

GREATFORD

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held by way of a ZOOM meeting to parishoners 26th May 2020 at 7.00 pm

Minutes

Present : Jon Workman (Chairman), Parish Councillors: David Anderson, (RFO)
Philip Britton (Vice Chairman), Gemma Taylor.
Parish Clerk : Lois Webb
members of the Public who were able to log in to the ZOOM meeting. Stephen Dean, Ross Edgar, George Aylett, Kerry Hockham, James Everitt, Bridget Everitt, Kevin de Trafford, Jacqueline de Trafford, Bob French, Nigel Ashby, Elizabeth Ashby, Helen Britton, C.Cllr/ D.Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, and 3 more villagers.

1. Opening of Meeting :

Cllr Workman welcomed all those able to log in to this meeting on Zoom (details of which were sent to 93 email addresses in the village a couple of days prior) and asked if anyone objected to their names being listed. There were no objections.

2. Apologies received for absence:

Cllr Ibis Channell,(not on internet) Richard McDermott (V.Hall Chairman) Martin Brebner
DCllr Kelham Cooke.

3 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st May 2019.

On a proposal by Cllr David Anderson, seconded by Cllr Gemma Taylor, the minutes of the annual meeting 21st May 2019, copies of which were circulated prior to meeting, were approved for signature

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Cllr Jon Workman

Introduction

In these difficult times for Greatford Village and for the whole country I think we can be thankful that we live in such a beautiful village. The aim of the Parish Council is to ensure that going forward Greatford is preserved as a conservation village whilst still moving forward.

It shows that in times as difficult as this it is phenomenal to see the village pull together, help out neighbours, check on each other and as a village show our appreciation for others such as flying the NHS flag and the weekly clap.

It was also fantastic to see such village spirit show itself in bundles on VE Day. A VE Day on which the village did its best to celebrate even in today's current restricted ways.

Highways

Although the Corona Virus is a bad situation, one pleasant side effect has been the reduction in traffic. Unfortunately, lorries are still a problem with them using the village as a 'rat run' and Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew is liaising with the companies responsible at a local level to try to resolve.

The SID sign is an active and hopefully effective way of keeping vehicles to the speed limit through the village.

It was also noted in the 2018 Report that the King Street finger post for Greatford was broken as well as the one on the Barholm road in 2019. Unfortunately, as they are both of a low priority for the Highways Department and they remain broken.

Flood Defences, Drains & Watercourses

Mr Chris Granville-White is our Flood Warden who does all the monitoring and reporting as well as liaising with the Environment Agency. I think we can all appreciate the huge amount of work that goes into this and we all owe Chris our thanks for all he does.

Cleaning & Litter Picking

Mr Bob French is our Community Litter Head who, as well as organizing village litter picks also undertakes many on his own. We are hugely grateful for this and, also for the grant, which Bob received and has kindly donated to the Village Funds. This money (£2316 since 2017) has been used for various village improvements to structures and amenities such as the new gates to the playing field.

Planning

The vast majority of planning applications this year involved work to trees. As always, the Parish Council encourage fresh planting and replacement when trees are removed.

One of the larger projects going on within the village is the renovation of Manor House Farm that now appears to be drawing to a close and which I think is looking great. It is also noted that development of the yard is now being looked at.

Playing Field

A cost effective response seems to have been found to the mole issue and I think most will agree this something we should carry on with.

Although as with many things during these times the activities on the playing field have been restricted, beforehand the facility was well used and I think we all look forward to the times when it is again.

A scheme is in progress to replace the rear fence and sympathetically clear and enhance the overgrown area at the far east side of the field. This is an ongoing project that hopefully many villagers will help out with.

Defibrillator

The defibrillator has been used at the Hare & Hounds and although unfortunately unsuccessful this time, it shows what a valuable asset it is. The Parish Council would like to thank David Trawford for his aid in administering it.

Church

The Parish Council continues to supplement maintenance work in grass cutting etc. of the churchyard and the Parish Council would like to thank Chris Harris and others who I understand have stepped in to help out when Chris whilst ill.

