



Helhoughton Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 20 May 2024, 6.30pm.

Parish Councillors present: Tim Harris (Chairman), Sean Millard (Vice Chair), Paul Flint, Melvin Lacey Freeman, Kit Price-Moss and Tom FitzPatrick (County Councillor). Also in attendance: Jodie Bond (Parish Clerk), there were 6 members of the public present.

1. **Welcome and introduction from the Chairman of the Council**

Cllr Harris welcomed all those present and introduced the various community groups within the village.

2. **To hear from the Village Hall Committee**

Jean Freeman reported that she has been re-elected as Chair and Chris Wright elected as Vice Chair. One long standing member has resigned, however the committee has decided not to replace this member at this time.

The reserves are healthy, with a current bank balance of £21,718.95

They intend to renovate the inside of the hall, including re-decorating, new curtains etc.

Work has been started on the boundary wall. This work was funded by a Solar Farm grant.

Cllr Moss-Price stated that once the wall is finished there will be more planters put out along the front to make it more appealing and they will keep folding chairs in the back for people to use at events.

The textile bank has been moved to allow work to the wall, and in doing so the front feet have broken as they had sunken into the tarmac, which the Parish Council may need to report to NNDC.

Questions were invited and Cllr Harris asked whether takings from the pub nights have increased from previous years, Jean replied that they vary, some are successful, usually over £100 is taken. The bar is run by volunteers, and has been opening at 7pm, which has attracted more families with children.

Yoga sessions continue every Wednesday during term time.

3. **To hear from the Solar Committee**

David Kettel reported that the AGM was held last night. Jean Freeman stood down as Chair but will remain on the Committee, while David Kettel was elected as Chairman.

The churchyard roadside wall issue is affected because the road is classified as a strategic route which suggests works can only occur during certain months of the year and is a traffic management issue. Cllr Harris is in touch with County Council to see what can be done to make things happen.

The Committee is still awaiting this year's funds, last year they arrived in mid-June. The walls, a community dance and the Airman's Arms kitchen refurb will take all that is carried forward plus this year's budget. A small amount has been held back.

Cllr Flint asked what other projects will be funded, David replied that as it's a grant-based scheme it's difficult to plan, it's up to the community to make applications.

Cllr Flint suggested encouraging parishioners to consider projects for the future and the Parish Council could submit applications for a grant once a plan or project is agreed.

A member of the public suggested publishing a 'shopping list' of ideas for the Parish Council to consider applying for.

Advertising is improving, so people can see where grants have been made and how to apply for a grant, which is via the Parish Council website and anyone can apply.

4. To hear from the Friends of Helhoughton Playground

Members of the group reported that an inspection was carried out and new signs were installed last year but there are only 2 of these signs left, the rest have disappeared.

The main gate padlock had somehow been broken so a new lock has been purchased, and the access code will be shared with key people to facilitate access. The code will be logged with emergency services if it is possible to do so.

A meeting with Tom Raynham is planned to discuss helping to flatten the football pitch, but this is to be confirmed. It is very uneven ground. A drainage pipe is being installed by the allotment site by the Estate to improve drainage. There is another section of land that could be flattened to extend the play area, update to follow. A Solar application would be considered for some play equipment for under 8's.

5. To hear from Kit Price-Moss of All Saints Church

Cllr Price-Moss reported that since Rev Bundock retired 3 years ago there has not been a priest, so retired clergy have been coming in to run services in the interim.

The Diocese has decided to appoint a permanent clergy person for the whole benefice and the hope is that they will bring their family with them. They will reside in East Rudham. West Raynham rectory is to be sold. The new clergy interviews will be held in July and representatives from each parish will be allowed to meet the perspective clergy and ask questions.

An inspector from the Diocese is coming to look at the building in a few weeks' time.

The grass in the churchyard is cared for by a group that is paid for by Parish Council.

A local wildlife group has assessed the area but have not reported back yet.

FACT have been to clear the overgrowth and uncovered gravestones which have been exposed, and some are damaged. A member of the public has recently said it looks lovely and tidy and looks so much better.

Cllr Harris wished to thank the Estate for removing the debris which was cleared during tidying sessions. The church was full at Christmas and Easter, with standing room only at Easter which is positive news.

6. To hear from Tim Harris with the Parish Council Chairman's report

The Parish Council continues to pay the bills, do its best to maintain the open spaces that we are responsible for and keep streetlights on, where they are wanted.

The PCs view on planning applications has changed slightly, we have agreed a principle that we will not express a positive or negative comment unless there is a clear benefit or detriment to the village. If it enhances the village we would be happy to support, otherwise we will remain neutral.

Speed is continuing to be monitored with thanks to Rob Lodge and Richard Tree.

We still see the odd high speed, but the average is better than most villages, following conversations with local police, so there won't be any intervention from them but we will continue to monitor it.

We are actively working on keeping dog fouling to a minimum, even though it's the NNDC remit, there is an increasing problem, but we plan to communicate with NNDC more in the future.

From a financial perspective we have around £8000 in reserves, which is down on last year at year end, so we are spending more, largely due to inflation. Our income last year also included a large payment for a burial.

The precept was increased for this current financial year by 2%.

There was a big rise a few years ago so a small increase will maintain our situation with inflation although it is difficult to predict our future costs.

Cllr Harris wished to thank the public for attending meetings along with fellow Councillors and the Clerk. Questions were invited but there were none.

7. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2024

The minutes were approved without amendment and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

8. AOB

There were none.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.35pm.

Signed by Chairman: Date: