



Minutes of Annual Reach Parish meeting held on; Wednesday 11th May 2017.

Attendance

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

Chair's Report

Much of our time this year has been taken up with responding to planning applications and the Local Plan draft, with mixed results. Following the well-attended village discussion of the Local Plan we submitted significant responses. We succeeded in getting The Hythe included as 'Green Space', which gives it similar protection to Green Belt, but allows proposals which enhance the green space and are demonstrably supported by the local community. And many of the infrastructure requests have been included. But the section specific to Reach is standard wording and has used none of the wording discussed by the village and submitted by the Parish Council, we have re-sent the wording we would like in this section. Although Reach is designated as a Small Village, which means we have no allocated development sites, there are many allocated and proposed sites in the surrounding villages. The Parish Council has reiterated our concerns about the impact on services for local residents and the impact on traffic, particularly on the B1102 and at the Quay roundabout.

The 24 Acres is developing well and Reach Wood is well established and kept maintained, although we are having problems with ragwort, and with hawthorn invading the meadow. We are in discussions with the Woodland Trust about managing these problems. Both are well used by villagers and visitors alike. The Parish Council is grateful to those villagers who work hard to keep these two amenities in a good state, especially David Thomas, John Reed, Steve Boreham and Nick Aklam.

Steve Boreham and Diana Ward have been working hard with the Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency to keep the Lode navigable and healthy. The IDB have dredged their stretch, but the EA has yet to confirm when and how they will dredge their stretch.

Steve Boreham succeeded in getting a 100% grant for the Parish to buy a defibrillator. We are grateful to the Village Centre for allowing us to install it on the wall to the side of the church. This will allow us to give rapid help to anyone suffering a heart attack or stroke. It was installed in time for this year's Fair, but was fortunately not needed. We will be arranging some training for anyone who would like to know how to use the equipment. The inspiration for this came from Swaffham Prior, where they have installed a defibrillator in their redundant phone box. The Parish Council considered the same arrangement, but decided that we should keep the public phone as mobile signals are poor here and we get a lot of ramblers and cyclists who might need a public 'phone.

Hilary Fielding has worked with the County Council and the National Trust to maintain public access to land around Reach and to try to maintain the bye ways and paths in safe condition.

The Events Team have run several events on behalf of the Parish Council over the year, with the highlight being the Christmas Tree lighting event. Hannah Baldwin represents the Parish Council on the Events team and ensures the Council is kept up to date with activities. We also worked closely with the Events Team for their first year of running the Fair. They had a tough act to follow and delivered a very successful and enjoyable event.

We have received complaints of dog fouling and dogs not under the control of their owners. Where possible we have followed these up with the owners and have made one referral to the dog warden after repeated reports of problems. We have installed an additional dog poo bin and are investigating the options for installing further bins. Bins need to be where they are likely to be used and readily accessible from the highway for emptying. Please let us know if you are aware of any places where we should install dog poo bins.

We have started mapping dog poo around the village, with a view to showing dog owners the impact they are having by not clearing up their dog's mess.

We have put a path in the cemetery to improve access, particularly for people in wheel chairs or pushchairs. We are currently commissioning work to restrict access for deer and other pests.

Steve Boreham and Charles Moseley have carried out surveys and boreholes which have shown that much of The Hythe was levelled up rather than down, suggesting that there will be surviving archaeology. Now that the sewage plant is no longer required, we were negotiating with Anglia Water to extend the land we lease from them on The Hythe and it seemed to be progressing well. Unfortunately, after a lot of positive feedback, they decided not to extend the land available to us. We will continue to work with them to see if we can find a way to get the redundant plant removed and open the space up.

Susan Bailey, our Clerk has persevered through frequent staff changes at Balfour Beatty to try to get the Heritage Lights installed around the Green. On 3 May we were told that the columns were on order, with an 8 week lead time. So we hope they will finally be installed this summer.

We have also liaised closely with Open Reach to bring fibre optic Broadband for the village. We agreed to lease them a small piece of the Green to site their box and ensured that they consulted with the County about the archaeological implications. Their original proposed site for the box would have been unsightly and might have restricted access for some of the Fair rides/caravans. So we worked with them to identify a better site. Residents now have a choice of superfast Broadband supplier.

During the year the Parish Council took full responsibility for the old Amenity Fund, now renamed the Grant Fund. Grants continue to be available for village projects and anyone wanting such a grant should apply to the Parish Council.

Our unaudited accounts for the year to 31 March 2017 show income £1,000 higher than budget, due to additional funding from ECDC and the wayleave payment from BT, and expenditure £1,000 lower than budget, from a variety of small underspends. This resulted in an excess of income over expenditure for the year of £2,300, as opposed to the £300 budgeted. We have £9,447 in unrestricted reserves. We therefore did not need to increase the Parish Precept for the current financial year.

