



## FENSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL

### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

**Held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022 at 19.00 at the Church Centre,  
Fenstanton**

#### Minutes

In attendance: - Cllr P Hayes, Cllr M Hewitt, Cllr P Kent (Chair), Cllr R McGee (Vice Chair), Cllr Mitchell, the Clerk (Jo Perez), Liberal Democrat candidate Clare Tevlin and Julie Briggs – Royal British Legion representative.

#### **1. Welcome and Introduction by the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 127<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Parish and made introductions to those that were required.

#### **2. Apologies**

No apologies.

#### **3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Cllr P Kent proposed** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held of the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were approved as true and accurate record of the meeting, **Cllr R McGee 2<sup>nd</sup>, all Cllrs were in favour, RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 are approved.**

#### **4. Annual Review of Parish Council Business – Chairman's report 2021/22**

##### **Chairmans report:-**

I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for contributing their personal time without remuneration, they have diligently dealt with the many issues brought before them during the year.

My thanks also go to District and County Councillors for their service throughout the period, and to Parishioners who have supported the Parish during this period.

Particular mention goes to Cllr Kevin Mitchell, who will not be standing for re-election this year. Kevin has made a major contribution towards the working of the Parish Council, acting as RFO, preparing annual accounts for audit, Chairing the Finance & Constitution Committee, working on the Flood Working Group and implementing several significant projects, including the new MUGA. My thanks go to Kevin for his valued service, his expertise and sheer energy and his willingness to pick up tasks and deliver them in support of the Parish has been invaluable.

Particular mention also goes to Cllr Colin White, who will not be standing for election this year, after many years of continuous service as a Parish Councillor and historically Chairman of the Parish Council. Colin has overseen many improvements to the village facility's during his time as a Parish Councillor and in particular the installation of Parish Church footpath lighting and creation of the village pre-school facility. My thanks go to Colin for his long and valued service, his expertise, experience and support for the Parish will be greatly missed.

Cllr Joseph Middleton has also decided not to stand for re-election.

We wish all every success, good health and happiness for the future.

During the current period we have received 2 resignations from Cllr's Jerry Schonfeldt and Sam Polhill, we thank them for their contribution and wish them both well for the future.

We also take this opportunity to remember Mark Richardson who sadly passed away during this period and wish his family well.

I also welcome Paula Short and Martin Hewitt as newly appointed Parish Councillors, who I am sure will be making a significant contribution going forward.

As you will have gathered, we have been experiencing a significant amount of Cllr churn during this period. After opening the year with a full complement of 13 Parish Councillors, 3 decided not to stand again, 2 resigned and 1 has sadly passed away. We managed to recruit 2 new Parish Councillors during the period, bringing our current compliment to 9, we therefore require an additional 4 Parish Councillors to achieve a full complement of 13. If any Parishioners feel they have the skills and time available to help make Fenstanton an even better place to live, I would encourage them to become a Parish Councillor and serve our community as an active member of the Parish Council.

### **Staffing & Support**

Our Parish Clerk Jo Perez settled in really well this year, her contribution and personal development has been exceptional, ensuring the necessary support for the Parish and Councillors is always available.

During this period, we successfully recruited a permanent RFO, however, for personal reasons she has since resigned. We are currently advertising to recruit a replacement RFO as soon as possible.

My appreciation also goes to the volunteer litter teams and the team members on volunteer list who contribute freely of their time, performing the much-needed task of keeping our village tidy.

### **Flood Working Group**

The Fenstanton Flood Working Group continues to be led by Cllr Nigel Ferrier, who has been working with local Government Departments to investigate the cause, impact and proposed solutions required to mitigate the risk of experiencing significant floodwater levels that encroached upon

Fenstanton on Christmas Eve 2020, damaging properties and significantly disrupting the lives of Some residents.

Despite engaging with and providing our locally produced evidential Parish Council Report submitted to our MP, CCC Lead Flood Agency, Environment Agency (EA) and Highways England (HE), Anglia Water (AW), we initially received no replies.

