

GREATFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

25th May 2021 at 7:30pm at the Village Hall

Present

Cllr David Anderson, Cllr Phil Britton, Cllr Gemma Taylor, Cllr Natalie Pretsell, Cllr Jason Halsey; District Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, District & County Cllr Kelham Cooke; Margaret Anderson, Nigel & Elizabeth Ashby, Ibis Channell, Bridget Everitt, Bob French, Alison Horton, Mike Stonestreet, Ann Sumner and Lois Webb.

Opening of meeting

Acting Chair, Phil welcomed everyone to the meeting, the first face-to-face meeting in over a year.

Apologies for absence

Richard McDermott, Elaine Hawkins, Popsy & Malcolm Wells, Dani Wheeler, Chris Granville-White

Approval of Minutes from APM May 2020

Proposed by David Anderson, seconded by Gemma Taylor.

Chair's report

Cllr Phil Britton, Acting Chair, gave a report on behalf of the Parish Council.

Introduction

It has been, and continues to be, a most challenging year for the whole world, the country and for the community of Greatford. The pandemic forced the Parish Council to continue to meet via Zoom for the whole of 2020 as it was the only Covid compliant means of doing so, and attendance at the meetings was for the most part significantly higher than the previous few 'in person' meetings that were held in the village hall.

Despite the pandemic and the challenges it created the Parish Council has continued to function, and has achieved a great deal in the preceding 12 months.

Planning

The council has engaged with local planning officers, highways officers, local councillors and our local MP to ensure that our concerns over the proposed gravel quarry on the eastern border of the parish are heard, in particular we are requesting a weight limit for the village and the roads leading off King Street so as to exclude quarry trucks from the village, we are also opposing the development on the grounds of road safety along King Street, damage to the environment, wild life habitat and the potential damage to the

archaeological heritage of the site. We will have the opportunity to air our concerns at a yet to be organised meeting of the planning committee.

Most of the other planning applications within the Parish in the preceding year were for house extensions and removal / lopping of trees, and all but one were approved.

Playing field

The council and a community of volunteers have been engaged in a large project to improve the facilities on the playing field. This project has been driven by David Anderson who has been tireless in his pursuit of grant funding, free resources, donations and volunteer help for the project.

The project has involved:

- Removing ivy and dead trees along the eastern boundary and planting a new boundary hedge with a more diverse species mix.
- Planting a new community orchard with local heritage fruit trees, and an information lectern.
- Installing new bench seating.
- Installing a playground slide (thanks to Ross Dykes & Knead Pubs for donating the slide, and to Jim Coulam for the at cost refurbishment of the slide).
- Levelling out some of the 'dips and rises' (thanks to Dave from D1 Excavations for his time, expertise and equipment, and to British Sugar for the donations of 50t of top soil).
- Refurbishing the climbing frame to make it compliant with regulations and installing a new basketball backboard and hoop (thanks to Bob French for his work on this).
- Provision of play equipment for villagers use (yet to be completed).

David has delivered well in excess of the initial project aims but within the original project budget, thank you David.

Play equipment

The playground equipment has been subject to 2 inspections this year as the new slide had to be inspected post installation and it was cost effective to assess the rest of the equipment again at this time. The second report confirmed that repair work undertaken was satisfactory with only a few minor issues being raised. Thanks to Dani Wheeler for her help liaising with the inspectors.

Highways

The pandemic and associated restrictions has led to parishioners spending more time at home, and this has led to greater engagement with the village and its surroundings, footpaths have been well used and have been maintained & upgraded to reflect this. Thanks again to Bob French who has been busy keeping the footpaths in good repair. There have also been recent efforts by the highways department to repair the many potholes on some of the roads around the village.

Community Activities

Covid restrictions have limited group social activities with events such as 'meet the neighbours' being unable to take place. However there have been some community activities to engage with such as the pebble art initiative with many decorative pebbles and stones being painted and distributed around the village by children and adults. Thanks to Gemma Taylor for this great idea to add interest to our walks around the village. Gemma and Ross Edgar also organised the socially distanced construction by local children and adults of 2 bug hotels on the playing field.

Flooding

Unfortunately the village was subject to flooding in late 2020 and early 2021, Chris Granville-White our flood warden has been very active in identifying the source of the flood water and trying to mitigate its effects on the village by clearing the small waterways of the village, and engaging with the environment agency to do so for the main river. Much more detail is contained within Chris' Flood Warden reports, Thank you Chris and also Mike Stonestreet (assistant flood warden) for your continued efforts to keep us dry!

Councillors

The positions on the council saw some change during the past year with the resignation of the Chair Jon Workman and the disqualification of Councillor Ibis Channel for non-attendance at the (Zoom) meetings.

The vacant positions were filled by co-option from a group of 4 candidates with Jason Halsey and Natalie Pretsall joining the council in March 2021.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Jon and Ibis for their significant contributions to the council, and to the village over their many years of service on the Parish Council.

