

## **DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held at 8.00pm on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall, Debden**

<b><u>Chairman</u></b>	Cllr R. Forster	(RF)
<b><u>Present</u></b>	Cllr E. Blackie	(EB)
	Cllr S. Luck	(SL)
	Cllr A. Tetlow	(AT)
	Cllr S. Watson	(SW)
	Mrs. C. Griffin	Parish Clerk
	16 Members of the public	

### **Guests:**

Cty Cllr S. Walsh  
Cllr J. Spreadborough. Carver Barracks  
Rev. John Saxon, St. Mary's Church  
Mr. Simon Gale, Pentecostal Church

The Chairman welcomed the residents and guests to the meeting and thanked the organisations that were invited for attending or sending in their reports. If reports are not read out, they will be added to the website with the minutes. If you do not have access to the website please contact out Clerk for hard copies.

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Amie Roper, Cllr Alicia Tetlow, Dist Cllr T. Knight, Mrs. J. Pearce, Mrs. J. Pearson, Mrs. J. Forster and Mr. D. Rose.

### **2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

It was proposed that the Minutes should be signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr A. Tetlow

Seconded: Cllr E. Blackie

### **3. Chairman's Report**

Many of the items previously covered in the Parish Council's report are now discussed and reported on at the bi-monthly Recreation Ground Trust meetings and the Chairman of the Trust will report on these separately .

My report concerns itself exclusively with Parish Council matters.

### **Allotments**

Further progress has been made in finding newcomers to take on the allotments largely due to Saffron Walden Town Council who has a long waiting list for allotments.

Without her assistance we would not be able to properly use this excellent facility which was so generously gifted to the village in the 1930s for use as 36 allotments by a local benefactor

Hedge cutting to clear the foot path was carried out in the winter and work continues to reclaim the three plots which have become badly overgrown.

#### Pond

Following the wet winter during which the pond overflowed on occasions the Marsh Marigold and Pink Lillies we planted last year are already appearing.

A new depth sign has been installed showing depths up to 1.4M at the back of the pond.

#### Noticeboard

The large public notice board by the pond has been completely refurbished

#### Drains

Following 18 months of chasing by our Parish Clerk a new culvert has been installed at the top of Fox Hill by ECC to prevent flooding and further erosion of the verge.

Drains were also unblocked at the bottom of Deynes Rd which caused flooding following reports by our Clerk to ECC

#### Byways

Further meetings were arranged between the land owners and Cllr Grundy ECC, Cabinet member for Highways to try and find a solution to the serious damage being done to Byway 37, caused by Off Road users which have made it virtually impassable for walkers.

#### Roads - Resurfacing

Over the past few years our local country roads have deteriorated badly largely due to increased use by larger and heavier vehicles resulting in damaged verges and dangerous potholes.

This last year ECC with the assistance of increased funding have made a big difference by completely resurfacing the road through the village from Mill Road to Highfields and properly patching Thaxted Rd, Rook End Lane, Slaughterhouse Lane, Church Lane and the Debden to Newport Rd. We thank you for this improvement All we need now is ECC to sort out the serious drainage problems reported causing ongoing and serious road damage on the Saffron Walden Rd before properly resurfacing

#### Co-ordination Committee – New Village Hall

The Parish Council agreed to support and participate with the Recreation Ground Trust, Village Hall Trust and the New Village Hall Group in order to build a new Village Hall.

It also agreed to make a financial contribution to the cost of a Mediator largely borne by Uttlesford District Council.

Details of what has been achieved so far will be given in the RGT and NVHG reports.

#### **4. Summary of the Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

Copies of the unaudited Accounts had been circulated in advance.

A question was raised regarding the Transparency Fund. The Clerk explained that the Council has a duty to comply with these new regulations and over the last two years funds have been available to provide office equipment and help cover the costs of implementation. The regulations require the publishing of financial information on the website including details of payments, councillors responsibilities, land and assets etc, annual return and other information.

#### **5. Reports from Dist Cllr Tina Knight and Cty Cllr Simon Walsh**

As Cllr Knight was unable to attend her report was read and will be added to the website.

#### **Cty Cllr Walsh reported:**

- That a record programme of more than £300 million will be invested in roads, schools, new homes and supporting the economy across Essex, as part of the County Council's budget proposals for 2018/19.
- The continued reduction in central Government funding, which will disappear completely by 2020, combined with increasing demand for services, increases in inflation, business rates and National Living Wage payments, mean the Council is proposing to increase Council Tax for only the third time in the last eight years. This will rise by 2% through the Government's social care precept, which will be ring-fenced to adult social care, and 2.99% to support the delivery of vital services such as highways, public transport, libraries and recycling centres. The proposed rise means a £1.12 per week increase for the average Band D property.
- The Council has delivered over £350m of savings in the last four years by generating income and reducing costs.
- In the last year, the Council created 2,500 new places in Essex schools, 92% of which are rated good or outstanding, and supported the creation of 11,370 apprenticeships.
- It also repaired more than 5,000 potholes, resurfaced more than 400 miles of road, while bringing Superfast broadband to another 100,000 homes in the county.
- Waste reduction remains a challenge, and a number of schemes will be promoted this year to encourage more reuse and recycling. Uttlesford residents remain one of the best performers for recycling. To help achieve greater reduction, the County will be supporting more food waste collections, more composting, clothes recycling and encouraging people to take small electrical for disposed at many of the County Libraries.
- The Local Highways Panel continues to be oversubscribed, with far more projects than the budget allows. Unfortunately we were unable to secure a top-up this year, so we are working on a much reduced budget of some £240,000. Byway 75 is scheduled for more work on surfacing and drainage in