We subsequently organised a site visit with our MP Jonathan Djanogly and CCC, following which our MP requested responses to our report, which we have now received. Put simply we have been advised that investigations are ongoing.

It is now 16 months since the flood incident occurred, without CCC Flood Lead, HE, AW or EA taking any remedial action, this is clearly unsatisfactory. Your Parish Council has therefore decided to fund the appointment of a professional flooding specialist in this field to investigate and produce a final report, which will be made available to our MP and the agencies concerned. We find ourselves in a very unsatisfactory position regarding the flooding incident, as this year we have been extremely lucky to have experienced an unusually dry period and have not to have suffered a repeated event. We will press on with engagement following completion of the independent report, which cannot be ignored.

#### **Projects Part and Fully Delivered**

- Village Pond renovation, fencing works and History board completed.
- Clocktower, bell and surrounds fully refurbished, ground lighting re-installed, planters and Whipping Post installed together with History Board.
- Installed additional benches in parish churchyard and Fen Bridleway footpath overlooking Moore Lake.
- Secured agreement from CCC Highways for a privately funded highways improvement initiative for a village wide 20mph speed limit, which will be implemented Autumn 2022.
- Jet washed the A1307 underpass and implemented a weekly cleaning and graffiti removal rota.
- Continued working through the Fenstanton Flood Working Group to engage with CCC, our MP, HE & EA to gain some flood remediation traction.
- Continued to support the new Village Hall by committing funds to reserves to be drawn down as required.
- Secured £15k LHI funding, finalised plans and committed Parish Council funding to implement Chequer Street parking bays, due for implementation Autumn 2022.
- Installed the Multi Use Games Area for use by the school and residents. Our thanks to Highways England A14 Legacy Fund for providing the facilities and finance.
- Implemented refurbishment of Bus Shelters and implemented a weekly cleaning and graffiti removal rota.
- Implemented Chequer Street wooden playground repairs.
- Implemented Rookery Place metal playground repairs.
- New maintenance contractors appointed and contract agreed.
- Cut back unsightly Chequer Street hedge and verge vegetation.

#### **Projects & Initiatives In Progress**

- Implement 20's Plenty speed limit throughout the village by Autumn 2022, privately funded by the Parish Council, without contribution from CCC.
- Implement London Road 30mph speed limit, funded through LHI & Parish Council.
- Continue digitalisation and location mapping of Village Burial records (historic records to be retained).
- Implement Chequer Street parking bays Autumn 2022.

- Village Pond, fence repairs, weed control, picnic tables installed and fish stocks re-introduced.
- Continue Fenstanton Flood Working Group activity, by producing a professional Flood Report, utilised to ensure HE, EA, CCC, take action to mitigate future risk of flooding and to prepare an Emergency Flood Plan for the Parish.
- Introduction of CCC Highways village wide drain clearing Bi-Annual scheme.
- Complete Online Mapping of all parish areas.
- Continue development of the Hamptons open space & football field for sport, exercise and social use.
- Finalise the 99 year lease and additional allotment land and water supply from Diocese of East Anglia Glebe Allotments. Fenstanton Parish Council will become the leaseholder, securing allotments expansion and future use. We are working with the Diocese of East Anglia and allotment holders to improve boundary fencing.
- Implement new booking system for MUGA.
- Implement jointly funded Church footpath repairs.

#### **Parish Matters General:**

##### **Cambridge Road A1307 slip road**

The Parish Council developed and submitted an Initial Proposal to HDC, applying for the release of Retained Community Infrastructure Levy, required to improve the Cambridge Road Slip Road surrounds and mitigate / discourage HGV Parking. Our application for funding was rejected by HDC in January 2021, and we have subsequently been advised that CCC Highways must first approve the proposals and have them fully planned and costed before submission.

The Parish Council has paid £500 to CCC Highways to work through the proposal again and re-draft it to ensure compliance, their support and reduce cost.