The Parish Clerk

A huge thank you to Mrs Lois Webb for her years of sterling work as the Parish Clerk. Helen Britton is taking over this burdensome and sometimes thankless task from Lois and we thank them both for carrying out such a smooth handover especially considering the times we are in.

Finance

On behalf of the Parish Council we would like to thank Mr David Anderson for his role as Finance Officer and Mr James Everitt for auditing the Parish Council accounts.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT RFO Cllr David Anderson.

David Anderson the Responsible Financial Officer distributed copies of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020..A copy of the detailed Financial Statements will be posted on the village notice board and published on our website when up and running.

A summary of the key points are as follows:

Total receipts for the year of £4727.55 were virtually as forecast in January.

The majority is mainly made up of £3400 for the precept and also a litter grant of £853.84, courtesy of the hard work put in by Bob French.

The grant money has been used to pay for new gates and next year will be used for the Playing Field development.

Total receipts were £2067.88 less than last year, which included an SKDC grant for play equipment and the associated VAT refund.

The clerk's fees of £1180 were £280 higher than last year. This above inflation increase is to move towards a more commercial rate.

Regular expenses of £1916.43 were £324.71 less than last year, mainly due to not having an inspection of the play equipment and not being billed for the Village Hall hire.

One off costs of £844.99 were solely for new gates and bollards. Last year we spent £1531.67

Total payments amounted to £3941.42 resulting in a surplus of £786.13 for the year and total cash funds of £7791.31.

This is considerably higher than our budget due to the reasons given above, but also mainly because of the dry weather, resulting in fewer hedge / grass cuts.

We are therefore well placed to fund the future playing field development.

The Chairman thanked David for his report.

6. **CCllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew 's Report 2019/20 Deepings West & Rural**

LCC

Now that we have entered into the next phase of moving forward, with some restrictions starting to be lifted, many Lincolnshire businesses will soon be starting to re-open as people are encouraged to go back to work – but only where it is safe to do so.

The announcement that we can now spend more time outdoors is also very welcome, as it means we can all enjoy getting out and about more to exercise and enjoy the fresh air. However, the guidance remains clear that we all must stick to social distancing when doing these things.

Schools re-opening – the Prime Minister announced that some primary school pupils could potentially return beginning of June, and working hard to make sure they can keep the school environment as safe as possible LCC continues to communicate and work with schools to ensure all plans are well-considered and supported.

School transport arrangements – the council is writing to the parents of children and young people who are potentially returning to school in June and entitled to school transport. We are asking that, wherever possible, parents transport their children to school unless they have no other option.

Household Waste Recycling Centres – the 'click and tip' booking system for the reopening of our 11 household waste recycling centres is now up and running & since its launch nearly 5,000 bookings, ready for when the centres opened on Monday 18 May.

Councillor fund – a total of 180 grants have been approved as part of our councillor fund, with over £107,000 allocated towards supporting local volunteer initiatives. I have donated towards purchase of materials to make scrubs for NHS and Deepings Business Survival Fund which aims to give professional advice to companies in the parish to help their businesses survive after Covid. www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/communityfund.

Additional highways funding – we have received a £54.3 million boost for Lincolnshire's roads from Central Government. Part of this will go towards road maintenance, like fixing potholes, repairing pavements, resurfacing, and improving our roads. Also be using some of the money to bolster sustainable transport across the county.

Care homes – we are keeping in close touch with our care homes on a daily basis and supporting them through this hugely difficult period for residents and staff. Our infection prevention and control team, working with our partners, are providing the necessary support as soon as it is needed.

Care homes are carrying out enhanced cleaning regimes to help protect staff and residents from infections which occur all year around. We are able to provide support to individual homes with a problem with accessing cleaning supplies if that becomes an issue.

Priority testing for care homes and other areas with the greatest need is hugely important. The Government has launched a new testing portal for care homes, making it easier for them to arrange deliveries of coronavirus test kits.

All staff and residents are now eligible for testing but initially priority is given to homes that look after the over 65's, with testing for those with younger clients coming later. We'll be supporting care homes with this new development.

