

GREATFORD

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 7:00pm

at the Village Hall

Present

Phil Britton, Gemma Taylor, Tony Barker, Jason Halsey, Natalie Pretsell, Cazz Anders, Elizabeth and Nigel Ashby, Rev. Aran Beesley, Toni Butcher, Rachel and Richard Barron-Clark, Helen Britton, Rod Campbell, Ibis Channell, Steve Dean, Ross Edgar, Sheran Essex, Bridget Everitt, James Everitt, Cheryl Foreman, Peter Essex, Bob French, Chester and Kate Gilbert, Chris and Diana Granville-White, Alison Horton.

Opening of meeting

The meeting was chaired by Phil Britton and he welcomed the assembled parishioners.

Apologies for absence

Kerry Hockham, Jeremy Hockham, Caroline Nathan, Mark Imray, Mareia Imray, Cllr Ashley Baxter.

Approval of Minutes from APM May 2024

Proposed by Gemma Taylor, seconded by Tony Barker.

Chair's report

Introduction

The preceding year has unfortunately seen yet more upheaval for residents with another flood event on 6/1/2025 causing damage to property and belongings for some residents.

Planning

A number of applications for planning have been received and commented upon by the parish council, most applications were approved but some more contentious applications were opposed by the Parish Council and did not gain approval.

An application to vary the planning conditions for the proposed quarry on King Street was opposed

by the Parish, District and County Councillors and this was rejected by the county council planning committee meaning that the permission will lapse as work has not commenced.

The main planning concern has been the approval by The Secretary of State of the development consent order for The Mallard Pass solar farm which has since been sold by Windel to Quinbrook who will be building the site through their construction contractors. The Parish Council is engaging with the new owners of Mallard Pass, along with other parish councils, and our district councillors to try and ensure that the development has the least possible impact upon Greatford.

Community Assets

The playing field equipment continues to be safe and serviceable but some of the play structures are coming to the end of their life and will need replacing in the not too distant future. The parish council has received quotes from a number of providers and has decided upon a number of new pieces of equipment that we can afford (subject to grants) and that will enhance the play experience for young people visiting Greatford playing field.

Rabbits and moles continue to dig up areas of the playing field and the council has deployed appropriate control measures as necessary during the year.

Highways

The community speed watch group has not been active for sometime owing to a lack of volunteers being available in the village to carry out speed monitoring.

Nigel Ashby continues to move the radar speed sign around the village to assist motorists in moderating their speed (thank you Nigel).

Speeding remains a problem in the village.

The roads surrounding the village are for the most part in a reasonable state of repair following a program of pothole repairs though more are appearing, particularly along the edges of roads where HGV and other traffic has eroded the edge & verge.

HGV traffic through the village has again increased over the preceding year, specifically quarry traffic and pallet network trucks associated with businesses along King Street.

The village footpaths continue to be well used by locals and visitors alike.

Community activities and events

The village hall and playing field hosted a very successful summer play scheme for the children of (or associated with) the village again in 2024 though the number of days available in 2024 was reduced owing to less funds being available.

Flooding

Following the disastrous flood of 3/1/2024, Greatford was inundated again on 6/1/2025 by another serious flood. On this occasion fewer houses were damaged as the flooding was less severe but nevertheless there was again significant damage to properties in the village.

The Flood Wardens have been extremely busy engaging with the County Council, Environment Agency, local landowners and the local drainage boards to try and improve the flood resilience of the village. Some good progress has been made on this front and more projects are ongoing to try and further improve our situation.

Summary

Greatford continues to be a great place to live though there are some significant challenges to village life that need to be confronted. The Parish Council is doing all it can to maintain and enhance our beautiful village and village life.

Financial report

Income for the year has been £11754 and expenditure £9217. The accounts have been prepared by Jason Halsey, the Responsible Financial Officer, and audited by James Everitt, who was thanked for his work. VAT from the year is yet to be reclaimed and amounts to approximately £430.00. The Precept was increased slightly in agreement with Parishioners to help fund flood improvements.

Report from SKDC Councillor Vanessa Smith

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve as one of the two elected representatives for Greatford at SKDC over the past 12 months. Whilst leadership at SKDC has remain unchanged, the last year saw a change in national government. This has brought with it an increase in house building targets. Consequently, SKDC are having to further update the local plan. The new Labour Government also plans to replace District and County Councils with a single unitary authority by 2028. 2025 has seen the election of Lincolnshire's first Mayor.

Over the past 12 months we have also seen the introduction of kerbside collection of batteries to reduce bin fires. SKDC has also started work on its new waste depot, costing £8.8m. It is hoped this will be operational by next year. There has been investment in Stamford car parks, improvements in the social housing sector and upgrades for our leisure centres. Sadly, the Deeping Leisure centre has not been reopened despite support from SKDC councillors. SKDC has also helped with the distribution of the UK shared prosperity fund which has benefited many local groups.

Closer to home I spoke at the LCC planning meeting where plans to vary conditions for the quarry at Greatford were refused. I am sure it will bring relief to residents and road users. At SKDC I have escalated various other planning concerns to officers.

Sadly, for some residents of Greatford, 2025 started in a similar way to the previous year with flooding to properties. My sympathies to all those who have been affected. I continue to do what I can to support the community on this matter and would like to congratulate the village flood group on their excellent work to date. My thanks to everyone for their support over the past 12 months.

