

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

Little Oakley Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 3rd April 2013

In attendance: Alan Jackson, Andrew Cullen, Richard Griggs, Val Wrycraft
Malcolm Steer, Harold Griffiths and Tom Howard

Also present: PCSO Ray Aylot and 1 member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Saul Hunnaball and Caroline Thomas

2. Confirmation and signing of the minutes from March 28th 2012

It was resolved to accept the minutes from March 28th 1012 as complete and correct.

Proposed: Val Wrycraft

Seconded: Harold Griffiths

3. Chairman Report

Tom Howard read out his chairman's report for the past year.

(see appendix 1)

4. Financial Report

The clerk read out the financial report for the last financial year

(see appendix 2)

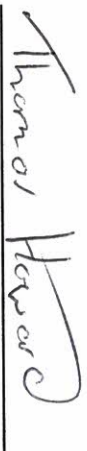
5. Public Speaking

Member of the public commented on the footpath between Oakridge and the Memorial

Club

End of Meeting: 19:18

Signed:



Dated:

9/4/2014

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Little Oakley Parish Council

Appendix 1

Chairman's report

The year began with a change of both the chair and the clerk.

I would like to thank both Val and Pat for their many years of service in these positions. I am very pleased that Val has continued as a councillor as her experience is an asset to the council.

Projects

This year has seen a number of projects completed and commenced.

War Memorial Relocation

The war memorial has now been relocated from the Memorial Club to the greensward next to Bayview Crescent and Lodge Road. This has been a great success with many members of the public commenting on the improved new location. Numbers attending the Remembrance Service were up again and it was a great improvement that everyone could stand comfortably around the war memorial instead of being confined to a small space around it as has been the case in recent years.

I would like to thank both Saul and Andrew for their efforts in relocating the war memorial. This will need to be the last time that it is moved, as it is now well travelled, having moved from St Mary's church to the Methodist Church, then on to the memorial club and now finally to the greensward by the village sign.

Bench

Now that the war memorial has been moved, it was an ideal time to replace the old bench on the same greensward next to the village sign. We have ordered a replacement bench in the same style as the other 'new' benches that we have placed around the village in recent years. We expect this bench to be delivered and installed in the next few months, and hope that it will last for many years.

Playground

We needed to replace the fencing and gates surrounding the playground due to the deterioration of the old wooden ones. We have just had these replaced by a new galvanised metal fence and gates which we expect to last for many years.

We were fortunate enough to receive a grant for the full cost of this replacement thanks to the Big Lottery Fund.

Bus Shelters

We are continuing our rolling programme of replacing the wooden bus shelters throughout the village, and are in the early stages of plans to replace the wooden bus shelter at the end of Seaview Avenue.

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Planning

The main planning matter concerning the village in the last year has been the continued development of Tendring District Council's Local Plan.

New Building

Many residents were greatly concerned about the proposals for about 1400 houses in and around the village that were put forward by local land owners and developers.

The representations of the Parish Council and local people has helped towards us currently being allocated 32 new houses in our Parish. This is a vast improvement on the proposals put forward and will hopefully allow sustainable growth while not swamping the village with new properties. The 'Great Field' will also be given extra protection from development.

Village Status

One of the key gains from the draft Local Plan is that it is planned to give Little Oakley its village status back. This means that we will no longer be part of the Harwich urban settlement area, and we will be given back our status as a Rural settlement. This is something that the Parish Council has previously requested, and that I have been campaigning for since before the previous Local Plan was approved.

Highways

Throughout the year we have continued to experience the same problems as usual with highways. These include the usual potholes and overgrown grass verges, hedges and trees.

Potholes

As normal, the potholes continue to appear as fast as they are repaired by Essex County Council, and we continue to report the new ones.

Hedges & Trees

We wrote to quite a few residents regarding overgrown hedges and trees obstructing pavements and highways. In the main, these were duly cut back in a timely fashion. Where this did not take place we referred these to Essex County Council to deal with as the highways and footpaths being obstructed are their responsibility. This resulted in all the overgrown hedges and trees being cut back to an acceptable degree.

The long standing issue of the overgrown grass at the Mayes Lane junction in Ramsey has now been resolved and it has finally been added to the regular grass cutting roster so that it will not be a problem in future. This will make the junction safer as now drivers will be able to see to the right when turning out of Mayes Lane opposite the church.