I would like to close by thanking our previous County Councillor, David Brown, for all the work he has done while our Councillor. He has always supported the Parish Council in our dealings with the County Council and was supportive of Swaffham Prior Primary School's bid for funding for the refurbishment. I would also like to thank Nathan Bridgeman, who is stepping down from the Parish Council, for his work on the Council, especially his work with Cathy Tayleur on the children's playground which we will discuss later. And I would like to thank our Clerk, Susan Bailey and all my fellow Parish Councillors for the work they have done for Reach residents over the last year.

Charlotte Cane
11 May 2017

County Council Report

No report received.

District Council

Housing

As house prices become ever more expensive it becomes harder for people on average incomes to be able to purchase a property.

One way that ECDC can help is by assisting communities to set up Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to build affordable houses to rent.

At Stretham and Wilburton CLT the first houses at the 75 home development have been completed and CLT tenants have started to move in.

At Swaffham Prior the eight CLT properties are now all occupied. Haddenham CLT are currently working alongside a local developer Palace Green Homes to develop a scheme of 54 homes on a site near West End, Haddenham.

Thrift CLT have been granted planning permission for 13 homes in Soham. Eight of the homes will be owned and managed by the CLT. Six on an affordable rental basis and two on a shared ownership basis.

Local people in Fordham were beginning to feel that they were losing control over the future of their village. As such, a group of trustees have come together to ensure that the community has a voice in how their village will develop. Fordham CLT held a very well attended public meeting in January 2017 and are currently pursuing various possibilities within the village.

And lastly Swaffham Bulbeck will soon have a CLT.

Tourism and Town Centre Team

It has once again been a busy year for the Visit Ely. For a small team we have continued to move the business on in our endeavour to become more commercial. A summary of our activities are as follows:

We launched a new Visit Ely website along with new branding and logo (www.visitely.org.uk) as well as a dedicated Oliver Cromwell's House website (www.olivercromwellshouse.co.uk) and Eel Festival (www.elyeelfestival.co.uk).

Our Visit Ely Guide for 2017 took on a new A5 format and we came away from the traditional listing and made it more into a lifestyle magazine. We also increased print numbers and distribution and are immensely proud of its new look and reach.

We attended four Travel Shows this year to help promote our wonderful area, specifically aimed at the group market. We have worked and supported two key new tourism businesses – Ely's first Riverboat Hotel, The Waternymph and the Sake Brewery in Fordham due to open next Spring. We are very proud to have these in our tourism portfolio as they widen our appeal to visitors.

Oliver Cromwell's House has seen several new bespoke lines in its Gift Shop including a new beer which has this month been featured in East Magazine as one of the best beers in the region from a micro-brewery. We have introduced a new series for public tours and turned the whole house into a re-enactment market in January as part of our Lord Protector's Historical Fayre which worked extremely well. We have also launched a pop-up Escape Room which is a concept that is trending across the country and this has brought in significant income to the house as well as providing another attraction for Ely and the district. This activity has also increased our engagement with the corporate market. We have introduced on-line book ability for all our tours and events and this has greatly increased sales.

Infrastructure Update

Ely Southern Bypass

Construction of the bypass is underway. CCC is planning a public consultation on the layout of Station Road and the underpass (which will remain open to one-way traffic), the date of this is TBC.

The bypass is expected to open in Spring 2018.

District Leisure Centre

The ground works are complete and the steel frame for the building is now being erected. Work will continue through the summer to make the building watertight by autumn. The new centre is expected to open in Spring 2018.

Ely Cinema

The Arbuckle's restaurant opened in March and the cinema is due to open to the public on 12th May. The other food outlets will open once their fit-outs are complete. The underpass is also due to open on 12th May.

The Council is working with CCC to enable a regular bus service to the site.

Littleport Schools

Work is ongoing on the construction of the new education campus comprising secondary, primary (including a pre-school) and special educational needs (SEN) schools, sports facilities including playing fields and the erection of a new leisure centre are due to open September 2017.

Soham Railway Station

Network Rail has completed the report evaluating the different options for delivering a station at Soham. The conclusion of this is the recommendation that they design a 2-platform station but do so in a way that allows for phased delivery, so if the required track doubling work is delayed a 1 platform station could still be delivered.

Network Rail is looking at the costs and procurement route of this work.

Ely Commuter Car Park

The planning application for a new 128 space public car park on land South East of the former Strikes Bowling Alley has been approved. Work is due to start shortly and the car park is expected to open late this year.

