



**Minutes of Ditchingham Annual Parish Meeting
Monday 19th May 2014 - 7.30 p.m.
Ditchingham Village Hall**

Action
by:

Councillors present: Julian Green - Chair (JG), Keith Weston - Vice Chair (KW), Vic Cossey (VC), Rev. Reg Kirkpatrick (RK), Colin Mison (CM), Gillian Ogden (GO), Stephen Read (SR), Sally Chapman (Clerk/RFO).

Apologies: Jane Chadd, Richard Mulley and District Councillor Pauline Allen.

Also present: Rev. Chris Hutton and 6 members of the public.

Before the meeting commenced the Chair of Ditchingham Parish explained that procedure dictates that the Chair of the Council if present should chair the meeting, he welcomed those present, and explained that two separate meetings would be taking place. The first of these being the **annual parish meeting**, to be followed by the **annual parish council meeting**. He further advised those present that, given that parishioners had the opportunity to speak at the annual parish meeting, there would be no opportunity for parishioners to speak at the annual parish council meeting.

MEETING

1. The minutes of the 2013 Annual Parish Meeting

To be "taken as read" proposed RK; 2nd KW, unanimous. Minutes signed by the Chair upon completion of the meeting.

2. Any business not on the agenda arising from those minutes.

None

3. Chairman's report on the Council's activities

The Chair read out his report (full report doc. 1 attached). Main points:

- A moments silence was held in memory of the late John Smith, former Clerk of DPC.
- Welcomed the new Clerk Sally Chapman.
- Thanked the 3 Councillors who retired in the last year; Mr F. James, Mr M Ankrett and Mrs M Ankrett.
- Welcomed the new Councillor Stephen Read.
- Stated the Parish Council should have 11 Councillors and there were currently 2 casual vacancies.
- Thanked District Councillor Pauline Allen for her significant contribution to Ditchingham's community.
- Thanked County Councillor Margaret Somerville for her ensuring that Norfolk County Council remembered that Ditchingham was part of the county.
- Thanked all Councillors for giving their valuable time voluntarily and acknowledged Cllr Mulley for his generous time on practical aspects around the village.
- Confirmed the precept agreed by Council of £25,000 and the reasoning behind this requirement.

4. Reports giving a summary of the year's activities from the Council's Working Parties:



Planning & Highways

Councillor Weston read out his report (full report doc. 2 attached). Main points:

- Conversion of the former convent buildings in Belsey Bridge Road by Emmaus.
- Planned new dwellings in Lamberts Way debate.
- The Waterside Maltings development.
- Accidents on the B1332.
- New litter bins, dog waste bins and grit bins.
- New litter picker Marcus Sladden.
- Belsey Bridge signs.

Maintenance & Environment

Councillor Kirkpatrick read out his report (full report doc. 3 attached). Main points:

- Significant work has been carried out on the play areas.
- Residents have taken on the responsibility of inspecting the play areas.
- The allotments are being well used and well maintained.
- The cemetery is well maintained and a family would like to sponsor a bench.

Local Development

Councillor Ogden gave a report on behalf of Cllr Chadd. Main points:

- The Skate Park and the Youth Shelter opened on the dip and are being well used. Councillor Ogden acknowledged the Grant funding gratefully received.
- There have been 'pop-up' events on the play area, including archery for local children and youths.
- The village fete was well supported last year and is planned again on 27 July 2014.
- Mancroft Advice Project ran a residential course with the local youths.
- The Litter Pick in April cleared the village of excess rubbish.
- The S106 monies will be invested in the village to benefit locals.

Finance & Resources

The Chair included his report on F&R activities in the body of his main report (see item 3). Main points:

- Reviewed and increased the insurance.
- Ensured PC's employees have proper contract of employment.
- Implemented a risk management strategy and a system of internal control.
- Increased the portfolio of policies.
- Recommended to Council a budget for 2014-15.

5. Report from the police.

Not present.

6. Report from the District Councillor.

Not present – report received and read out by the Chair (full report doc. 4 attached). Main points:

- Freeze on SN part of council tax for 6th year.
- Work on local development framework nearly complete.
- SNC members have a budget of £1k to spend in their wards – Cllr Kirkpatrick is the first person to apply in support of local young people.
- SNC's Neighbourhood grants of £2k are still available.

7. Report from the County Councillor.



Not present. (No report sent).

