

ASHBY ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Thursday 21st April 2016 at 7.30 pm at Ashby and Thurton Village Hall

Present: Robert Todd (Chairman) and Edgar Hoddy.

Also Present: Linda Gray (Clerk), PCSO Kevin Nightingale and PCSO Jo Pike and 7 Members of Public.

1. **Apologies** were received from Terry Kitt, Sarah Cook, Mark Rolph, Jaan Lerner and Barry Stone.
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2015** had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting and a report of the minutes was read out by the clerk. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Chairman's Report** - Report by Robert Todd, Chairman.

Thanks were extended to all the Councillors who continue to support the Parish Council: to Mark Rolph for his Webmaster role keeping the Website up to date, the Neighbourhood Security Service and the Oil Syndicate. Thanks were also extended to Linda Gray who supported the Parish Council as the Clerk. It was all change with County and District Councillors with the very sad loss of Derek Blake and the retirement of Adrian Gunson. The replacements Barry Stone and Jaan Lerner had both attended one Parish Council meeting each which was a significant change from the regularity of the previous incumbents. From the Parish Councils perspective it was very important for the District and County Councillors to maintain good communication, however levels of contact recently had declined. There were two **Councillor Vacancies** on the Parish Council and information for interested parties was available from the Clerk.

Other areas to highlight include welcoming the new Vicar, Rev Chris Ellis and the finding of a medieval axe in the old rectory grounds leading to communications with some previous owners of the property who had left the village some 20 years ago.

Highway issues such as pot holes and silt build up were reported to the Highway ranger team on a regular basis with many being repaired and addressed.

With regards to **planning** the Parish Council try to express the views of the Parish in their feedback to South Norfolk, however the current process does not value or consider the local views or guidance of the Parish Council or residents. A recent planning application which the Parish Council in principle supported, concerns were raised regarding the installation of an animal housing building close to a local water course; concerns were ignored and the building work continued without alteration.

Village Boundary review. There was speculation in the District that South Norfolk would be consulting on the adjustments of Village Boundaries with the expectation of some villages linking up. At present there was no factual information available; however Ashby St Mary Parish Council had already informed Jaan Lerner, District Councillor they would like to remain independent.

South Norfolk Housing Strategy, documents for the next tranche of housing options would be available shortly as part of the consultation process. The Parish Council recognised the principle policy of dispersing housing within villages and Market Towns however the views of further developments in Ashby St Mary remained unchanged.
4. **Financial Report** - Report by Linda Gray

The Precept had been slightly increased to £2,769.00 per annum, the South Norfolk Tax support grant had decreased to £45.00 and expenditure remained largely related to statutory costs. There were no capital expenditure or training costs to report. The grant received from Anglian Water for £1,000.00 relating to the problems of water supply in December 2014 had been passed over in its entirety to St Mary's Church PCC to help support the funding required to provide improved facilities at the Church to include a toilet, kitchen and meeting room. The bank balance for the year 2015/16 finished at £1,359.47 as at 31st March 2015
5. **Parish Council Website** – Report by Mark Rolph read by Linda Gray

The website, updated on a regular basis, had received no structural changes and continued to offer comprehensive information for residents including the Parish Council Minutes and now followed transparency guidelines to offer annual accounts and audit. Police reports were included along with rainfall statistics, planning information and decisions and Cricket Scores. The Parish Council remained very proud of the quality of its website, which had been recognised by South Norfolk Council and was satisfied the website provided a genuine benefit to the community and remained good value for money.
6. **Neighbourhood Security/ Ashby Update service** – Report by Mark Rolph read by Linda Gray

The neighbourhood security messages were issued to the subscribers of the Parish Council's free Ashby update service. Neighbourhood security remained an agenda item at every Parish Council meeting where reports received from the Police, now called Police Connect were discussed. It was

recognised the Police resourcing had been scaled down in the area which was a concern however Councillors welcomed discussing areas of concern with the local PCSO when he can attend meetings. Since December 2015 there had been a notable reduction in the amount of Police Connect messages which was as a direct result of the decrease in resourcing and now many alerts refer to the wider area and generic warnings for winter driving, crime prevention and protections from scams rather than more specific village issues.

We hope the Police will see fit to reinstate the information to previous levels in the future.