We also welcome the Government's announcement about allocating an extra £600m nationally for infection control in care homes. While we don't yet have details on how the funding will be allocated, the extra money will help us to reduce and prevent coronavirus outbreak in Lincolnshire.

Support for businesses – Business Lincolnshire is offering advice and guidance for all businesses, including people who are self-employed, on safety issues, business recovery, diversification and more. They are also holding a series of free webinars and digital support including expert speakers and case studies.

Coastal car parks – we have opened our car parks at our Coastal Country Park for those who will be going to our coastline for exercise – to hopefully minimise disruption for local residents.

Lincoln Castle grounds re-opening – a huge success

Over the bank holiday weekend around 2,500 people took the opportunity to visit Lincoln Castle grounds which re-opened on Saturday for the first time since the middle of March.

Everyone respected the new social distancing measures that were in place. There were lots of positive comments from people who were grateful that the grounds were open, and one lady said it offered her a ray of hope that things are getting better.

We now look forward to planning for phase two of re-opening which will see the opening of the Medieval Wall Walk and a takeaway café option – as requested by many of our visitors this weekend.

SKDC Report-

The Markets at Stamford, Bourne & Grantham have been kept open during the last 8 weeks and have been another way of allowing people to purchase food. They have been combined with the Farmers Markets which has help boost the numbers and range of food available. Bourne 6 stalls, Stamford 15 stalls, Grantham 11 stalls

The first competition held by the use of video conference app. Zoom took place at the end of April to find out the next Stamford Poet Laureate. Seven people applied with Rob Elks being successful.

The Arts Centres programmes were all postponed and we are looking at how we can proceed once we start to come out of lock-down. We are keeping in contact by issuing a fortnightly E-newsletter.

Covid-19 virus has had a big impact on our Visitor Economy. In SKDC we have approx. 3.4m visitors who spend about 190k. We have a DiscoverSK newsletter and arranged our first virtual business briefing beginning of June.

7. **District Councillor's Report: Cllr Kelham Cooke.** This updated report was read out by the Clerk in Kelham's absence

We set out clearly at the start of the lockdown, that our three priorities as a council during this crisis are to protect the health of our staff, our members and our residents; maintain our critical services; and support local businesses. I am proud to be able to say that because of the loyalty, hard work and dedication of all our Members and staff, we continue to meet all three of these objectives.

In order to support our most vulnerable residents, we were one of the first councils to establish a community hub, providing a central point of contact for those needing help and those wanting to offer help. Our hub is staffed from 8am to 7pm seven days a week by a team of dedicated redeployed SKDC employees. Since the lockdown, the team has received a total of 1,570 calls and emails. Naturally we work hand-in-glove with the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum

In our district alone, we have an army of 1,500 volunteers who stand ready to help either individually, or by working with community groups and charities. We have about 7,000 people shielding in South Kesteven, and about 1,000 of them are receiving help in the form of food or other essential supplies.

To support this work, we have established a Befriending Service to support people who are vulnerable and/or isolated. Again a dedicated team of redeployed staff have called around 1,300 residents identified as potentially vulnerable, to reach out and offer help. About 300 have taken up our offer, and the feedback has been tremendously positive. In addition, I have personally written to more than 18,000 vulnerable residents to let them know about this service, our community hub, and how to get in touch if they need any help, support, or guidance.

We continually engage with our residents and businesses through many different platforms. Our Coronavirus web page has been visited more than 17,000 times; we have produced a Covid-19 information booklet to ensure residents who don't have access to the internet have vital information. In addition, we have created a bespoke 'returning to business' web page with key links and information to help businesses ease out of the lockdown safely and within Government guidelines; and I keep our members updated with briefings twice a week and I write to our MPs once a week. For information, I have attached an infographic we have used to very visibly show what we are doing to support our residents, our businesses, and our communities.