**8. Report from Community Groups.
Ditchingham Primary School**

Not present – a letter had been received and was read out by the Chair (full letter doc. 5 attached). Main point:

- Proposal for the Ditchingham Pre-School to relocate to a new building on the Primary school site and update on the current position.

9. Report from Ditchingham United Charities

The Chair Keith Weston of Ditchingham United Charities read out his report (full report doc. 6 attached). Main points:

- Mr Vic Cossey is the new Clerk.
- Sums for disbursement have increased.
- Grants have been recently given for all applicants.

10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- A parishioner questioned the signs on Broome Heath regarding the new fencing and the fact that the wording 'Full consent given by Ditchingham Parish Council' had been crossed out. Councillor Weston advised Ditchingham Parish Council had not given consent and that was why the statement was deleted.
- A parishioner (whose garden backs onto the dip) requested that the goalpost be re-orientated by 90 degrees to prevent balls being constantly kicked into her garden and hitting her conservatory. Councillor Kirkpatrick said he was sympathetic with the situation and had investigated this matter. He advised; if the goalposts were situated as suggested, the balls would be kicked into the road. It was suggested the possibility of the goalpost being moved into the field or high netting put along the fence.
- A parishioner advised rumours were circulating that the pre-school would be opening in September and stated (update point 8 and doc. 5) this would not be the case. The Chair suggested putting an update in the Parishioner Magazine or on the Parish's website.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm.



Doc. 1.
DITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL - A YEAR'S REVIEW

Councillors
Ladies & Gentlemen

I would like to introduce the Ditchingham Annual Parish meeting 2014. Please note there are 2 meetings tonight. This is the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING. Before commencing I shall simply acquaint those present with some rules and procedures regarding annual parish meetings. So briefly:

- ***The purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting?*** To allow registered electors to discuss parish affairs and to pass resolutions thereon. This meeting is also an opportunity for the Parish Council and community group leaders to explain their activities over the last year... I'm not sure yet who will wish to speak; we shall soon find out!
- ***Who can attend the meeting? And can I speak?*** Anyone may attend but only registered electors in the parish may speak and vote. Should you wish to speak I will ask you to stand so that all persons present can identify who is talking; and I shall ask for your name and address for the purpose of the minutes.
- ***Who will chair the meeting?*** The Chairman of the Parish Council is obliged to chair the meeting if present. In his absence the vice chairman must preside if present. If neither is able to attend, then the meeting will elect a chairman from those electors present.
- ***Will Parish Councillors be there?*** Although there is no compulsion, Councillors normally attend; they will speak if required, but the purpose of the meeting is to enable the ordinary electors to have their say.
- ***Will notes be taken of the meeting?*** A written record of the meeting will be taken by the Parish Clerk to keep in a special book. The rules on the signature and admissibility of minutes are the same as those for Parish Council meetings.
- ***How long will the meeting last?*** As long as need be within reason; previously meetings in Ditchingham have lasted about 30 minutes... it really depends on those present and the number of questions and the discussions that are raised.
- ***Will the Press be there?*** If they choose! The rules for press admission are the same as any Council meeting.

The **Annual Parish Council Meeting**: will follow immediately after the close of the Annual Parish meeting. This also is a special meeting, when contrasted with the other five Council meetings in the year. At the annual meeting the Council: elects the chairman and the vice chairman; makes other annual appointments [to committees and advisory working parties] and makes resolutions on other business matters such as insurances, risk management policies, etc.

At the end of the Annual Parish Meeting there will be a 5 minute break before I convene the ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING. Thank you.

Once the Annual parish meeting is convened, as retiring Chair of DPC, as is custom and to some extent statutory requirement, I and other members of the Council will report on the years events. As parishioners you are welcome at the Chair's discretion to ask questions on these reports.

I will now commence the meeting.

- > Elect Chairman?
- > 1. Confirm minutes
- > 2. Deal with business not on agenda
- > 3. Retiring Chairman's report



Thank you. Without further ado, and without stealing the thunder of my colleagues around the table as Chairs of our sub committees and working parties, I will briefly summarise the year's activities.

Before doing so however I would like to remark to all those present, that's Councillors and members of the public, that the Chair will not permit questions in respect of any of the reports until item 10. This is in the interest of ensuring that the meeting is conducted briefly and in a structured manner. Thank you.

First, and before 'normal business' I would like to observe a moments silence for John Smith who was Clerk for 56 years. Sadly John passed away earlier this year.....

Secondly, I would like to welcome Sally Chapman as our new Clerk. Sally started as Clerk in January this year. And I hope that this also will be a long and successful Clerkship! And while Sally lives in Harleston with modern technology she is every bit as contactable as if she were living in the village. Please make her feel welcome.