The revised proposals will be re-submitted to HDC Community Infrastructure Levy Committee when completed.

Meanwhile, to help mitigate dangerous parking of HGV's, the Parish Clerk will continue contacting all Hauliers whose vehicles are parking overnight and causing an obstruction, requesting them to cease this.

##### **Community and S106 grant allocations**

- Community Café.
- Fenstanton Friendship Club.
- Fenstanton Football Club.

##### **Parish Planning Matters**

A significant number of planning applications (40 for previous Year), have been received and reviewed during the period, in respect of which the Parish Council have been consulted in an advisory capacity by HDC Planning.

##### **Burial Board Matters**

The Parish Council is continuing to progress with the validation and Digitalisation of Village Burial records (historic records to be retained). This will be enhanced with a new, on-line high-resolution digital map of the open graveyard.

The Parish Council is continuing to progress an initiative with CCC and the school, which would provide additional land required for expansion of the graveyard. Insignificant CCC progress has been made on this initiative, causing continuous delays in support.

### **Parish Precept & Funding**

In order to maintain the current level of service provided and achieve a balanced budget in the coming financial year 2022/23, the Parish Council has unanimously voted to increase the Parish Precept by 20%, which equates to an increase of £17.84 per annum for a level D property in the village.

The Parish Precept remains within the bottom 25% of comparable sized parish precepts within the Huntingdonshire district.

### **Financial Position as at the year end 31/03/2022**

We have again ended the year in a healthy financial position, the details of which are contained in the RFO's Report. However, we do have significant financial commitments to meet during the coming year to complete the Projects & Initiatives outlined above and commitments made to fund the new Village Hall.

### **Financial Year End Accounts**

Draft Financial year end accounts are currently being prepared for the period ending 31 March 2022. The audited Annual Accounts will be made available to members of the public between early June to mid July.

## **5. Annual Review of Parish Council Finance Report 2021/22**

Report from the acting RFO:-

As Acting RFO, I would like to highlight the financial position of Fenstanton Parish Council for the year ending 31.03.22. subject to any adjustments during the internal and subsequent external audits. The full accounts will be available to the Fenstanton Public in July/August.

### **Overall**

Cash in hand has risen marginally over the year, from £300,660 to £306,950. This includes a number of reserves and commitments, including £95,000 for the Village Hall Trust, £10,000 for the Fen Cycleway maintenance, improvements to the path through the Church, Local Highway initiatives including Chequer Street and '20 is Plenty', as well as the two amounts we hold for the Bertha Pitfield Clock Tower maintenance of £18,931 and Youth Club Fund of £2,447.

### **Operational Expenditure.**

The vast majority of our funding comes from the 'Parish Precept'. This is collected through your Council Tax bills by HDC and is approximately 6% of the total amount you pay. In 2021/22 this was £83.92 per household for a Level D property. In addition, we received some income from the graveyard and CCC for grass cutting work we carry out on their behalf and a small amount of bank interest. In total our 'operational' income was £112,282.

From this we pay for the Parish Council Office, a variety of administration costs, including insurance, Clerk and RFO salaries, all maintenance and repairs, including grass and hedge cutting and playground repairs. In addition, we were able to provide some funding for groups and organisations within the Parish, including: Fenstanton Football Club, Fenstanton Community Cafe, Fenstanton Friendship Club.

### **Capital Expenditure and Parish Improvements**

Our approach to any major capital or infrastructure expenditure in the Parish is to source funding, wherever possible from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, to remove any financial impact on Fenstanton Households. This

has enabled us to provide a variety of services and resources, including The Community Warden Scheme, Clock and Pond repairs and upgrade, repairs to the Bus shelters, financial support for the School improvements, as well as the MUGA and various benches and tables around the Parish from External Grants and funding from the Community Infrastructure Fund (our proportion of a developer tax). We have also been able to secure a pocket of Land on Cambridge Road which is likely to be used by the various Scouts and Guides groups as a new base.

