

Little Oakley Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Wednesday 8th May at 7.00 in the Millennium Room, St Michaels Church, Ramsey

Present: Councillors Griffiths, Attrill, Bush, Griggs, Hunnaball and McNee

Others Present: Jeanette Sands – Clerk/RFO

19/008A

Introduction

Cllr Griffiths welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting

19/009A

Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

19/010A

Declaration of Pecuniary and Non Pecuniary Interests

No declarations were made.

19/011A

Minutes of Previous Annual Parish Meeting

These were accepted as a true record by all Councillors and duly signed.

19/012A

Chairman's Report

This will be my last report as Chairman of Little Oakley Parish Council as I have decided to retire and therefore, I am not standing for re-election as a Parish Councillor in the May council elections.

It has been a privilege to be a Parish Councillor and Chairman since April 2017.

A good deal of council time was taken up making sure we complied with The General Data Protection Regulation, this has been an EU directive which the UK signed up to without really understanding how this would apply to small town and parish councils. The National Association of Local Councils convinced the Government to amend the Bill so that small town and parish council did not need to employ a Data Protection Officer to supervise the parish clerk. But we still had to produce a plan of how we operate the regulation.

The council have been looking into the possible site of an outdoor gym, similar to the one in Dovercourt. The suggested site was Oakridge open space, however as the Football Club has closed off the area that was left to the Memorial Club on behalf of the villagers the council have been looking for an alternative site of an open space for children to play and site the outdoor gym. There is an open space near the Two Village School which is owned by Essex County Council, the council have been in contact with them but progress has been very slow and has come to a halt due to the forthcoming May elections. If we could lease the area from ECC there is the possibility of some funding from Sport England.

With regard to planning issues the council has mainly been happy with extensions to existing properties in the village, but have tried to make sure adequate parking spaces are still available on the properties involved. We regard to new properties once gain we have contacted Tendring Planning department if we feel there is inadequate parking spaces or other

issues. The planning laws have recently been changed by the government so some types of development of existing buildings do not need planning permission, however the need to meet the building regulations.

There is an ongoing problem with overgrown hedgerow, the council has been actively pursuing getting these cut back, either by the owners or the local authorities.

Essex County Council Devolution, this current involves footpaths and road potholes.

As ECC do not have the funds for some of these works they are being devolved to town and parish councils who will have to fund them. Grass cutting of footpaths, ECC will only make one cut per year, any other cutting will have to be by town and parish councils. They will need to make they or their contactors have the appropriate insurance and training certificates for the equipment being used.

Reporting of pavement problems and road potholes to the appropriate contactors will be devolved to town and parish councils.

The Council website, the website hosting company changed its server system and the conversion software they provided failed to convert our website. We have a new hosting provider and our website has been rebuilt in house. However, from 23rd September 2020 all Public Sector websites must meet WCAG 2.1AA, Accessibility Standard, this is an EU directive the UK Government signed up to, without providing local, town and parish councils with the funding that it requires.

The parish council now has a Facebook page. It will be used for roadworks, travel updates, severe weather warnings etc.

The bus shelter at the junction of Harwich Road and Mayes Lane in the Harwich direction was replaced by Essex Highways, the council is investigating whether the two bus stops near the Old Cherry Tree pub could be replaced as well.

The council finances are in good order and the precept has been increased by approximately 2%, the Finance Committee will be carrying out a review in light of the extra costs of matters outlined above.

I would like to thank Malcolm Steer for 25 years' service on the Council, he had to retire late last year for personal reasons, and also many thanks to Andrew Cullen, for many years' service on the council he is not standing for re-election, they both will be greatly missed.

LOPC currently have vacancies for 4 parish councillors, this means there will be no May elections for the LOPC.

I would like to thank all the parish councillors for their support during the past year, it has been a pleasure to have been a member of Little Oakley Parish Council with you and I wish you all the best in the future.

19/013A

Finance Report

The Council had prepared a budget for the financial year 2019-2020 and applied for a precept of £16320, it was noted that this year would be the final year when a grant towards the precept would be available. When planning expenditure for the new financial year the Council had taken into account possible increases in costs. Reserves were also included in the budget with the largest amount being reserved for the children's playground as this area can have very high maintenance costs involved. The Council had also appointed an internal auditor for the 2019-2020 accounts.

19/014A

Public Speaking

No members of the public attended the meeting.

The Meeting Closed at 19.20