

ASHBY ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Thursday 20th April 2017 at 7.30 pm at Ashby and Thurton Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Robert Todd (Chairman), Edgar Hoddy, Terry Kitt, Carol Powell and Mark Rolph.
Also Present: Linda Gray (Clerk), Barry Stone, County Councillor, and 10 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sarah Cook, Ian Kings, Sarah Kings and Anita Somerville.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st April 2016

These had been circulated to all those attending the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting. A report of the minutes was read out by the clerk. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report by Robert Todd.

The Chairman extended his thanks to all the councillors for their continued support. He also praised the continuing input and hard work of the council's clerk. The Parish Council was a team with shared responsibilities. He recognised the webmaster role undertaken by Mark Rolph in maintaining the website, neighbourhood security service and oil syndicate. The chairman welcomed Rachel Cooper to the council and her first annual parish meeting and reminded the meeting there was still one vacancy to fill. He thanked county councillor, Barry Stone, who he was pleased to be present, and appreciated how attendance was difficult for the district councillor, Jaan Larner. He felt it had been a quiet year which was always good. Church improvements were moving closer. The war memorial was now 'listed'. There had been an improved rapport with South Norfolk district council's planning officers. However there was ongoing concern with South Norfolk regarding potential changes to village boundaries. Ashby did not believe there was a need or a desire to merge with any other parish. The driver was those parishes whose numbers warranted mergers. Ashby would continue to resist this. The most exciting potential happening was the possible future arrival of B4RN superfast broadband. He felt the parish needed to consider how to progress with this. There were no questions for the Chairman.

4. Finance

The clerk reported that the parish council's previous end of year balance stood at £1359.47. With the parish precept of £2852.13 and other minor income, total income for 2016/17 was £4256.41. Expenditure was reduced to £2527.67 leaving the figure carried forward to the forthcoming year to be £1728.74. The chairman was asked whether the annual donation towards the church grass cutting of £50 might increase in future. The chairman agreed there was every chance of this happening.

5. Parish Council Website

In his role of webmaster, Mark Rolph reported that he continued to update the website as soon as possible after changes were needed. A major organisational overhaul was undertaken which had not initially resulted in the success hoped for due to a change in the system operated by the website hosts. The website had changed little in overall appearance. It focussed mainly on the council's business such as meeting minutes, finance and planning information. But the History page contained a wealth of details and photos concerning recent and historic parish gatherings and a large amount concerning the church. The website included how to join the Ashby Update Service (including neighbourhood security alerts) and the Ashby Heating Oil Syndicate. A grant had been applied for to procure software and dedicated equipment to assist with maintaining the parish website.

6. Neighbourhood Security / Ashby Update Service

Mark Rolph submitted his report in which he lamented the continuing reduction in Police messages, which used to regularly detail crimes within the general Loddon area, including Ashby, to the point that they had all but ceased. The last information showed numbers of the types of crimes within the general Loddon area but not the area or village where and what type of crime occurred. It gave the impression of an eroding level of confidence in neighbourhood security policing. The most useful reports of crimes and reportable activities had come direct from parishioners. Mr Rolph thanked residents for doing so and hoped they would continue. Any Ashby resident could seek to join the Neighbourhood Security / Ashby Update Service and as the former was linked to Homewatch, it was not unheard of to potentially reduce home insurance premiums. The council's service was free and more details were available on the website or via a factsheet.

7. Police Report

With no specific report relating to Ashby having been received, the clerk read the latest general report that had been issued covering the Loddon, Brooke and Chedgrave area.

8. Ashby Oil Syndicate

The community-based syndicate had been operating, successfully, for the last four years and was run by the parish council. It was a free service to Ashby parishioners, currently operated by Mark Rolph. He reported the syndicate had continued to make meaningful savings. No oil company was favoured from those he contacted while seeking the best deal. The year to April 2017 had seen 6 orders totalling 48,975 litres, up from 7 orders and over 35,000 litres in the previous 12 months. Savings of over 5p per litre had been achieved. It equated to a £90 saving for 1500 litres. Syndicate membership stood at 35, but more from within the parish were welcome to join. It was a free service by the parish council which was proving both a success and worthwhile. A factsheet was available on request.

9. County Councillor's Report

Barry Stone gave a report to the meeting. The Boundary Commission, he said, was nothing to do with South Norfolk district council. It started in Parliament, then went to County Council's last year and had now reached parishes. Parishes would get nothing imposed on them - there should be no fear there. The aim for broadband was to have 98% super broadband in South Norfolk by 2020. This was a county council / BT (Openreach) alliance.

The County Council had made many improvements during the year especially to children's services with lower costs yet better services. On transport, the NDR was on budget and on time, completion being later this year. The missing road link was still to be determined for which an innovative solution was needed. There was no date for the start of the Long Stratton bypass; the Hempnall roundabout had funding in place, the Hales roundabout was being county council funded; the Loddon roundabout was due to be funded the housing developer. A gas main issue had caused a problem but the aim was to start in April 2018 and end in August. No funds were in place to deal with the Hellington crossroads but it was planned to reduce the speed limit. Parish Rangers should now tell parish councils when they were coming in good time. Mr Stone fielded questions over the exit entrance to Hales garage, verge cutting and the NDR.

10. District Councillor's Report

No report had been received from Jann Larnar.

11. Ashby & Thurton Playing Field Committee Report

Carol Powell, the Ashby St Mary parish council representative, presented her report. The Committee comprised 10 members. Annual grass cutting cost £650 which was hoped to be reduced soon to £500. Thurton parish council donated £430 while Ashby parish council donated £50. Subsidies to maintain the upkeep of the Hall were being sought, as funds were struggling. The 100 club needed more takers. The emergency lighting had been upgraded. Several fundraisers held had proved very successful which Carol thanked parishioners for supporting. Nevertheless it was likely hall hire charges would have to be increased.

12 Village Organisation Reports

Church - Terry Kitt reported all was well! Many fundraising events had been held. Three traditional village events in May, July (Strawberries and bubbly) and September (Jazz). A local inter-church quiz saw Yelverton win. A final decision was to be made concerning a kitchen, toilet and meeting room extension for which funds would be sought. Support was needed from the whole village. The memorial was now Grade 2 listed and grants were available for its maintenance. The village sign mold had been cleaned and was on display in the church.

BYRUS - Angie Broadberry reported the group continued to offer Little Fish for church children, Explorers, and Holiday Club.

Thurton & Ashby Preschool Playgroup - Rachel Cooper read a report prepared by Sandra Rennie. The autojumble was very successful and would be held again in 2017.

W.I. - Dolly Howes reported the group was now 35. Meetings are held on the first Thursday monthly.

Footpath / Tree Warden - Edgar Hoddy stated there were no reports of any footpath problems.

Cricket Club - No report submitted

13. Any Other Business

In answer to a question from Mr D Catchpole, the Chairman confirmed there were currently no vacancies for parish councillors. The Chairman also thanked those present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 9.42 p.m.