Littleport Station Car Park

The planning application for 74 car parking spaces and 16 cycle spaces at Littleport Station has been approved. The car park is expected to open later this year.

Local Issues

We still have a problem with the high volume of cars passing through our ward on their way to Cambridge. As we do not have village planning envelopes because we do not have a Local plan, I am increasingly involved in opposing inappropriate planning applications in our open countryside.

Also, I have been involved in several disputes between Sanctuary Housing and its tenants.

There is still a problem with fly tipping, but it is not as bad as it has been in previous years.

Allen Alderson

Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities SPPC

No report received.

Village Centre Report

It has been a year of change, beginning with the handover of the fair to the Events Committee last September. Is it that long ago?

We have agreed to sell the tents and transfer the other equipment for the use of the fair organisers.

The hirings have remained steady with the Montessori providing the stable income and yoga, singers, drumming and photo club all providing welcome revenue.

With the transfer of the fair we have now moved to bi-monthly meetings and have a new treasurer in the shape of Andrew Trump who takes over from Hugh De Lacey.

We would like to thank Hugh for his Stirling work and wish him well on his move oop north.

VHC Chairman's Report -2017

Local Plan

A discussion took place regarding the additional sites for development that ECDC are now listing, since the closure of the public consultation. Although there are no sites within Reach there are several in the surrounding villages that will have an impact on the residents of Reach. The PC will again put forward the view that the additional housing will have a huge impact on the infrastructure in the area, roads schools, doctors surgery to name a few.

New Playground

Due to the two people who have been heading up this project being unable to attend this meeting, this discussion was deferred as there was insufficient information. The PC would like to open the discussion up to a wider section of the village, *the Clerk* will see if this is possible to be coordinated with the village sports day.

Reach Fair and Events Team

The events team is made up of four villagers who enjoy managing events for the enjoyment of villagers and their family and friends.

These events have included:

- Christmas Tree Lights Switch on
- Carols around the Christmas Tree
- Garden Parties to celebrate special occasions
- Beacon Lighting with Time Capsule
- Apple Day
- Reach Festival

Events have been funded from the Amenity Fund (now the Grant Fund), Donations and sales of merchandise such as calendars, tea-towels and bags – with the aim being to break even over the period of a year.

All events have generally been successful with some excitements as well! And the addition of power onto the Village Green was achieved to the benefit of all.

The opportunity then arose for the Team to take over the management of Reach Fair from the Village Centre Committee who, after many successful decided that enough was enough. This extended the remit of the team to be responsible for making a profit from an event for the first time.

This was a far bigger project than we had experienced before but because the Fair had been well-managed previously we had a lot of guidance in place and previous supporters of the Fair were happy to help us in the same way as they had done previously.

Minor changes were made in this first year and they included:

- Zones of activities
 - o Traditional items on Fair Green
 - o External Food Stalls grouped together on the Top Field
 - o Children's activities (inflatables) in one area of the Top Field
 - o Craft and Local Producers stalls in one area of the top field
- A clearer entrance with signed Information Tent to welcome visitors from the Burwell Road.
- Increased numbers of stalls on the top field – we reduced the cost from £65 to £40 but filled the field resulting in an increase of over £1,000 from the previous year (with many of the Festival stallholders coming along to the Fair).
- Improved advertising
 - o Website
 - o Social media
 - o Increased/improved street signage
- Increased internal signage and a free programme which highlighted the Top Field

Ultimately, if success can be judged by profit, the it worked well. The provisional surplus at this stage is £8,300 compared to a figure of £6,000 in 2016.

And if success is judged on feedback from stallholders, villagers and visitors, then the changes, in general were well accepted.

The surplus of £8,300 will be reduced by:

- £1,000 for the purchase of the tents
- £360 for the storage of the tents for a maximum of 6 months (£60 per month, payable in arrears)
- Insurance £290

This would leave a provisional surplus of £6,650 – all of which will be transferred to the Grants Fund.

The Fair went well but we learned from some mistakes

- Traffic Management and Car Parking was stretched
 - o The car park was full at one stage and only the cold weather stopped this being a bigger problem than it was
- Post Event activities were not as well managed as they should have been
 - o Straw bales
 - o Litter picking

Final thoughts

- The Events Team are happy to manage the 2018 Fair
- The storage of Events Team/Parish Council inventory remains an issue
- Inventory ownership
- Spending the Grants Fund money!

David Parr – on behalf of the other members of the Events Team - Hannah Baldwin, Claire Halpin-McDonald and Jo Mules

AOB

There as none.

Report collated by Susan Bailey – Parish Clerk.