

MINUTES OF EARL SOHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Thursday 16th April 2015 at 7.30 pm in Earl Soham Village Hall

1.Present: Richard Tinkler (Chair) Celia Peacher, John Hulme, Jackie Barrow, Mark Rutherford, Chris Pratt, Jane Page (Clerk) Cllr Peter Bellfield

Apologies: Cllrs Andrew Patterson, Lucy Murrell

Public: Mrs L Tinkler, Mrs J Rothery, Mrs T Heron, Mr M Sargeantson , Mrs P Mander, Mr Mrs P Russell, Mr Mrs G Vellacott, Dr R Rowell, Mrs P Bellfield

The meeting opened at 7.30pm

There were no declarations of interest

The Minutes of the APM of 3rd April 2014 were approved

The Chairman welcomed the members :

Cllr Bellfield presented his report

County Councillor's report for 2014/15

A personal comment

From a personal point of view this is a year which I would rather forget. However I am now making good progress and it will be nice to be able to drive again. I have nothing but praise for the NHS, Ipswich hospital and all those who work in the three specialist areas that have treated me in the last twelve months, not forgetting my own GP. My gratitude to them all is immense.

Unfortunately this has meant that I have not been able to provide the service to you all which I would like, particularly in being unable to attend meetings which help me to appreciate the problems and concerns in the 26 parishes I represent. My apologies , but I hope that from this summer "normal service will resume"

Council Tax

I am sure that you all know that for the fifth year in a row the County Council has frozen council tax. This means that Suffolk residents will not pay any more than they did in 2010/11. We have delivered savings of £130m over the last four years. However, if central government policies remain unchanged, we estimate that we will have to make further savings of £120 over the next three years, having started with £38.2 for the forthcoming year. A significant proportion on the savings have been achieved by a reduction in the workforce of 47% across all council services.

Two major operational changes

As far as what has happened at the County Council, two significant service changed responsibility in order to reduce costs just before or in the early part of the year. The CSD services which were in partnership with BT, were brought back in house after ten years, and the Highways maintenance contract was put out Kier MG.

CSD contract

The transfer of the CSD contract, which included the financial, IT and HR activities of the council, came back into our direct responsibility seamlessly. Even the few adverse comments which we were getting towards the end of the contract seem to have dried up. It is also saving us money.

Highways contract

The transfer of all highways maintenance to Kier MG has proved a very different matter. To start with we negotiated the contract with May Gurney with whom we had had a good relationship, but at the last minute they were acquired by Kier. The idea was that the council staff would transfer to Kier MG under the normal arrangements, but some of the more important staff decided to take redundancy where it was offered, thus resulting in a shortage in the workforce. It seems that the council did not insist in adequate corrective action being taken soon enough, although us Councillors were complaining to the highways department and the Cabinet member because of the frustration you and we were having in getting anything done. I am glad to say that it all came to a head in the second half of last year when meetings at the highest level within Kier MG produced action on their part. A list of all outstanding work was drawn up and given priority and most has been undertaken. However we discovered subsequently that a number of tasks which councillors and parishes thought were outstanding had never got on to the outstanding list, that is the reason why we still have work outstanding for more than a year but it is now being scheduled.

Highways fault reporting tool

A very important new highways fault reporting tool was introduced earlier this year and any member of the public can use this system by going to www.suffolk.gov.uk/report-a-highways-problem. The new highways reporting tool which allows photographs to be up loaded can be accessed by tablets and mobiles. This means that people can access the map on the go and these will be recorded and actioned straight away. The tool also allows anyone to follow up the report to see the progress being made to complete the work. This means that if any member of the public sees a highways maintenance problem they can report it there and then.

Energy from waste

Towards the end of last year our new energy from waste plant at Great Blackenham was commissioned. This was a major success for the staff responsible because we had relatively little opposition to the development, unlike Norfolk where the cancellation of the contract has cost the council over £30m. On top of that the plant was opened on time and on budget, again quite an achievement for a Government body.

High speed broadband

During the year we put in a second tranche of £10m towards high speed broad-band for Suffolk which should mean that 95% of the County will have improved speeds by the end of 2017. The latest news is that 75,000 premises are now connected to high-speed fibre broadband thanks to the Better Broadband for Suffolk programme.

Young people's employment centre

Last November we, in collaboration with other organisations, opened in Ipswich the very first young people's employment centre in the country for 16 to 24 year olds. What is notable about this project is that it is not just an employment centre but they are trained how to write CVs and approach interviews. In the first month more than 500 young had made use of the centre.

Education

Under the councils new School Improvement Strategy we have recently sent out the second risk-rating letter in which each school is rated red, amber or green, based on information the school has provided as well as government data. This is all part of the work we are doing to keep on top of poor performing schools and to be able to pin point where assistance to improve their outturn is required. Meanwhile last year's exam results showed an improvement at all levels, in some cases reaching national levels, but there is still a long way to go.

Locality and minor highways grants

During the year I was very pleased to be able to help various people and organisations with financial assistance, the locality grant being over- subscribed. However, due to the problems mentioned earlier, the highways grant was not fully utilised, but I am able to carry the balance forward to this year.

As always feel free to telephone me on 01473 735259 or e-mail on peter.bellfield @suffolk.gov.uk for any assistance you may require with the County Council.

Peter Bellfield, County Councillor for the Carlford Division

Public comment:

Speeding traffic was raised and the possibility of Community Speed Watch was introduced. Cllr Bellfield and Cllr Snell have jointly funded a speed gun for Easton which if maintenance costs are shared could be used by both villages. Clerk will arrange training and facilitate this

Mr Sergeantson raised the ongoing problem of the encroaching/overgrown verge by the surgery. This is Highways responsibility - Clerk will pursue the matter

There is continuing erosion of the Green. Cllr Bellfield confirmed lack of funding for helping with this. Clerk will contact Highways for a site visit to see what lawful measures the PC could undertake.

