

# **Greatford Parish Council**

## **Annual Parish Meeting**

**May 21st 2024**

### **Present:**

District Cllr Rosemary, Trollope- Bellew, District Cllr Vanessa Smith, Parish Cllr Gemma Taylor (Vice Chair), Cllr Tony Barker, Cllr Jason Halsey (RFO), Cllr Natalie Pretsell (and acting as Clerk), Nigel Ashby, Rachel Barron-Clark, Jeremy Hockham, Kerry Hockham, Lois Webb.

### **Apologies:**

Cllr Philip Britton, Helen Britton, Ibis Channell, Ann Sumner.

### **Approval of Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2023:**

Proposed by Cllr Jason Halsey, seconded by Cllr Tony Barker.

### **Chair's report from Cllr Philip Britton**

The preceding year has been yet another busy one for the members of Greatford Parish Council and at the time of writing the workload shows no sign of abating!

The start of the year saw us continuing to represent the village in opposing the Mallard Pass Solar Farm with members of The Council attending and contributing at the planning enquiries, and also writing further representations to the planning inspectorate on a number of subjects. At the time of writing the Secretary of State has delayed the decision as to whether to grant a development consent order. The Parish Council has also reviewed numerous local planning applications and consultations and made comments or representations where appropriate.

The summer of 2023 saw another successful summer playscheme for the children associated with the village to enjoy. The scheme was again funded by a National Lottery Grant applied for by the Parish Council which paid for the playscheme provider, and the hire and cleaning costs of the village hall.

The Parish Council has maintained village assets including the playing field hedge and grass, as well as the play equipment which is coming to the end of its life and will need replacing over the next few years, and this will be a focus for the coming year.

The Parish Council would like to thank those parishioners who have involved themselves in maintaining our village through litter picking, path clearing and removing fallen trees and branches in the playing field and many other

Unfortunately the life of the village since the New Year has been dominated by the unprecedented flooding of the 3rd January 2024 with many residents unable to live in Greatford since the flood and likely many further months at the time of writing. While the flood was ongoing members of the Parish Council directed the fire brigade to help some of our more vulnerable parishioners and in the immediate aftermath of the flood arranged for portaloos to be distributed around the village when

the sewage system failed. On this subject, I would like to thank Deeping Lions & SKDC who ultimately provided these facilities in our time of need. Following the flood The Parish Council instigated the formation of a new 'flood group', headed up by Cllr Jason Halsey and a number of other volunteers, including our former Flood Warden Chris Granville-White who has stepped down after more than ten years but is still active in the flood group. Thank you Chris for all of your hard work as our Flood Warden. The new flood group has developed a number of strategies that they are pursuing to prevent flood damage to the village in the future and details of this are in the Flood Warden's report.

While the flood of January 3rd was an unprecedented disaster for our village the 'silver lining' was the community spirit and communication among villagers that followed, in particular the setting up of the village Whatsapp group and the community soup lunches which have helped us to share our experiences and also knowledge.

As ever Greatford is a great place to live and work with tremendous community spirit that has been strengthened by the recent adversities that we have faced and overcome together.

### **Financial report from Cllr Jason Halsey (Responsible Financial Officer for Greatford PC):**

The end of year balance is £8539.81 which includes a VAT reclaim of £146.30 this year. The Reserve Account, which paid a small amount of interest (£13), is now closed and the funds were transferred to the main account to make accounting and auditing much easier. The Parish Council will continue to look to online accounting in the future. There has not been much expenditure this year outside of the budget and there is a healthy balance of funds available. The refurbishment of the play-equipment, which was delayed due to the flooding, will be costed out next year. The accounts will be audited imminently and the annual return will be completed at the next meeting on June 25th 2024.

### **Report from District Councillor, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew:**

It has been a funny year since the elections last May. Some Councillors are still trying to get used to the changes that have taken place. Thanks given to fellow Ward Councillor, Vanessa, for her support during this time.

### **Report from District Councillor Vanessa Smith:**

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have been the District Councillor for Greatford over the past year. Last May saw a change in Leadership at SKDC with the Independents, Greens and Liberal Democrats forming a majority group. The Council was initially led by Cllr Cleaver before Cllr Baxter took over in January 2024.

The Council is working to improve its housing provision, deliver good value for money, engage more with communities, improve transparency, and meet the challenges of climate change. Over the past year funds have been put aside to help with the reopening of Deeping Leisure Centre and LED street lighting has been approved. Twin-stream recycling, with separate paper and card collection, has been rolled out. Twelve houses were purchased in Langtoft initially for Ukrainian refugees which later reverted to social housing. Money has been made available for various community projects. Funding for a tree officer has now been included in the SKDC budget. The rise in the SKDC's proportion of the Council Tax was limited to 3%. For the residents of Greatford the most notable event of the past year has obviously been the flooding caused by Storm Henk. SKDC assisted during the flooding itself and later the clean up operation. Toilets and skips were provided. Over the past year I have done my best to support the community and raise issues that have been

discussed with me with the council, particularly with regards to the flooding. I have tried to keep everyone up to date with information from SKDC. I have spoken up for residents. I am grateful for the ongoing support.

The Parish Council put on file their thanks from the village for SKDC in providing skips and toilets in the aftermath of the flooding in January.

**Report from Chair of Greatford Village Hall Management Committee**

No report submitted

Close of meeting of 7:30pm