In the lead-up to the lockdown, we wrote to the tenants in our 6,000 council homes to reassure them of our continued support, explain how we planned to prioritise our services so that we could protect their health, the health of our staff, and maintain critical services. A bespoke newsletter for our tenants is currently in the pipeline to provide further guidance and reassurance as we enter this new phase in the fight against the Coronavirus.

Redeployment to make the most of our resources is vital in these difficult times. We have redeployed about 90 members of staff, some to the services already mentioned, others to support our waste collection crews. So far, we have fully maintained our waste collection service, including recycling and garden waste – we are still collecting 80,000 bins per week. But the first redeployment was to enable two Emergency Planning teams to be established, to run the incident room. Having two teams builds essential resilience, so important when the picture is constantly evolving and the future unsure. The Chief Executive and I lead the Incident Room and are in daily contact to provide an overview and overall direction.

Keeping local democracy running smoothly and transparently is a challenge we all face at present. However, we have already held several successful virtual committee meetings, and one virtual full council meeting, attended by 55 of our members, which ran exceptionally well and won praise from across the political spectrum. I believe we are one of the first, if not the first council to hold a virtual full council meeting with all but one member taking part.

Our virtual operation doesn't end there. In two short weeks, we went from about 40 people working remotely from home per day to more than 400 people working in this way without any real problems. We have enabled our Customer Services Team to operate remotely, providing support not just with their usual services, but also handling calls about council, tax, benefits and rents, thus enabling our Revenue and Benefits team to deliver direct specialist support to residents and businesses affected by hardship.

I am proud to say that SKDC remains one of the top councils in the country for delivering much-needed grant aid swiftly into the bank accounts of eligible businesses. The speed with which the Council responded was evident in the fact that more than 900 grants were paid out to eligible businesses within 24 hours of us receiving the money from Government. To date, we have paid out more than £25 million to 2,115 businesses, of the £31.7 million we received from Government. We have also awarded more than £17 million in business rates relief to 686 eligible businesses and are putting in place measures to allocate the Government's new discretionary fund.

In order to ensure that all our Members are able to offer financial help within their wards, where needed most, we doubled our Ward Member Grant Scheme, to £1,000 per Member so if you need support get in touch!

Separately to all the above, despite initial criticism, we have successfully maintained all our weekly markets, supporting our traders and residents. The successful running of the markets – which are for fresh food only – has won over even our most ardent critics. Our success even won a positive mention in the Daily Mail online. With thanks to Rosemary for managing this and the markets throughout the crisis.

As many of you will be aware, the council also has a new Chief Executive, Karen Bradford, who started with us just 21 days before lockdown. This could have presented many challenges as Karen and I learned how best to work together and Karen sought to establish her relationships across the council. However, I am delighted to say things have gone incredibly smoothly.

Karen and I lead the council's incident room set up to ensure we have a core central team leading our Covid-19 work. We also participate in weekly telephone conferences with Government ministers, the LRF and other partners across the district in a joint battle against this virus.

Lastly, I am honoured to have been offered the opportunity to Lead the Lincolnshire Communications Recovery Cell, and I shall continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with partners from the public and private sectors as we work together for the benefit of those we serve.

I look forward to seeing you all soon at a future parish council meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Cooke for his detailed report.

8. **Greatford Village Hall - Chair's Report 2019/20** From Richard McDermott, read out in his absence by Helen Britton.

After many successful and self-sustaining years, the village hall and specifically the committee that supports it, has had a challenging but also successful year. Firstly, after sustaining itself for many years and always being able to raise enough through hall hire income and events income the village hall has had to draw on its reserves this year to cover the planned for building works to refurbish the toilets area.

Whilst bookings had gone up and bookings income for 2019/20 looks particularly healthy the COVID-19 scenario means that we have no income from March 2020 onwards and of course many bills still to pay. This is an issue that we need to manage, and the committee is looking at a couple of options here to cover any potential shortfall.

The second challenge we faced were the resignations from the committee from David Brown, Simon Teesdale and Jonathan Manning and of Andy Eliot as our bookings manager. Malcolm Wells has also decided to relinquish his role as Trustee of the Village Hall. They all have, over the 14 years I have been living in the village, been huge contributors to the success of the village hall and associated activities and events. They will be massively missed and leave a large hole. Many thanks must go out to them all for their great support over the years.

