



Minutes of Annual Reach Parish meeting held on; Wednesday 3rd June 2015.

Attendance

Charlotte Cane	Chair	Present
Michael Aves	Vice Chairman	Present
Hannah Baldwin	Councillor	Present
Steve Boreham	Councillor	Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
David Thomas	Councillor	Present
Diana Ward	Councillor	Not Present
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
Allen Alderson	District Councillor	Present
David Brown	County Councillor	Present
John Robinson -	Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities.	

Police Report

None received.

Chairman's Report

I start this report by saying how saddened we all were at the loss of Rita Dunnett. Rita made a huge contribution to the village, not least through her role as a Parish Councillor, and she is greatly missed. With funding from The Amenity fund the PC arranged for the installation, within the woodland on the 24Acres, of an oak memorial bench, from the village, in memory of Rita.

The 24Acres was officially opened on 1st June, with a fantastically well organised programme of events, funded by grants from the Amenity Fund and The Forestry Commission. There are still plans to develop the site, including a safe area for horse riding, and fundraising for this project is under way. Earlier this year a hedgerow was planted along the Northern boundary of the site, funded by grants from the Woodland Trust, the National Trust and the Amenity Fund. A good turnout from the village saw the hedgerow planted in a single morning. With all the attention on the 24Acres it is important not to forget Reach Wood, which is a valued village amenity. To support management decisions a 'Friends of Reach Wood' has been formed. Further volunteers to join this group would be most welcome.

There have long been concerns at the speed with which traffic enters the village, particularly from the direction of Swaffham Prior. The Parish Council applied to the Local Highway Improvement Initiative for funding to install traffic calming measures, and the application was successful. It is expected that consultation within the village on the various options, and then the necessary road works, will begin soon.

This year saw the need for a considerable amount of major tree work around the village, including work on the Horse Chestnut on the Green, the Ash trees in the corner of the playing field by the playground, the hedge at the approach to the play area, and the Lime trees and boundary hedging of the Cemetery. The state of the horse chestnut on the Green is being monitored.

In response to a complaint with regard to Muntjac deer destroying plants and flowers in the cemetery, the Parish Council has organised deer proof fencing of the back boundary.

The village sign was discovered to be in a serious state, and repair was deemed impossible. Jon Holmwood kindly carved and painted a new sign, a perfect replica of the original.

Under a County Council, County-wide programme, the village street lights have been replaced. Following objections, the heritage-style lamps around the Green have been retained, and there are plans to add additional lamps on the West side. Fundraising led by David Parr has helped secure the necessary finances, which include a contribution from the Parish Council. It is hoped that this project will be completed very soon, once the contractors and County Council can sort themselves out.

The new village 'Events Team' proposed placing a Christmas tree on the Green opposite the Village Centre. Following an application by the Parish Council this was funded by the Amenity Fund. It is hoped that the turning on of the lights, drinking mulled wine and carol singing, which many enjoyed, will become an annual event.

Following the elections on 7th May we welcome 2 new members to the Parish Council – Hannah Baldwin and Steve Boreham, as well as one relatively recent addition – Charlotte Cane who joined the PC at the end of 2014. We must also say thank you to two members who have stepped down – Ross Clark and Joyce Harrison. Joyce's contribution to the work of the Parish Council is acknowledge in particular – she has been a member since 1976 – for 39 years. Thank you Joyce!

David Thomas.

Financial Report

Based on unaudited accounts YE 2015

The Parish Council has achieved a good financial result this year and expects to provide a surplus of £1000 for the year ending March 2015.

Income from normal business was at £14,000 and expenditure £13,000.

Unrestricted reserves (money not allocated to certain projects) are at £12,000.

Charlotte Cane.

County Council Report

2014 – 2015 saw the County Council move from a cabinet system of governance to a Committee structure. This change has required much closer working between the political groups to deliver on behalf of the people of Cambridgeshire. Overall, I believe the move has proved positive. I had the honour of been appointed vice-Chairman of the new Children and Young People Committee, a role I have enjoyed immensely. I also sat on a number of committees and other bodies including: the General Purposes Committee; Constitution and Ethics Committee; Corporate Parenting Board; Cambridgeshire Social care Improvement Board and panels to recommend sponsors to run new schools in Ely, Godmanchester, Hampton and Littleport.

Wrestling with the financial challenges of ever increasing demand and tightening budgets saw the Full Council proposing a Council Tax increase of 1.99%, whilst still delivering savings of £29.8 million in the coming year. This is in addition to the £115.3 million of savings delivered over the past 3 years. Looking back over the year we have made good progress in a number of areas. In conjunction with Balfour Beatty most of the streetlights across the county have now been renewed. We have secured planning permission to build the new Ely Southern Crossing to tackle the bottle-neck caused by the railway bridge. The new Fire Station in Burwell was built on County Council land. We also signed a "City Deal" with central Government which should unlock £500 million of investment to improve infrastructure in and around Cambridge. We are exploring the possibility for the County Council to develop affordable housing on County Council land. We were successful in lobbying for extra funding for Cambridgeshire schools, although there is still some way to go before we have a fair funding formula for our schools. Following the inadequate Ofsted rating of children's safeguarding services some time again it was very pleasing that, when Ofsted inspected this year, we were rated as "good" – this was the first time an authority had achieved an increase of 2 Ofsted grades following an inadequate ruling.