Speeding

We continue to have a problem with speeding throughout the village, with residents complaining about speeding on Rectory Road, Harwich Road and Mayes Lane.

The speed sign on Harwich Road has been repaired and is now working again, and it is hoped that this will deter some speeding there.

After a series of accidents on the lane section of Rectory Road, we are looking to request a reduction in the speed limit in that section of road from the National 60mph speed limit to a more appropriate speed limit.

We are hoping to work with other local Parish Councils on this matter as Rectory Road joins on to

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the Maltings and the Soils in Ramsey and Great Oakley respectively.

While Great Oakley are not supportive of reducing the speed limit in the section of Rectory Road in their Parish (beyond Saltwater Bridge), Ramsey are keen to work with us.

P3 Partnership - footpath 8 from Oakridge to the Memorial Club

For several years we have been trying to work through the bureaucracy involved in trying to get the public footpath between Oakridge and the Memorial Club provided with a surface of road planings to make the path easier to navigate by parents and small children using the path in the winter months.

In order to assist this process the Parish has joined the P3 Partnership.

Progress is being made, but it still has some way to go before we reach the point of getting the improved path that we are working towards.

Flooding

After such a wet year, we have experienced more flooding than usual and this has been particularly bad where the pond opposite the Rectory has been flooding.

I would like to thank the small group of local residents that dug out an adjacent ditch and re-laid a pipe that was causing some of the problem at this site.

Essex County Council were due to write to residents responsible for the ditches in that section of road to remind them of their responsibility to keep these ditches clear.

We continue to monitor the situation to ensure that flooding at this site does not become a regular or prolonged occurrence.

Broadband

Many residents are very concerned about the unacceptably poor level of broadband received by most of the village. The average speed is less than 1.5 Mb/s and many residents receive a speed of only just about the old dialup speed of 54 kb/s.

We explored the possibility of getting funding from the Rural Community Broadband Fund, but while we qualified to receive this, we would have had to have found 50% of the cost from local people and businesses. This was not viable and therefore was not pursued.

The government has put forward £530m to BDUK of which £6.46m has gone to Essex County Council, who are running the project for our area. We have been campaigning to get the upgrade that we should get based on our poor service and us being a market failure area. The recent local delivery of postcards by Parish Councillors will hopefully generate some further registering of interest locally and help boost our likelihood of getting the required upgrade.

The current public consultation on the BDUK project implies that we should be a priority for an upgrade, and we hope that this will happen by the 2015 target date that they are working towards.

Recycling

Tending District Council introduced a controversial new recycling service which was seen by most residents as a cut in service. After much public outcry, we held a public meeting with Cllr. Nick Turner, the portfolio holder for the environment at TDC.

The recycling service has 'settled down' a little now, but there is still discontent amongst residents as they believe that their service has been cut and that plastics that should be recycled are now going to landfill instead.

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

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anticipated.

Little Oakley Parish Council

Appendix 2 - Financial report

Finance report for 2012/2013

At the start of the financial year Little Oakley Parish Council had a total balance of £6206.47 which was split with £800.57 in the cheque account and £5405.90 in the savings account.

During the financial year there has been an income total of £16631.90 which was split into the following:

£7.25 – Interest received from the bank
£16.00 – Donation toward the relocation of the war memorial
£613.65 – VAT refund
£10,000 – Precept (Which was split into 2 payments of £5,000) and
£5,995 – Big Lottery Fund grant for playground fence.

The estimated income for 2012/13 was £10,636.90. The actual income for 2012/13 was £16,631.90. The variance for the income in 2112/13 was more than expected by an amount of £5995. This was due to a grant being awarded for the playground fence.

Total transfers from the savings account to the cheque account came to a total of £9,900.

The total expenditure during the 2012/13 financial year totalled £10,219.82.

The estimated expenditure for 2012/13 was £10945.91 and the actual expenditure for 2012/13 was £10219.82 giving an under spend variance of £726.09. This was mainly due to the clerk only having one salary payment in 2012/13.

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

Savings account - £12,137.80

Cheque account - £630.75 – this is an estimated amount due to the final bank statement not being received yet.

The estimated VAT refund for the financial year was estimated to be £734.58. The actual amount of VAT refund claimed for the financial year was £695.08. The variance in VAT is due to lower lighting repair costs and lower playground maintenance costs.

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

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council can budget for replacing play equipment, bus shelters etc.

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