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this year's budget and £45,000 has been allocated. I agree a winter closure would be the answer to Byway 37.

- There will be a new Cabinet member for Highways.
- I continue to be Cabinet member for Environment and Waste, and it is proving to be a busy portfolio. There are proposals for a second nuclear power station at Bradwell and I have oversight of that on the County's behalf.
- I am also responsible for supporting work to reduce flooding and work very closely with Environment Agency colleagues to get funding for a whole range of programmes, not just inland but also in protecting the coast line. I have received visits from the Flood Minister, Therese Coffey, and the Chief executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan. These visits raise the profile of work done in Essex and our Flood Team is recognised as being one of the best in the country.
- Other work covers our Outdoor education Centres and Country Parks. Both are investing significantly in order to improve income which will be reinvested in further improvements.
- Our joint agency work on fly tipping is beginning to show dividends, with the net closing on a number of suspects. My next piece of work is to reduce general littering which is proving to be a blight across the county

The PC had sent a list of issues to Cty Cllr Walsh prior to the meeting and he reported on these as follows::

- Road closures - This is a big issues and we are in the hands of the water and telephone companies who can shut the roads. I understand it is confusing and the signs get left for some time after the work has been completed.
- Blocked drains - no answer yet on the road from Debden Manor to Purton End. PC to write to ECC with copy to SW.
- Potholes - These should have been done on the road up to Purton End. It was reported that a few have been filled but not very well and there are still a considerable number that need repairing.
- Planning application for Ivy Todd Hill – I have received quite a complicated answer regarding why they changed their mind. The Chairman advised that the speed survey used was carried out in connection with another application in a different location. The Clerk added that the site lines do not comply with current regulations. SW suggested reviewing the speed limit on the hill.
- Policing - Invite the Police & Crime Commissioner to come and talk to you.
- Superfast Broadband - There is fibre into the village but people on the outskirts are only getting 2 megabits per second. Another roll out is going to be provided and they will put in fibre at Debden Green in the first phase.
- Highway litter is the responsibility of the District Council.

AT raised a question regarding fly tipping.

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Cllr Walsh said that different agencies are looking into this. They are looking at large lorries coming from London and finding a farmers gateway to tip rubbish; it is organise crime.

EB said the road closures are incredibly frustrating for residents and as the buses do not run it is extremely inconvenient. It would be helpful if a piece of paper could be added to the sign to say exactly where the road is closed.

The Clerk requested clarification on the situation regarding mirrors on highway verges. Cllr Walsh confirmed that permission is required and ECC should be contacted.

A resident said he had written to the Council about dangerous bridges over ditches a few months ago. Last Saturday there were 35 children camping at Debden Green they did not use footpath 35 but used Sampsons Lane instead.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> June there is an organised walk in aid of Cancer from Thaxted to Audley End and the walkers are proposing to use Path 75 which is impassable.

SW will ensure they are aware of the current state of this path.

SL reported that some parishes are paying for a PCSO. Crime is a problem and is a concern for people in the village. Cllr Walsh said this does not come within his remit but will send the PC some information on contacts. It was also suggested that the local MP, Kemi Badenoch, should come and talk to the PC about national policing.

#### **6. Report from Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. George Cormack, on activities at Carver Barracks over the last year**

Commanding Officer, Lt. Col George Cormack from Carver Barracks had sent his apologies.

**Lt. Col Justin Spreadborough** gave an update on the following key issues:

- We are undergoing some significant changes at the Barracks. The whole Army is re-shaping under the 2020 Refine programme. One of the big decisions included within this programme was the closure of Carver Barracks in 2031.
- Whilst we have done some planning as to where we go next but we will be here for the immediate future.
- We are part of the 29EOD and Search group which consists of five EOD's including a military working dogs. The 33 Engr Regt (EOD) arrived first at Carver Barracks and will remain, the 101 Engr Regt is part of the change and they will move back to London as an Army Reserve. Fundamentally, most of the soldiers and their families will remain here as the Regiment will re-role to be named 35 Engr Regt (EOD&S).
- Internally, we have a newly formed Group Support Unit, of which I am part, and that primarily looks after the Carver Barracks base, but also the Military Working Dogs located in North Luffenham as well as 11 EOD Regt RLC based at at Didcott.