I would like to thank the three Councillors who retired in the year; Frank James, Martin Ankrett, and Maureen Ankrett.

I would like to welcome Stephen Read who was co-opted onto the Council in November 2013. Stephen was born and raised in the Bungay area often working school holidays in the family cricket bat business. After leaving school he trained as a Cabinetmaker and after spending some years working in Europe returned to join the Nursery business, growing fruit and ornamental trees with business premises in the village. Stephen moved to Ditchingham 12 years ago with his wife and three children.

Our full 'contingent' of Councillors is 11 (the Clerk is an officer and cannot vote). You will be aware that there are 2 casual vacancies on the Council at the current time. This matter will be discussed further in the Annual Parish Council meeting (following this meeting).

I would like to thank Pauline Allen our district councillor for the significant contribution that she has made to our community, not only as a local politician but also hands on... she is good at doing speed camera stuff and litter picking! In particular I would like to thank her for making our district council (South Norfolk) work for us. And I would like to thank Margret Somerville our County Councillor for ensuring that Norfolk County Council continues to remember that Ditchingham continues to exists...

While ALL parish councillors give their time voluntarily and play their part in their own way from the Chair I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Richard Mulley who (and there are others too...) has generously given his time on practical aspects around the village, refurbishing litter bins, putting back the bus shelter seat, speed awareness and more...

Last year I reported on how the Council was making progress with 'new ways of working'... this progress has continued and you will shortly hear reports from the Chairs of our committees in respect of:

- Planning & Highways (Keith Weston)
- Local Development (Jane Chadd)
- Maintenance & Environment (Reg Kirkpatrick)

I will now include a brief summary of the activities of the Finance & Resources Committee in this report before handing over to my colleagues who will tell you



more about the Maltings; activities in the Dip and on the Thwaite Road play area, and some of the initiatives in the Community including Section 106 monies. With regard to Finance and Resources we have:

- Reviewed and increased our insurances, particularly noting the litigious nature of today's society and the risks associated with our play areas and more direct involvement in frontline 'localism';
- Ensured that our 'employees', principally the Clerk, but also our litter picker, has a proper contract of employment and is paid compliant with HMRC regulations.
- Implemented a Risk Management strategy;
- Implemented a system of internal control and made more robust our internal audit framework
- Increased our portfolio of policies, that while arguably bureaucratic, are necessary to comply with legislation; and
- With Keith Weston as vice Chair, we have invested in making sure that our new Clerk Sally was 'up to speed' as soon as possible; And
- Recommended to Council a budget for 2014-15.

As a Council we agreed to levy a precept of £25,000. The decision to increase the precept was carefully considered. The Council took a long term view, giving consideration to the current political agenda, where it appears through the various announcements and consultations through the office of Eric Pickles (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) that there is clear continued intent to force a freeze, or cap on parish precepts. With this in mind, the Council having held council tax for 5 of the last 8 years confirmed its firm intent to ensure that the precept (if it is at some point in the future is to be frozen) is of the correct quantum for sustainability of the Council. As noted last year, the historic rate, has not been, and the Council, without increasing its funding recourse (precept) would have the stark choice of dramatically reducing the services it offers, or in effect, trading insolvently! As Chair, given last year's outturn, and the 14-15 budget I am confident that the Council will close 14-15 with acceptable reserves of about 6 months precept giving it head room to take advantage of joint funding and similar initiatives that without such reserves are a lost opportunity to the Community.

In round terms the proposed precept of £25,000 equates to an average £34.72 per household (£0.67 per week), and an annual increase of £6.75 (just 13p per week). Clearly averages must be explained, the tax base on which the actual precept is calculated makes allowance for varying reliefs (e.g. for the least able to pay and empty properties) and for adjustments between Council tax bands... the effect being that the increase for properties in band A will be less and in band H more.

While some services and amenities previously offered by Central Government, the County or District Councils are being withdrawn or reduced, some services and amenities are now being delivered at an increasingly local level. Some might call this 'Localism'? This Council's 2014-15 budget is designed to maintain the status quo, and, to continue our programme of community renewals and initiatives. The Council continues to maintain its web site. On the web site you can find contact details of all Councillors and of the Clerk. You can also find copies of agendas and past meeting papers (minutes). You can also find copies of our Committee Terms of Reference and our policies.

