

Draft Minutes

GREATFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

17.5.22 at 7:30pm

Present:

Clr Philip Britton (Chair), Cllr Gemma Taylor (Vice Chair), Cllr Jason Halsey (Responsible Financial Officer), Cllr Natalie Pretsell, Cllr Tony Barker.

Elizabeth Ashby, Nigel Ashby, Ibis Channell, Alison Horton, Ann Sumner, District Cllr Rosemary Trollope-Bellew.

Helen Britton (Clerk to the Parish Council)

Opening of meeting

Cllr Philip Britton welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

Apologies for absence

Cllr Kelham Cooke, Lois Webb, Dani Wheeler.

Approval of Minutes from APM May 2021

Proposed by Cllr Gemma Taylor, seconded by Cllr Natalie Pretsell.

Chair's report

Philip Britton gave the report.

The preceding year has seen an end to the pandemic restrictions and village life has gotten back to a more normal routine with the church, village hall and pub all re-opening, and all with significant work undertaken to improve their facilities.

Planning

There have been numerous applications for building and tree work over the preceding year, all of which were approved, though some with caveats.

The proposed 55 hectare quarry at the junction of King Street and Baston road was passed but with the proviso that part of King Street is widened so as to more safely accommodate HGV traffic accessing the site, this application has moved to the 'Pending Legal Agreement' stage and as yet no work has begun.

The proposed Mallard Pass Solar Farm was the other major planning application that was announced in November. The application will be in the form of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and as

such will be assessed by the planning inspectorate who may or may not grant a Development Consent Order (DCO). This is out of the jurisdiction of the County Council planning departments (both Rutland & Lincolnshire) though they are consultees as is Greatford among many other affected Parishes.

We were fortunate with the timing of our November Parish Council meeting and were able to discuss the proposal soon after its announcement. At that meeting it was decided to contact all affected parishes and draw together people for our neighbouring parishes who are keen to examine the proposal in detail. This led to the formation of the Mallard Pass Action Group (MPAG) which has met twice in Greatford, and several times elsewhere to scrutinise the plans and proposals of Mallard Pass Solar Farm. The action group has developed a strategy to inform as many people as possible what our locality will look like if the proposal goes ahead, what the risks to us could be, and how people can comment upon the proposal.

Greatford Parish Council is supporting the work of MPAG.

Councillors

David Anderson retired from the council and passed his duties as RFO on to Jason Halsey. Tony Barker joined the council in January 2022 to fill the seat vacated by David. Tony's background and expertise have been useful in looking at a number of planning applications since he joined the council.

Community Assets

The playing field improvements have established well with the community orchard growing well and the re-sown grass on the re-graded bumps & dips now covering the ground and fit for mowing. Thanks to Harry McDermott for his efforts watering and weeding the new trees to ensure their establishment.

There have been intermittent issues with moles and rabbits on the playing field which have been attended to as necessary.

The play equipment was partially upgraded by Bob French (and helpers), and it passed its annual inspection, it is anticipated that further upgrades / maintenance will be required and the council is budgeting to accommodate this as it becomes necessary.

Highways

The roads surrounding the village are for the most part in a reasonable state of repair following a program of pothole repairs, surface dressing and line painting.

The village footpaths continue to be well used by locals and visitors alike. Those in the immediate vicinity of the village have been maintained by Bob French to ensure that they can be accessed by all, thankyou Bob.

Community Speed Watch.

Speeding through the village has been a concern of residents for a number of years. To address this Jason has initiated & developed plans to deter motorists from speeding and we have joined the community speed watch initiative, purchased the required equipment and trained a number of volunteers who will be conducting speed monitoring as soon as the sites have been approved.

This will bolster the radar speed sign that Nigel Ashby has been moving around the village.

Community activities & events

Last summer saw the village marking an end to most of the pandemic restrictions with a village picnic on the playing field organised by Dani Wheeler and Hannah Penson. It was good to see friends and neighbours socialising once again. Thank you Dani and Hannah for organising a great event that was enjoyed all those attending.

Gemma Taylor with help from Alison Horton & Helen Britton applied for a lottery grant to enable the Parish Council to fund a summer play scheme for the children of the village, surrounding villages and also children with a connection to the village. Summer 2022 will see 3 weeks of activities on the playing field for our young parishioners to enjoy. It will also be good to see the refurbished playing field being put to good use.