- We will shortly see the growth of two new Squadrons and as a result will see a slight increase in personnel. This means that more families will be living in the surrounding areas, particularly at MOD Wethersfield.
- There are three Commanding Officers. For 33 Engr Regt (EOD &S) it is Lt. Col Sam Stuthridge, for 101 Engr Regt (EOD&S) it is Lt Col Irena Dziswiewska who will remain and command the newly formed 35 Engr Regt (EOD) at the end of July 2018 and for 29 EOD&S GSU it is Lt Col George Cormack who also has the responsibility as head of the establishment
- Any local matters can be directed through me or the Adjutants.
- Our technical infrastructure at the Barracks is a challenge. There have recently been problems with foul smells in the vicinity of our medical facilities which means our medical officers cannot carry out their important work. This is a serious matter for us which means sending our soldiers to RAF Wyton.
- A new soft facilities company have taken over called ESS.
- As part of the ESS take over it was discovered that the Shop at the Barracks was running at a loss and is therefore closing along with the post office.
- One of my roles is security officer. We looked at vulnerabilities and have in collaboration with Essex Police installed an ANPR camera on a pole on the road outside the Barracks to provide us with intelligence.
- Everyone at the camp is very committed both to working on Operations in the United Kingdom and across the rest of the world.
- We have and are undergoing a significant IT change and now have a limited wi-fi coverage for the Barracks.
- The Sports project, consisting of an 8 lane running track and an all weather pitch, has been caught up by bureaucracy and is currently under review by General Bashall and we are expecting some direction in the coming weeks.
- The Injured Soldiers fund has been fully integrated into the Felix Fund and that is working well. On behalf of Carver Barracks we thank you for all your local fund raising efforts – they are truly appreciated.

The following questions were raised:

- SL asked if the British Legion could be informed in October who will be attending the Remembrance service in November.
- In the past the Carver Barracks 4 x 4 security vehicle has come into the village at different time and driven around the car park. JS said he would mention this.
- Why do the Chinook helicopters come over? JS said they just touch down but if there are any issues please let him know.

**Rev John Saxon, Curate St. Mary's Church,** reported that he arrived in the village in June 2017 after Hilary's retirement. Thank you for making me feel very welcome. I am carrying on the good work in the parish and providing regular worship. Please note there is a Plant and Book sale coming up at the Church on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm

There is a new padre at the Barracks, who is keen to get a family activity morning organised so information will be available on this as soon as possible.

I heard there was a bandstand in the Rectory garden and in the past there have been concerts in the garden, So on 7<sup>th</sup> July there will be a concert in the garden at the Rectory.

JS advised that Nicola Evans at the Barracks would be pleased to advertise any local events.

**Simon Gale from Debden Pentecostal Church** reported that they have been running without a pastor since 2011 but get much support from other people to help with their services. They also have a weekly coffee morning which is well attended and prescriptions are delivered to the Church for people who cannot get to the surgery in Thaxted.

Several times a year we distribute a newspaper to every home in the parish and hold special services at Harvest, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We also have a joint service with St. Mary's Church on the morning of Good Friday.

We try and maintain an outward view on other parts of the world and maintain contact with our missionaries. In particular we keep in touch with a couple who worshipped at our Church in Debden in the 1980's but now run an orphanage, and bible school in India.

## **6. Reports from Village Groups**

**Mike Fairchild read the report from the Village Hall Co-ordinating Group which will be available on the website.**

SL asked what provision has been made for the football teams that use the pavilion on a regular basis as there will not be a pavilion while the new village hall is being built.

The Chairman said that Debden Football Club and the Youth team work together and have been made aware of the situation. They are quite prepared to look for an alternative place to play; there are options.

SL queried the ownership of the pavilion. It was confirmed that the RG Trust owns the pavilion and the PC manage it.

**Elisabeth Blackie, Chairman of the VH Trust, read a report which will be added to the website.**

Following the discovery of gas cannisters in the playground last weekend, SL asked if the CCTV had been viewed. The RG Trust will look at it and consider drawing up a policy to comply with the new regulations.

**Richard Cawte, Chairman of the Village Hall Trust, read a report which will be added to the website.**

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### **British Legion**

Richard Cawte also reported that the Debden branch of the RBL continue to support all military personnel both past and present and are working hard to recruit more members, On May 19<sup>th</sup> there is a Barn Dance at Broctons Barn to raise funds for the Great Pilgrimage 90 which involves standard bearers going to France and laying a gate at the Menin gate. We have an opportunity to put a message on the wreath and would welcome suggestions. JS said this could be advertised at the Barracks.

### **7. Open Forum**

It was reported that there are two manhole covers that required attention. One is near the notice board and another one opposite, in Mill Road. The Chairman said he would look at these and, if necessary the Clerk will report to Affinity Water.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.