That's it from me as Chair for my report. I will now ask the Chairs of our subcommittees and working parties to give their reports, and remind those presents to hold their questions to item 10.
Thank you

Julian Green
Chair, Ditchingham Parish Council

Doc. 2

DITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT TO
2014 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

There were several small and non-contentious planning applications in the parish in the last 12 months. Some were dealt with in consultation with the committee members; some were aired at Advisory Committee meetings followed by public meetings. No members of the public attended. Plans for the conversion, by Emmaus, of the former convent buildings in Belsey Bridge Road were recommended, by this committee, for approval. Plans for four new dwellings in Lamberts Way were recommended, by this committee, for refusal. They were refused by SNC but the decision was overturned on appeal. (More about this road in my APCM report)

The most significant planning and highways items during the year have, of course, been Waterside Maltings and the B1332. The former is developing at a pace, a number of homes are now occupied and people (who express an opinion) tend to be complimentary about what P J Livesey are building. Concerns were raised about safety at the junction but NCC deems it safe.

There have been several more accidents and near misses on the B1332. I have badgered NCC for improvements to the road surface but with the current requirements to make savings in the austerity drive there are no grounds for optimism. (More about this road in my APCM report)
We made a successful application to the Parish Partnership Scheme for 75% funding towards two VASs but we were unable to fund our 25% and the plan was abandoned.

The resources we had available were largely spent on a number of new litter bins, dog waste bins and grit bins. The controversy about statues on Chicken Roundabout died down. By September the new lighting was working and the old lamps were eventually taken away. SAMs have not been deployed this year. Interest in their use waned until this spring but when Cllr. Mulley requested one all of the six machines were faulty.

This year also saw the resignation of Mr. David Fairhead, who had picked litter and done small maintenance jobs on behalf of the Council. His successor is Mr. Marcus Sladdon. Litter remains a problem. Marcus, Cllr. Mulley and I all help to keep it under control.

There has been some disquiet about the number of signs to the Belsey Bridge Conference Centre. (More about this road in my APCM report)
The burger van and toilet have gone from the B1332 layby.

Keith Weston
Chair Planning & Highways Committee

Doc. 3

Report from Maintenance & Environment Committee

Tabled Chair's Report for May 2014 Annual Meeting

Play Areas:



The play areas have seen significant work carried out over this past year and it has been heartening to receive very favourable comments from the community and from visitors from other areas envious of our facilities.

We are grateful to those residents who have taken on the responsibility of inspecting the areas and bringing to our attention any areas of concern. These are dealt with through DIY or if it is beyond those skills then contractors are asked for quotes for major works.

We will continue to seek ways of improving the facilities not only for the young people but make it an amenity which all the community can enjoy.

Allotments:

The allotments continue to be well used and on the whole well maintained. We will monitor their use over this growing season and any that seem to be being neglected the holder will be contacted with a view to either work the plot or give it up.

Cemetery:

The cemetery continues to be well maintained. A family have indicated that they would like to sponsor a bench where the Ashes are interred so that people visiting this area can sit and reflect. I will be contacting them to firm up this offer.

I would like to thank my committee for their support this year.

The council are very happy to receive ideas of how the community would like to see any these facilities improved.

Reg Kirkpatrick 19th May 2014
Chair of Maintenance & Environment Committee

Doc. 4

Ditchingham Annual Meeting - 18 May 2014 at 7.30pm
Report from Pauline Allen, District Councillor

Thank you for inviting me to your meeting tonight. I'm sorry I can't be with you; currently I'm in Bournemouth helping to look after my elderly mother.

SNC matters

Over this last year my role with SNC has remained largely unchanged. I attend full council meetings and I'm still the shadow portfolio holder for the Growth and Localism remit.

Occasionally I am a substitute on the Planning Committee now known as the DMC and my work with North East Suffolk CAB as the SNC representative to the Board continues.

I was pleased to support the freeze to the SNC part of your Council Tax; this is the 6th year we have been able to do this to help residents. The work on the Local Development Framework is almost complete. The Council has voted through the policies and more recently the site allocations for new house building. We are waiting for this to be examined in public by the planning inspectorate and then the LDF can be fully implemented.

Local matters

I've been pleased to attend most of your Parish Council meetings during this last year. In this time it has been great to see the Maltings site being developed to its full potential. My congratulations to the PC for so ably starting the process of deciding how to spend the S106 monies resulting from the development. The work with SAM in the village has continued and although it would be desirable to see greater police response to the speeding problems in the village the partnership between SNC and the PC to gather data remains valuable. Another example of partnership is the successful litter pick with Ditchingham volunteers led by the PC taking part in SNC's month long event to make the village and the District a tidier place to live. I would like to briefly pay tribute to John Smith (the long serving clerk to DPC) and to Eric Wimpenny (founder member of Ditchingham's SAM group) who both passed away in March this year. These men made a difference.



