is further compounded as Highways usually take the line that they won't do anything and take the contentious view that the parking slows down the traffic and should therefore make the road safer.

### **Speeding**

We continue to have an issue with speeding and continued to push for the part of Rectory Road from The 'T' junction with The Soils/Hill Road down to the existing 30 mph limit to be reduced. A speed survey was carried out by Highways, but after not being placed in the most sensible location, has lead to no significant progress being made in obtaining the reduced speed limit that we are seeking.

Finally, I would like to thank all councillors and the clerk for their hard work during the past year, and hope that the coming year brings further improvements through the projects currently anticipated.

### **Appendix 2 – Finance report 2013/14**

At the start of the financial year Little Oakley Parish Council had a total balance of £12627.60 which was split with £480.75 in the cheque account and £12146.85 in the savings account. The £12146.85 included the grant from the Big Lottery Fund for the playground fence.

During the financial year there has been an income total of £16045.17 which was split into the following:  
£9.05 – Interest received from the bank  
£2777.37 – VAT refund  
£10,500 – Precept (Which was split into 2 payments of £5,250 in April and October) and  
Cilca reimbursement (bursary) - £288.75  
PRoW - £2470 - money for the footpath project

The estimated income for 2013/14 was £10,945.75. The actual income for 2013/14 was £16,045.17. The variance for the income in 2013/14 was more than expected by an amount of £5099.42. This was due to being reimbursed by PRoW for the initial layout of costs for the footpath project and slightly more than expected VAT refund.

Total transfers from the savings account to the cheque account came to a total of £24100

The estimated expenditure for 2013/14 was £24047.38 and the actual expenditure for 2013/14 was £22166.58.giving a an overspend spend variance of £1881.80. A big part of this overspend is due to the new notice boards, which even though we

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had been awarded a grant for the majority of the cost of these, we had to pay the full amount out initially. Now that we have them installed I have begun the process of getting the grant money from CIF.

The closing balances at the end of the financial year are:

Savings account - £4082.97

Cheque account - £2559.17

Total in bank at year end is £6642.14

For the financial year of 2013/2014 Little Oakley parish council raised the precept by 5% raising it from £10,000 to £10,500. The reason for this raise is to try and build up a reserve so that the parish council can budget for replacing play equipment, bus shelters etc.