

Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall on the 23rd of April 2013

Vice Chairman, Mr Ian Cattermole opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed members of the public

Present:

Councillors, Mrs E Handy, Mrs J Delasalle, Ms P Dowling, Mr R Hewitt, District Councillor, Mr K Weeks, a number of representatives from village groups and the Clerk Mr M Mortimer.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr R Aves, Mr B Claybrook, Mrs L Pearce, Mrs J Sumpter and County Councillor Spratt.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 24th of April 2012

Copies had been made available at the meeting and the minutes were approved and signed

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising

4. Annual Report of the Parish Council

Mr Cattermole, standing in as Chairman, spoke first of the website describing it as a wonderful tool for communication and thanked Margaret Harris for her unstinting efforts. He thanked Mr Hewitt for maintaining the constant pressure on the Highways department that seems to be necessary. He was pleased to report that the Parish Council had been able to make donations to several local organisations. With regard to the thorny issue of traffic in The Street, Fersfield he said the Parish Council needed to bite the bullet and he suggested setting up a sub-committee. Mr Cattermole complimented all those concerned with the Jubilee celebrations which had been a great success. Turning to the parish charities he thanked Mrs Handy for her Herculean efforts in combining the charities under the trusteeship of the Parish Council, a long process which he hoped was approaching its end.

Concluding he said he wanted to thank, above all, Mr Rodger Aves for his constant support of the community, an expression which was warmly endorsed by everyone.

A copy of the report is in the minute book.

5. Statement of Accounts for the year to 31st March 2012

The Parish Clerk presented a statement of the Parish Council's Accounts for the year to 31st March 2013. A copy of the statement is included in the minute book.

6. Reports from Charities

Mrs Handy spoke for the three charities which the trustees were in the process of combining under the name of the Fuel Allotment Charity. The land belonging to it is currently being registered at the Land Registry.

Report in the minute book.

Mr Canfer reported on the Elizabeth Barker Charity, the accounts for which were now up to date. The Parish(School) Account stood at £1041.03 and the Church Account at £2173.60.

Report in the minute book.

7. To receive a report from the Chair of the School Governors.

The Clerk read a report from the Head, Mr Gavin King, which described improvements that had taken place and stated that the school had achieved its best ever SATs results.

Report in the minute book

8. Reports from Parish Organizations:

Reports were given by:

Fersfield PCC

Mrs Sumpter provide a very positive report on a well supported church. Regular and well attended services were complemented by successful fund raising activities.

A copy of the report is in the minute book.

Bressingham PCC

Mrs Burroughes gave a report stating that the PCC had managed to pay its Parish Share but that she had real fears for the future of the church. She said what the church needed was a "Friends of the Church" group or association, like Fersfield, that could raise funds to meet the escalating costs. Everyone agreed that it would be a tragedy if the church were to close. On a more positive note Mrs Burroughes described the re-interring at the church of the skeleton found during the renovations of the Chequers.

Report in the minute book.

The Methodist Church

Mr Sayer, the lay preacher, said they were a Family Friendly Society of the Thetford, Mildenhall and Diss Methodist circuit with services at 10.30 on Sundays. Being an Ecumenical Church he explained that they exchange pulpits with local Anglican churches every month.

Report in the minute book.

Bressingham Village Drama Group

Mrs Webb reported yet another highly successful year having raised in the region of £2200 for the Village Hall, with a number of productions including Smalls Talk and the panto, The Beauty Sleeping. Something of a blessing in disguise was the failure of the lighting to meet current standards. Although costly to put right, and Mrs Webb thanked the Town Lands Charity for its donation, the result is a much tidier system with the bonus of no need to hire lights in the future.

Report in the minute book.

Bressingham & District Ladies' Club

Mrs Peachey gave a report on a busy year hearing about the activities of the East Coast Truckers, and a year in the life of Norwich Cathedral, amongst other topics. She announced that the group had been able to make a donation of £100 to Cancer Research..

A full report is in the minute book.

Bressingham and Fersfield Village Hall and Recreation Association

Mr Byrne, as Chairman, gave a report. It pointed out that a number of groups and organisations used the Village Hall and the playing field and that it enhanced the life of both villages. He thanked the committee members for all their work. Mr Byrne thanked in particular those who looked after the garden and Mr Seagers for his work on the building. He pointed out that there were costs to be met in the future regarding the Hall but that wasn't stopping the committee considering developments such as new play equipment or even providing a community cinema.

The Allotment Association

Mr Traynier described the work that allotment holders had carried out to return the site to a decent condition where potential allotment holders would want to come. The local media was reporting on the improvements and the availability of plots. Future plans include hardcoring paths and providing a car parking area.

Mr Cattermole said those involved deserved to be proud of what they were achieving. Report in the minute book.

Footpaths

Mr Traynier reported that he had surveyed all 40 of the parish footpaths and that he would do his best to make sure all paths, styles and so on were kept up to standard. He explained a numbering system he was introducing so that walkers could report problems to him with great accuracy.

The Village Website

Mrs Handy read a report prepared by Mrs Harris revealing that usage was continuing to increase with over 500 visits over the past month mostly to the gallery and market place pages as well as the home page of course. Mrs Harris expressed the view that the site should be registered under the Data Protection Act as it was holding email addresses.

Report in the minute book.

9. Report from Norfolk County Council

Councillor Spratt sent a report which the Clerk read. In it he said that he had introduced provision of £1 million pounds for parish councils aimed at making villages safer by providing kerbing, paths and so on. He had also completed the roll out of the Rangers scheme and kept the county farms in the domain of the County Council. Mr Spratt reported that over the last three years the number of mortalities on Norfolk's roads had been halved.

Report in the minute book.

10. Report from South Norfolk District Council

District Councillor Weeks reported that the finances of South Norfolk Council were sound and that staff had been flexible in accepting necessary changes. In fact, he said, that the council was actually beginning to employ more people. Mr Weeks did however express some concern over the policy of the council to invest in property in its search for a decent return on its capital which he felt could involve too much risk. Another area where he had concerns was the plan of central government to make funds available to local authorities and for those authorities to consult their voters on how best to spend some of it. Mr Weeks felt that the cost of establishing voters wishes could be too expensive. On the sometimes touchy subject of recycling Mr Weeks explained that if the council were to find a new partner in its recycling activity it might be possible to collect things like yoghurt pots in the future.

11. Any Other Business

Mrs Burroughes reiterated her concerns for the future of Bressingham Church and asked the Parish Council to urge people to help. She also asked if an additional trustee could be found for the Elizabeth Barker Charity.

Several people commented on the number of building lorries going to the airfield though nobody had any explanation. Mr Hewitt praised the school for its recent progress saying it was regaining some of the quality it had a decade ago.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.