Website

Another significant, and largely unseen project of the past year has been the migration of the village website to a new platform. Thank you to our parish Clerk Helen Britton for completing this on time. The website is where all of the parish council meeting agendas, minutes and reports can be found, as well as information about the village, forthcoming events, planning applications and much more. Please use it and if you have any contributions please for the website please let Helen know.

Summary

In summary it has been quite an eventful year for all manner of reasons, however Greatford remains a great place to live and we look forward to the easing of Covid restrictions so that the community can get together again and fully utilise all of the amenities of the village.

Financial report - Year end accounts

Responsible Financial Officer, Cllr David Anderson, distributed copies of the accounts for the year ending 31st 2021.

Total receipts of £7685 were £2958 higher than last year mainly due to £2850 in generous grants from SKDC and LCC and donations from villagers towards the Playing Field projects.

Total payments of £9842 were £5901 higher than last year.

Recurring costs of £1982 were close to last year.

The Playing Field project's scope was considerably increased to include a significant refurbishment of the swings and play bars, and a high quality information lectern was decided on as was the levelling of the field.

A strimmer and hedge cutter were purchased to help Bob French with the tremendous work that he does in keeping the village tidy.

The gross project cost for 2020/21 was £6020 and net of grants £2830, £1200 above the two year budget.

Further costs have been incurred in 2021/22 but we will receive a VAT refund of £1062 mainly relating to the project.

The net deficit was £2157 which reduced the total cash funds to £5634 close to the November forecast.

Report from Councillor, Rosemary Trollope Bellew, Deepings West and Rural

Rosemary spoke for the last time as the County Council representative and highlighted that Greatford is now represented by Cllr Ashley Baxter. She was delighted that the potholes and finger-post sign to Greatford have been repaired. She has donated grant money, including to Greatford in support of the playing field project. Rosemary reported that Cllr Robert Reid will take up the case of Greatford.

Rosemary thanked everyone for their support over the last 4 years and is looking forward to representing Greatford as District Councillor.

Phil thanked Rosemary for her support.

Report from Cllr Kelham Cooke, Leader of SKDC

Kelham gave a report with the main points as follows:

18,000 workers were given support through the SK Working Hub and the fact that Customer Services remained open throughout the pandemic.

80,000 bins have continued to be collected every week.

The pandemic has caused financial loss for the district but the Cultural Recovery Fund has led to Stamford Arts Centre and Bourne Corn Exchange being refurbished. There is a 'Welcome Back' fund available to support the reopening of businesses and Kelham encouraged people to take this up. Community Fund Grants are also available. SK is now running the local leisure centres and this is working well. Recently, the 100,000th vaccination against Covid19 was given. Face-to-face council meetings are now law and there is lobbying for hybrid meetings to take place. There have been no cuts to frontline services.

Responding to a query from a parishioner, Kelham reported that the refuse collectors have received a £50 bonus and a pay increase in recognition of their work, and Kelham visited the depot to speak directly with the workers.

Report from the Chair of the Greatford Village Hall Committee

Alison Horton gave a report on behalf of Ricard McDermott and the Village Hall committee.

There has not been a huge amount of activity in the Hall over the past 12 months for obvious reasons. However the Hall Committee has still been busy:

- The Hall was closed in line with government regulations apart from a few months in the autumn, but hall hire during those months were very sparse as these were restricted by the rule of 6.
- The Hall has been able to benefit from some government grants, thanks to the hard work of Alison Horton and Margaret Anderson. This has been a real benefit to the Hall during a time when our income has been seriously hit.
- That has enabled us to have:
 - the floor fully refurbished, repaired and upgraded,
 - some work to the front window and roof,
 - new rear windows and doors to be replaced providing better insulation and security (due to happen at the beginning of June).
 - external painting and decoration is programmed for August.
- Acquisition of smaller items: paper towel dispensers, microwave, hoover for refurbished floor has also been completed.

- The Committee have further/future plans including internal decoration, and possible improvement to the back room.
- The AGM is planned for July. This is an open meeting and we will present the usual items and updates including a full financial report at the GVHMC AGM in July. It is also an opportunity for us to gain ideas from the village.
- We are delighted to confirm that Lois Webb has agreed to become a trustee. There is still room for another one
- The Committee would also be keen to welcome another 2-3 members if anyone was keen to get involved. We are currently a small group of 7.
- Some regular bookings are restarting including the dog training and clarinet class. We have also benefited from an art group.
- However the hall does need more regular bookings, as some of our previous hirers will not be returning.
- We would also welcome ideas for events in the Hall.
- Harry McDermott has been doing odd jobs such as painting and some cleaning of the hall plus volunteering as part of the working party to help with the Playing Field Project for his Duke of Edinburgh Award.

All are welcome to the Village Hall Committee AGFM in July and encouraged to give their ideas. The committee is seeking a Trustee and committee members. For information about this, speak to members of the committee.

Miscellaneous

The Acting Chair permitted ex-councillor, Ibis Channell, to speak. She pointed out ways that she has contributed to preserving the history of Greatford, such as the engraving above the old school doors, and that she will continue to help and work for the good of the village.

The meeting closed at 8:05pm