Report from Rev. Aran Beesley, Greatford Parish Priest

The Harvest Festival was well-supported. Nicholas Watts gave a presentation to highlight framing issues. There was standing room only at Christmas Eve's Nine Lessons and Carols Service. Messy Church and Nature in the Churchyard events throughout the year have entertained and taught the children of the parish group. Thank you to all in the village who have supported these Church Services and events.

Report from the Chair of the Greatford Village Hall Management Committee,

Richard McDermott

Hall Improvements:

Following a busy, few years improving the structure and appearance of the Village Hall, this year has mainly been focused on maintaining the hall and building on the improvements of previous years. However, we have completed the improvements to lighting on the playing field should evacuation be necessary and some work to make the regular checks of firefighting equipment and lighting more straightforward. We also completed improvements to the front lighting. These works were recommended following a visit from the Lincs Fire Service. During the forthcoming year we hope to improve the entrance from the gate to the main door – though the costs of these work appear quite significant as things stand and we are exploring potential funding sources.

Events:

Seeing the hall full to the rafters at several events this year has been a real highlight, with the Live and Local events being incredibly successful once again. Through the Live and Local scheme, we were able to host music, comedy, drama and dance in the form of the 309's, Terence Blacker and Last Dance Saloon. All have played to full or almost full houses.

A huge thank you must go out again to Alison Horton for all her hard work in arranging these Live and Local events as they have been a huge benefit to the local community, and a lot of work, plus hosting the acts is required to ensure these events are run so successfully. We have just heard we have three more acts through Live and Local agreed for the next twelve months, so watch this space for more details!

Regular activities comprise the puppy training classes and T'ai Chi, and there have been a respectable number of children's birthday parties and other private events held in the Hall. Among the many events held at the Village Hall were the summer sports scheme, organised by the PC, which will again run this summer.

The Village Hall was again fortunate to escape the floods of 6 th January, and we again agreed to host and fund a village hog roast and get together on the 22 nd of June. This was a great chance, in beautiful sizzling summer weather, for friends and family to get together. Given the cost to the village hall, it is likely that this will be the last of these events for now but given the challenges the village has faced in the past couple of years, the hog roasts have been money well spent.

Committee:

At our last AGM we welcomed Cheryl Foreman as our new Treasurer. Cheryl has done a huge amount of work to manage our accounts and finances, and we are now fully digital, with the village hall accounts now at last (after a challenging process from the bank) fully online. This has meant managing the accounts is so much easier.

Thanks as well to all the Committee Members and our Trustees who have done so much to help run the Hall, both through their contributions at meetings but also the hard graft and support they have given in ensuring the hall remains a safe and well-run building, and in setting up, organising (and tidying up after) so many events this year. Your efforts and inputs are always incredibly valued – thank you once again,

Report from the Flood Wardens

On June 6th flood wardens chaired the 1st multi agency flood response meeting. We were very pleased to have representatives from all relevant agencies; LCC Highways and LCC Flood Team, Environment Agency,

Internal Drainage Board plus support from councillors Vennessa Smith, Ashley Baxter, Tony Barker and Rosemary Trollope-Bellew .

The following updates and information received and discussed:

LCC - confirmed that a programme of works to restore the function of Main Street road drainage to its original design function. This will include re lining and root cutting. LCC will try to avoid digging up the road but this may be unavoidable and road closure may be required. Drain cleaning and inspection along Carlby road will be completed, contractor cleaning drains late June 6th was reported. LCC enquired if the land drains connected to the road drain system had already been cleared. GFW confirmed that this drain has been vastly improved and will receive close attention in Autumn.

LCC and the EA confirmed that they are in partnership to fully update the hydraulic modelling in and around Greatford and the West Glen all the way downstream to Surfleet. This will take into account the recent history of flooding in Greatford. This is a directive of the Section 19 recommendation and will form the basis of future emergency response and justification of any capital schemes that may be designed. Phase 1 of this study is due for completion in August 2025, this phase is mostly hydraulic modelling update and evidence gathering. GPC and GFW will support this as we did during Section 19. Ultimately, this modelling will go on to support the design, options appraisal and funding options of flood prevention schemes - this is good news but the horizon is long term.

EA - confirmed the collaboration with EA as above and when complete will enter a public consultation on flood defence and prevention funding. Locally they confirmed cut channel maintenance will include removal of gravels that have accumulated in the first 20-30m of the gates, annual weed cutting. Temporary sand bags will be removed only when a permanent solution is in place. Work continues on Fitz William sluice outcomes. EA are engaged with Greatford Hall regarding river bank integrity, this is ongoing. The EA agreed to follow up with Greatford Hall on plans to clear and maintain the drainage ditch adjacent to the public footpath that runs along the northern boundary through the woods. It was requested that EA investigate reasons behind water remaining in the roadside channel opposite the pub and adjacent to Lois Webb's property. They need to establish if this is river water coming through the retaining wall or ground water. Councillor Baxter asked the EA if they would consider exploring the potential use of the new nature reserve/country park planned at gravel pits north of West Deeping as a flood mitigation to take capacity from the cut in times of high water levels/potential flood - EA noted this and suggested it would be good to discuss as a potential option.

IDB - although Greatford does not come under the jurisdiction of local IDB it is covered by the Extended Area of the Black Sluice IDB. It is confirmed that enforcement of riparian responsibility is delegated to Black Sluice IDB by LCC for Greatford and the surrounding area. The GPC and GFW will be requesting that the IDB politely reminds local landowners of their riparian responsibilities. The IDB have also offered assistance with heavy equipment to help clear vegetation and any other problem areas where they can easily assist if they have machinery working nearby.

The meeting closed at 7:25 pm