Locally, working with others we were able to secure a new 25 year lease for Burwell Community Sports Centre at a favourable rent. I have also been approached for help and guidance by a number of local groups and residents on a wide range of topics and individual issues. I also had the honour of being shortlisted in the national Councillor of the Year Awards.

It has been a busy and varied year and I am sure the coming year will be no different.

Cllr David Brown
County Councillor for Burwell Division

District Council

See attached.

Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities

See attached.

Amenity Fund

In a departure from recent years, the Amenity Fund committee agreed to more expenditure this year than it received in income from the fair, approving the following grants:

Sports day	£230
Christmas tree on the green	£500
Memorial bench for Rita Dunnett	£765
Hedge to the front of the 24 acre field	£300
Curry night (matched donation to Ebola appeal)	£500
Heritage streetlights	£850

These were the amounts of grants agreed. In some cases the claim came in for a little less than this, while in the case of the heritage streetlights no money to date has been claimed.

Regarding the curry night, this was a slight departure on previous practice. The Amenity Fund has traditionally funded village events such as sports day and the Christmas carols. In the case of the curry night, however, the food and drink was all donated; what the Amenity Fund contributed was a charitable donation to match the money which had been raised by the event. The committee adopted a policy that it would in future match-fund charitable donations to causes outside the village (up to £500) on the condition that they were raised through a village event. This has the agreeable outcome of supporting good causes as well as fulfilling the purpose of the Amenity Fund: to facilitate community events.

Ross Clark.

Village Centre

No report received.

A.O.B

Swaffham Prior School was discussed, including the amount of repairs needed. SPPC would like to help with this.

Dog mess was discussed and will be added to the next PC meeting agenda.

Reach Community Solar Farm has received enough funding to go ahead, with the addition of a small loan.

Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities

It was not a busy year for the charity

A grant was awarded for the official opening of the Pond leased to the village by the National Trust.

John Norris Seat was installed on Coopers Green

The proposed Skateboard + Scooter park did not go ahead as the charity was prepared to help financially.

Stipend. It was agreed to a £500 for the next year

Sadly the charity committee is finding more difficult to collect information about the people who fall into financial so that it is able to help.

This help is available as follows

- ① Help with books for students entering University where some help is needed
- ② Families with children when one of the parents leave home and leaves the children with a one parent family
- ③ Schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh
- ④ Sport but not least Swaffham Prior Schools Foundation Trust £300 was awarded last year, the intention is to donate £600 this year

The charities finances are in good order Investments have held up well during the recession and available to invest some of the monies for another day

District Councillors Annual Report - 2015

Changes to the Council

We have made the following changes to the Council.

- The seven committees have been reduced to five
- Cut senior management team, deleting 14 posts, saving nearly £500,000 annually.
- Frozen the East Cambs element of council tax for the last two years, and will be again next year. Whilst at the same time producing a balanced budget.
- Put forward plans to the boundary commission to reduce the number of District Councillors from 39 to 27, as from the 2019 local elections

Wheelie Bins

Since bringing in wheelie bins we have increased our recycling rate from 33.7% in 2012/13 to 46.1% in 2013/14 making us the 3rd most improved English local authority last year. We expect to achieve over 56% this year

Ely Southern By Pass

Now that the Government has overridden English Heritage's objection, work will be commencing in the near future on the by-pass

Ely's markets

Ely's markets are operated by ECDC and are recognised as among the best in our region and are a popular attraction for residents and visitors alike. Last year they generated an income of about £70,000 for ECDC. There is 100% take up of stall sites and there is also a waiting list.

Ely's new cinema

Work will commence on the Cineworld cinema this Sept/Oct. It will then open at the end of 2016. Included will be a 500 car carpark. An underpass under the A142 for access for pedestrians + cyclists. Also included will be four food outlets a two fast food drive throughs.

Encouraging apprentices

Last year we set aside £16,000 for local businesses to take on apprentices.

So if a local business takes on an apprentice who lives and was educated in the district we will give that business a grant of £1000. Last year saw 13 apprentices taken on

East Cambs Local Plan

The new local plan runs up to 2031. The plan was ratified by full council at April's meeting.

It will identify areas for uses such as housing, retail, employment and leisure activities. It makes it harder for developers to propose unsuitable applications

Housing

The forever increasing price of housing means that many people on modest incomes are finding it harder to purchase a property.

I feel that as a council we should be placing greater emphasis on the provision of affordable rental accommodation.

With this in mind we are moving forward with our flagship policy of 'Community Land Trusts' in such places as Soham, Swaffham Prior, and Stretham & Wilburton

Mr Charles Roberts is the member of our Conservative group who has been instrumental in driving this policy forward.

Committees

During the last year I have been a member of the Regulatory and Support Services committee, also the licencing and the Commercial Services committee.

I was the Council's Infrastructure Champion, working with officers on infrastructure issues.

Plus also I was a member of the Swaffham Internal Drainage Board

Allen Alderson

Allen Alderson

Report collated by Susan Bailey – Parish Clerk.