Flooding

Fortunately there were no flood events in the preceding year, though the team of Flood Wardens continue to be active ensuring that the water courses through the village are free of obstructions so that water can move through and away from the village unimpeded. Chris Granville-White has also persuaded the EA to conduct an experiment with the sluice by lowering the datum by 10cm so that it opens earlier and moves water away more quickly and hopefully prevents the flooding upstream that in the past has inundated some parts of the village. This seems to have worked when we experienced heavy rain during the winter as the cut seemed to fill up earlier than the river.

Chris has also been very active in trying to engage the EA and Local Flood Authority in aspects of the Mallard Pass proposals that may affect the flood risk of the village.

Summary

The preceding 12 months has been quite eventful as the village has gotten back to normal post pandemic, however there are very significant challenges to the village and its environs in the year ahead and we must come together as a community to try and protect our village from the potential disruption and disturbances that these challenges bring.

Financial report - Year end accounts

Jason Halsey (RFO) reported that everything balances with the bank statements, excluding the receipt of the 22/23 precept payment from SKDC which will be shown in the year 22/23, as previously done. At the year end, we have a cash book balance of £12,374 or £13160 including the business savings account which includes the National Lottery grant of £5900 for the children's summer sports club activities, to be spent in Summer 2022. Insurable assets value have increased by £481 to £25,271 with the inclusion of the Community Speedwatch equipment. The internal auditor has now completed the audit and signed the accounts.

An updated 2-year budget plan will now be prepared and presented at the next PC meeting.

Report from District and County Councillors

Cllr Rosemary Trollop-Bellew gave the following annual report:

Coronavirus has again taken centre stage for the majority of 2021 to March 2022. The council's own Meres leisure centre at Grantham continues to be where residents can receive vaccinations, in just 5 months from opening the centre had vaccinated 100,000 people -May 2021.

Our street scene and waste collectors continued to give an outstanding service during covid with families being paired together. We are waiting for the new depo to be built which will give better access and facilities for our workers.

InvestSK worked with businesses to receive various grants, the Welcome Back fund £(252,909) which was used to promote the 4 market towns which included the very successful Bourne in Lights. There is the Covid Additional Relief Fund (£2,699.6520) to be used for businesses affected by the pandemic but were ineligible for support.

The street markets continue to be popular with our residents especially during the worst of the pandemic, with some traders doing a delivery service to more vulnerable members of the community.

Last year saw the first SKCommunity Awards with 70 nominations, the response was better than we could have imagined and look forward to it again this year.

The Stamford & Grantham Mid-lent fairs made a welcome return after a 2 years absence

The council had to take the decision to close Deepings Leisure Centre last year due to health and safety reasons – boilers, roof, tiles coming off in the main pool, lift out of action to name a few. A decision was taken at Council to up-grade the existing building due to the strong feeling/views from local residents.

The council is responsible for 3896 streetlights of which we are upgrading to LED lights.

With just under 6000 council properties we continue to up-grade and build more for rent. The right to buy scheme is still available to our tenants.

During the last year we have also done an Arts Review, Stamford Arts Centre has received a new roof, decorated the ball room & gallery, moved the Customer services into the centre and kept the Box office function.

At the end of the year the Council was busy checking properties ready to welcome Ukrainian refugees into the district.

Report from the Chair of the Greatford Village Hall Management Committee

Richard McDermott, Chair of GVHMC, sent the following report.

The repair work required due to the storm damage have now been completed and the hall is back into normal use. A huge thank you to all the trades that supported this but in particular Pete Harrison from H&H builders for securing the building and completing the work so promptly.

The redecoration planned for the interior has been completed and the Village Hall Committee will now discuss options for further improvements which may involve an improved kitchen and back room.

The Village Hall Committee is also delighted to support and host some of the upcoming Jubilee celebrations.

We are still on the lookout for additional committee members. If anyone is interested please get in touch.

Otherwise the hall is returning back to business as usual with plenty of hirers using the hall, and we are excited to be hosting Three Men in a Boat this Friday 20th May as one of our live and local events and a small number of tickets are still available. Please go to the live and local website and search for Greatford Village Hall if interested. A huge thank you to Alison Horton for all the hard work she puts into these events. A schedule of further events will be provided soon!

The meeting closed at 7:50pm