Chairman's Report for the Earl Soham Parish Meeting 16th April 2015

- as last year, the Village Hall Annual Meeting will be held separately this Saturday, 18th April, at 5.00 pm. We have had no changes to the Parish Council in the last year but go to Election on May 7th this year.
- Our thanks go to Cllr Peter Bellfield our County Councillor and to Cllr Bob Snell our District Councillor for their continuing support and interest in our parish and their attendance and reports at our meetings.
- Again, there have been few planning applications over the year. Work has started on the development of the land opposite Glebe cottages. Work has not yet started on the two new homes in Low Road and is understood that the change of use of the shop/brewery site is not being proceeded with at the present time. At this moment in time, there is no application submitted for the development of the land opposite Street Farm in Brandeston Road.
- The continued erosion of the green and grass verges is still a major concern and the plan to see if we can put some substantial posts in ourselves during the Summer last year have not yet materialised.
- The Precept for 2015/16 has been set at £6660.00 an increase of £140 over 2014/15. £121.19 will come from a Government Grant. Our costs are budgeted to be £6851.00, but this allows for training courses and some expenses which may not actually be incurred. The Precept has been increased again slightly in order to bring the finances to a level necessary to meet expected increases in costs due to proposed developments in the future and maintain reserves which have been allowed to fall below a safe minimum.
- The Allotments continue to thrive and have become a great community asset. Sadly, some tools have been stolen and villagers are asked to report any suspicious behaviour.

- The Christmas Tree on the village green appears to have been a success and at no cost to the ratepayers, thanks to the generous donations from local businesses. Special thanks go to Cllr Mark Rutherford for installing the lights, charging and changing the batteries. Thanks also to Cllr Andrew Patterson and Paul Anderson for erecting the tree.

- A vote of thanks is due to the following people:

Grass cutting and maintenance – Andrew Patterson and David Peacher

The Village Hall Management Committee

Head teacher (Karl Pearce) and shopkeeper (John Hutton).

PCSO Hassler for his dedicated support

Our Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators

Our band of litter pickers led by Roger Sykes

Marion Willets for managing the Events page on the Village website

And our Councillors and Clerk who continue to serve this parish

No report SCDC

No report School

Police Report - received too late to be read at the meeting

This report has been prepared by

PCSO 3034 HASSLER based at Framlingham Safer Neighbourhood Team.

CRIME UPDATE

There has been **11** reported crimes from **(31st of March 2014 through to 31st of March 2015)** .

- 1) **2 x Burglary – Other building**
- 2) **1 x Burglary – Dwelling**
- 3) **1 x Burglary – Dwelling with intent**
- 4) **3 x Criminal damage – Vehicle**
- 5) **1 x Criminal damage – Dwelling**
- 6) **2 x Theft – Other**
- 7) **1x Theft – From shop**

Within the same period last year there were **23** reported crimes within the Earl Soham Parish.

HOW DOES THIS COMPARE WITH OTHER PARISHES NEAR TO EARL SOHAM
DURING THE SAME TIME PERIOD (31 / 03 / 2014 to 31 / 03 / 2015)

BRANDESTON 6

SAXTEAD 6

KETTLEBURGH 3

LEATHERINGHAM 1
CRETINGHAM 6
FRAMLINGHAM 102
WICKHAM MARKET 84

Police Connect

For those of you that haven't signed up for the New Police Connect yet, please don't forget about it!

This is replacing Police Direct.

The service is free, easy to use and is proving to be a very valuable policing tool.

The service doesn't just assist us it also benefits you. You will receive regular updates either via text, email or landline letting you know what is happening in your area.

Leaflets are available at all police stations or visit our website.

suffolk.police.uk/policeconnect

CONTACTING THE POLICE

YOUR LOCAL OFFICERS ARE:

PC 1410 BURT
PCSO 3034 HASSLER
PCSO 3051 MANN

PCSO 3195 HINTON

In an emergency always dial 999

Friends of St Mary's report - Dr R Rowell

St Marys continues to prosper with fund raising to raise money for the fabric of the church continuing. £650 was raised at the quiznight, there will be a golf day on 2nd October and a bridge afternoon on 24th September. There is a leak over the chancel currently awaiting attention. The church also has some charity funding available

Townlands Trust Report - Dr R Rowell

The vehicular bridge to Townlands Trust field has been replaced largely thanks to the assistance given by Longstaffes. The field is to be used for thatching straw with it's traditional methods.

Jubilee Wood - no report but a tree was planted by the PC earlier in the year to commemorate WWI

The Henchman Club Educational Trust - Mrs Jo Rothery

This Trust has a fund of £100 to be awarded to any village person of under 21 for secondary education - college or university

The Christmas Tree on the Green was a great success and there is support for this practice to continue

There was some support to try the Coffee Caravan in Earl Soham - Clerk will arrange this

Mr Sargeantson introduced his idea to form a monthly walking group - the first taking place on May 16th leaving the village hall at 1.45pm

Cllr C Pratt said that the Welcome Leaflet produced by the PC is ready

The culvert by the surgery is being compromised by fallen trees and debris and attention was drawn to the fact that much of the drainage system is due for dredging - this is the responsibility of each landowner. The Clerk will contact each owner requesting that a joint effort is made - Mrs J Rothery will assist with details

The Meeting closed at 8.40pm