This had left us with a small number of committee members, but we are very lucky to have additionally secured onto the committee at our AGM Maggie Kaye, Elizabeth Beckett and Alison Horton. Welcome all and thank you! Alison has done a phenomenal job as our new Secretary also covering bookings administration and work on our policies and procedures. We are still keen for new committee members, and a Trustee, who are keen to contribute. Ideas and questions are welcome (to a degree!), but even more welcome would be people who will happily roll up their sleeves and do, to contribute to activities which help us manage, maintain and enhance the hall, or organisation of events and fundraising activities.

As ever we are very grateful to the committee especially Liam O'Flaherty, Heather Hooper as Treasurer, and Nigel Ashby. Heather will be standing down as Treasurer once the end of year accounts are completed, after many years excellent service. Nigel keeps an eye on many aspects of the hall and does so much to keep its external face so welcoming and pleasant. Thank you all as we could not have kept the hall operational in 2020 without you.

On another positive note we have been so lucky to be supported by the efforts of the team that organised and delivered the excellent Christmas event and raised more funds for the village hall refurbishment, and then also July's Midsummer picnic and treasure hunt, which was primarily a social event, but it amazingly raised £145 nonetheless. We are incredibly grateful of the efforts of so many (too many to name – but thank you all). These funds have been used – we feel – to good effect, supported by funds from our reserves, and also some funding from the Trustees.

Whilst the Hall has been locked down, local contractors have been able to work independently to upgrade the toilet furniture where necessary, better insulate the toilets, block off the roof opening, and improve the hot water provision and lighting, making them more economical. There are still a few minor cosmetic matters to complete, but the new toilet area is looking very smart and much more in keeping with the look and feel of the rest of the hall – it is a shame you can't visit it just yet!

Other highlights of note this year include:

- Fantastic regular bookings - The regular bookings for band practices, clarinets, HIIT and other classes, puppy and dog training meant the hall was used most days of the week.
- Over the weekend 2 nd/3 rd November - an art exhibition by 5 Greatford artists (Mandy Barnes, Rachel Barron-Clark, Alison Horton, Paschal Jevons, Maggie Kaye) and Jo Sanford from Stowe was highly successful, with numbers of visitors surprising everyone.
- December fundraising - The Christmas Fayre (as previously mentioned) also donated £385 to the Salvation Army in Bourne to support the provision of food hampers and Christmas presents for local families in need.
- Tidying of storage – In the winter we had a small party of Richard and Harry McDermott (DofE) and Liam who started clearing the back cupboard and the room off the kitchen and removed unwanted items. Harry has continued this and items belonging to hirers have been moved to the front storage room. The room leading off the kitchen needs some further cosmetic work but is now much more useable. Harry has also continued to clear and paint parts of the hall. So a challenging but ultimately a very successful year, and we hope to be able to confirm further additional committee and possibly trustee members very soon and more on some events later this year to enable us to showcase the hall as a rural, characterful venue it is. Richard McDermott, Greatford Village Hall

The Chairman thanked Richard McDermott for his comprehensive Village Hall Report, and extended the parish's grateful thanks for the VH Committee's work in all aspects

9. **Clerk's Report : Lois Webb**

Lois reported that she had very much enjoyed her time as Clerk, and expressed her huge thanks to all Councillors past and present for the unceasing support they had given her throughout her terms of office over the years. She said she would obviously still continue to help in any way with anything in and for the village community – she's not going anywhere! She also welcomed Helen Britton to the Parish Council and was grateful to her for her accepting the position of Clerk, and making the transition run smoothly in these difficult and unusual times of isolation and distancing during Covid-19. Thank you to all. L

10. **Public Forum** There were no other responses

Close of Meeting

The Chairman thanked all those present for their participation closing the meeting at 7.45 pm

Chairman : Cllr Jon Workman

Clerk : Lois Webb