- 7. Police Report** - Report by PCSO Kevin Nightingale and PCSO Jo Pike
Kevin Nightingale introduced Jo Pike to the Parish as his replacement as Kevin would be retiring in May 2016.
Statistics for reported crime for 2015/16 - there had been 3 reported crimes which were 2 common assaults and 1 Actual Bodily Harm related to two domestic incidents and 9 incident calls.
Chris Shot was the Schools Officer based at Hobart High School CEOP.
Kevin acknowledged that due to staffing constraints the level of detailed information reported to Villages had reduced however if there was a serious issue the Parish Clerk would be contacted.
On behalf of the Parish Council Robert Todd thanked Kevin Nightingale for the outstanding support and commitment he had given to the village while he was the PCSO and offered best wishes for the future.
- 8. Ashby Heating Oil Syndicate – Report by Mark Rolph read by Linda Gray**
On behalf of the Parish Council, Mark Rolph had been the organiser for the Ashby St Mary operated community based syndicate operating in the village for the last three years. A strong membership of 30 households all who were very appreciative of the savings they had made. As a Parish Council led service initiative the syndicate continued to flourish and with no formal membership the syndicate was completely free for all residents to join. The savings available had been significant, aided by the falling price of oil in the previous year. Seven orders placed this year totalled over 35,000 litres with prices ranging from 29.10p down to 24.7p and a potential saving of up to £62 per 1000litres.
Residents wishing to join the syndicate should contact the Clerk
- 9. County Councillors Report - Report from Barry Stone, County Councillor**
A report had been sent prior to the meeting and would be circulated during the meeting.
- 10. District Councillors Report - Report from Jaan Larner**, District Councillor included information regarding the change of waste collection routes from 6th June and more information would be received shortly. He responded in connection to queries from Mark Rolph relating to the Parish Plan and the Clerks issues with the Dog Bin Invoice issued from South Norfolk Council.
- 11. Ashby and Thurton Playing Field Committee** - Report by the Richard Taylor Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. Sarah Cook reported as the Parish Council representative on the committee, a vacancy for secretary had arisen. There were many regular users of the Village Hall facilities with the Preschool being the main regular user. Remedial maintenance work had been completed on the Play Area and Hall with a community team from Aviva undertaking painting of the hall. A solar lighting scheme for the driveway was under consideration. With the reduction in the use of the sports field reducing the rental income and increased costs to £650 contributions from the Parish Councils would be appreciated. 100 Club continued to be successful with a pay out of £35.00 per month and a super draw in November annually and the recent Spanish evening had been a success. .
- 12. Reports by Village Organisations**
Church Report - St Mary's PCC – Research into available grants to support the refurbishment programme and supply a kitchen and toilet were being undertaken. Two recent significant donations had enabled the refurbishment of a 17th Century ledger and the replacement of the notice board.
BYRUS – The Church Youth Group continued in the village under new leadership provided by Youth for Christ. Developing links with local primary schools was a focus and the membership of 20 high school students was welcomed. Rev Chris Ellis reported the group was flourishing and could benefit from additional funding.
Robert Todd confirmed the issue of funding would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

WI with a membership of 29 the group was continued to grow. Meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month with many additional social events organised. Various speakers invited to meetings covered a wide range subjects. Centenary celebration events were organised for later in the year and two members had attended a Royal Garden Party as part of the Queens 90th birthday celebrations.

Thurton and Ashby Pre School

The Pre-school continued to offer good quality care and education for the twenty two registered children aged between two and school age. The children access the early years curriculum both indoors and outside in a range of activities. Forest School training had been completed by two members of staff giving ideas and practical advice for outdoor games, den building and using natural items. Parents and carers enjoyed opportunities to visit through themed lunch clubs. The reliance of Parents and Carers to assist in fundraising events such as Auto Jumble, Classic Cars and Craft Fayre were vital for the continuation of the provision.

Trees and Footpaths – Report by Edgar Hoddy

Footpaths – With South Norfolk reducing grass cutting of local footpaths to once a year local farmers have assisted in some areas however there remained many footpaths not receiving any work and residents were asked to do their bit and take shears and secateurs with them on walks to keep local footpaths passable.

Trees –Placing Tree Preservation Orders on all the trees in a garden as the result of a planning application and was considered by all to be a harsh reaction by South Norfolk to a reasonable planning application. In response to a question from the audience it was confirmed that South Norfolk had not visited or surveyed the property or met with the house holder prior to placing the TPO's on the site. It was agreed by all this action was not cost effective and considered a waste of South Norfolk's funds and was another contribution to the loss of faith in the actions of the District Council.

13. Any Other Business

Concerns were raised from the audience regarding grass cutting costs of the playing field and it was felt that both Village Parish Councils should contribute. Robert Todd explained that in recent years the precept had been kept to a minimum as a financial assistance measure to local residents and recently the annual precept had been increased to build up funds to provide a reserve in order that the Parish Council could offer financial support to community groups in the future. This matter would be discussed at the forthcoming Parish Council meeting in May 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.53 pm