#### **In summary**

Our finances are in a healthy position. However, we know we face increasing demands on our resources, not least through the 'downward push' from the larger authorities for your Parish Council to take on increasing levels of services and costs previously associated with them. We will need to remain cautious in what we can fund and continue to closely manage and monitor our expenditure.

#### **6. Reports from County and District Councillors**

None present.

#### **7. Presentation by Ashley Dolling – HDC Community Protection & Enforcement Officer**

Unfortunately, Ashley was unable to attend due to it being within the Election period, however he will attend the next full PC meeting.

#### **8. Any other community group reports – inc Royal British Legion**

Report from Julie Briggs:-

##### **Fenstanton and Hilton Royal British Legion**

Originally Fenstanton and Hilton RBL were a Sub Branch of St Ives RBL, but after reorganisation we now come under Cambridgeshire umbrella. We are extremely small in number so do not have a committee, but Margaret and I do attend St Ives Branch and Women's Section meetings. Even so if you join Fenstanton and Hilton RBL you can also join St Ives or any other Branch without any further cost. The annual membership is £17.00.

Just to clarify you do not need to have been a member or be related to a member of the Armed forces to join the Royal British Legion. Similarly you do not need to be a member of the RBL to be a Poppy Appeal Collector.

Activities of the Royal British Legion in this area include:

- Supporting retired and present members of the Armed Forces and their dependants. Our Welfare Officer Alan will contact or visit, when informed of a person who needs support. At the moment he only has Margaret and Monica Thompson who may continue with visits or telephone contact, if the person needs company or help with shopping or such like. There are courses available to help prospective Welfare Supporters.
- Our Standard Bearer can be asked to attend a funeral of either retired or present Military personnel. Normally he is supported by other members of the legion. Last year it was wonderful to be asked to attend a Party to celebrate World War 2 Veteran Reginald Millns 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- St Ives Women's Section are back to meeting on the second Monday of each month at the Ivy Leaf club in Broadleas at 11am. This is an opportunity to meet up and make friends whilst having a tea, coffee and biscuit sometimes cake.

- In the past there have been outings and joining other Huntingdonshire RBL Women's Sections to support their fund raising or join their celebratory party. These activities will start up again once restrictions and members feel comfortable to participate.
- Women's Section organise Poppy Bingo to support the annual Poppy Appeal.
- The St Ives Branch members meet monthly but purely to discuss business matters.
- Naturally RBL members will be contributing to the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in St Ives.

I had been Standard Bearer for the Fenstanton and Hilton RBL until autumn of last year, after sustaining an injury. We are extremely fortunate in that Michael Paver has volunteered to take my place.

So now membership of Fenstanton Hilton RBL consists of 3 of us: Margaret Shardlow, Michael Paver and myself. Granted there are no members living in Fenstanton, but I have arranged to speak at Fenstanton Parish Council next month. So please do think about at least enquiring about joining us. If you have any questions do please ask.

Hilton totally amazes Margaret and I each year by villagers' generosity during each Annual Poppy Appeal. Last year we had about 20 (actually 19) collectors, but more helpers are always welcome to lighten the load.

#### **9. General question time**

Liberal Democrat candidate Clare Tevlin commented on the Bus Shelters and how good they looked.

She also asked about the tables that had been positioned outside of the new convenience store in the Village that have now been removed. The Chairman advised Clare that the Parish Council had not been involved with the removal of the tables but advised her that the land belongs to HDC and the shop owner would need consent from HDC and a licence to have tables outside.

Clare asked whether the Parish Council were doing anything for the Queens Platinum Jubilee. The Clerk advised that the PC are not doing anything but would support local groups/individuals that wish to hold an event.

Cllr M Hewitt advised that he had seen an article on a Facebook page to say that the LHI for London Road, St Ives had been approved. The Clerk advised that she had not had any official correspondence about this but would check with the County Councillor.

Meeting Closed 19.49