To complete my report on an upbeat note - SNC Members now hold a budget of £1k to spend in their Wards during this financial year; criteria and a simple application form are emerging for this spend. I'm so pleased that Cllr Reg Kirkpatrick is the first person to discuss possibilities for a small amount for a project with young people. SNC's Neighbourhood Grants of up to £2,000 are still available. If there are any groups or organisations in the village that would like a small amount of help, please do make contact with me. Finally I would like to thank Ditchingham Parish Councillors and residents for their support during this past year.

Pauline Allen
District Councillor

Doc. 5
16th May 2014

Ditchingham Primary School

Dear Sir

Proposal for Pre-School to relocate to new building on School site

I am writing to update the Parish Council, parents and carers, residents and the wider community on the proposal for the Ditchingham Pre-School to relocate to a new purpose built building on the Ditchingham Primary School site. I thought the Parish Council might find it helpful if I sought to clarify and confirm the latest position regarding a few key factors; both on behalf of the governing body and for the benefit of the Parish Council and others with interest in the village.

As a governing body we are totally committed to the principle and aims of this project; to assist the Pre-School to deliver the best possible outcomes for all of the children of our Community both now and in the years to come. Norfolk Property Services have prepared some detailed drawings and recently marked out the area of the proposed site so that we were all able to give full consideration to the proposals. Before matters can progress further there are now a number of issues to be considered and addressed.

Approval in principal has to be obtained from the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust. We are confident that the Trust will want to be supportive just so long as the necessary legalities and responsibilities are satisfied.

Clearly planning permission for the development will need to be obtained and realistically this could take some time, together with the connection of the utilities which can take up to three months from the date of application. I am advised that a further factor is that Sport England may question or seek to challenge the use of part of the playing field for this purpose which could also delay planning permission.

Our concern on behalf of the pre-school is that it shouldn't find itself incurring costs at too early a stage in proceedings and developments before full authorisation is given by the trustees and planning permission is obtained. I am sure you will agree that this seems a suitably cautious and sensible way to proceed until there is certainty about these two key elements.



Let me reiterate that as a Governing Body we are committed to supporting this exciting and valuable project but we trust that the community will understand that, for the reasons outlined above, a September 2014 completion date may not be achievable. We will do all that we can to ensure the project progresses as speedily as possible and will endeavour to communicate progress with the Parish Council as the project develops.

If you would like an update at any time, please contact Sarah Hammond on chair@ditchingham.norfolk.sch.uk.

Yours faithfully

Heather Brand
Headteacher

Sarah Hammond
Chair of Governors

Doc. 6

DITCHINGHAM UNITED CHARITIES (DUC)

Clerk: Vic Cossey

Chair: Keith Weston

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2014

This year saw the end of an era with the death of the Charity's Clerk, John Smith. He is sadly missed. Instead of employing a new Clerk one of the trustees, Vic Cossey offered to fill the role. His offer was gratefully received by the trustees.

Interest on the sums invested in the Charities Official Investment Fund has, again, held up well in the difficult financial situation. Year on year the sums for disbursement have not diminished. Indeed, this year the sum invested had increased due to the sale of land.

As usual the Finance Committee met to read applicants' letters and to look at their accounts. The recommendations made, by the Committee to the full meeting of trustees were adopted. In deciding how to disburse funds the Trustees take into consideration the following:

- Historical situation – some organisations/applicants provide important services to the community and may be reliant on support from the DUC
- Variety and number of applicants
- Current priorities of applicants
- Financial situation of applicants
- Membership of organisations – are most members local?
- Age range served by applicant organisations; the Trustees try to spread the funds to the benefit of all age groups

At 2014 AGM the Trustees had £17,333 to disburse and they were able to make grants to all of the organisations that sought help. They were:

Parochial Church Council
Parishioner (Village News Letter)
All Hallows Hospital
Village Hall
Primary School
Play Association (For Thwaite Road Play Area)
CAB

Community Cafe
Scudamore Homes for the Elderly
Some funds were retained but earmarked for The 4 Villages GNS; Village Fete and Ditchingham & Broome Playgroup

A sum was set aside to help students entering university.