

Draft Parish Meeting Minutes of 16 May 2018

Hoe and Worthing Villages: Norfolk

Parish Meeting
Draft minutes of meeting held on 16 May 2018

Hoe and Worthing Parish Meeting
DRAFT

1. Attendance

Trevor Wood (Chairman), Senga Thomson, Philip and Rosemary Cane, Dave Williams, Roger Patchett, Carl and Glenys Watling, Margaret Barrett, Sue Chapman, John and Jenny Tuckwell, James Keith, James Sayer, Dick and Sue Malt, Robert Richmond, Mike Mullins, Sally Dearing, Celia Daniel, Adam Flack, Bill Borrett and Alan Hughes.

Apologies were received from Linda Eaglesham and John and Lorna Hardiment.

After welcoming everyone to the meeting, in particular Robert Richmond, District Councillor, and Bill Borrett, County Councillor, as guests, the Chairman began by thanking Sue Malt for making tea before the meeting, Simon Brock and James Keith for keeping the lawn tidy at the hall, and the Working Party (Sue, Dick, Dave, Carl, Glenys and Suzanne) for giving up their time to spring clean the hall.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 October 2017, available on the Hoe and Worthing website and also displayed on the walls of the village hall for this evening were offered for adoption.

Philip Cane proposed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting, seconded by Carl Watling. There was a unanimous show of hands to agree with the proposal. Therefore the minutes were adopted.

The Chairman noted that since the last meeting, Albert Stagles, a long time resident of Hoe and a stalwart attendee of our Parish Meetings and events, had sadly died. The Chairman also announced that Charles Carey, one of the Church Wardens for Hoe and well known in our parish had also recently died.

3. Treasurer's Report

Margaret Barrett, the Treasurer circulated her report for the financial year ended 31 March 2018, to the meeting.

It was noted that the hall insurance for last year and also for this year have both fallen due within this financial year so, the amount shown in the accounts appears to be double.

It was further noted that only one payment made to the Church had been banked in this financial year so the year-end balance is incorrect.

Grants of £227 are shown in the accounts and this includes the £200 grant received for the Jo Cox Great Day Out community event.

The Treasurer has concerns with the electricity contract, currently with Affinity. She will look further into this matter to ensure we are receiving the best deal.

The Treasurer felt that there would be no reason to increase the precept. Bill Borrett proposed that it should be left as it is and Adam Flack seconded this proposal. Unanimous.

The chairman thanked Margaret for the completed accounts and proposed they should be adopted; this was seconded by Dick Malt and unanimously agreed.

4. Chairman's Report

- Norfolk Day. This will be the first such event, organised for 27th July 2018. It has been promoted by the EDP and local radio. The Chairman felt that it would be a good opportunity to raise the profile of the parish, had written an article for the EDP and received agreement from our MP and others to visit the area. Hoe parish hosts the historic site of the traditional centre of the county, marked by a prehistoric glacial boulder opposite Hoe Rough but has the shortest parish name and no signs indicating its presence. This level of obscurity is an impediment to obtaining grant funding for the hall which currently needs repairs and refurbishment and it is hoped that a higher profile will improve things. Dick Malt indicated that the parish would be showcasing the work of the conservation volunteers at Hoe Common on Norfolk day who had agreed to organise events. The Norfolk Wildlife Trust had indicated they would be visiting nearby Hoe Rough on the day.

- Council Tax. It was noted that the county have requested a large increase in Council Tax once again. This was the first parish meeting since the rise. Bill Borrett explained that 3% of the revenue would be allocated to adult social care and the other 3% would be used for all other expenditure. The chairman pointed out this represented again the maximum allowed by central government without triggering a referendum in the county. Bill Borrett said that the rules would not permit the maximum rise to be charged every year and as it had been done twice it could not be done again next time.

- Local Councillors' Allowances. The Chairman brought to the attention of the meeting the large increases of 11% - 15% in allowances that the local councillors had agreed for themselves and then failed to answer press questions about the decision. This was again the first parish meeting since the allowances rise, the chairman pointed out there had been some incredulity and queries and asked Bill Borrett to explain why the increase was approved. As indicated earlier there had been a maximum rise in council tax at a time of austerity, with those employed at the council restricted to 1% rises for years and when the independent body reviewing councillor allowances had recommended there should be no rise. Bill Borrett explained that allowances had been introduced many years ago because effectively people who were not rich or retired were prevented from being councillors. Allowances were calculated on the assumption that one third of councillors' time was voluntary. Allowances had been raised this time as they had fallen behind those awarded in similar counties. He also indicated that the review body had recommended a rise but not until re-organisation to a cabinet system next year. The rise was therefore just agreed earlier than recommended and that appeared to have been overlooked in the reports. James Keith urged the meeting to return to more local matters and after checking with the meeting the chairman ended the discussion.

- Planning. It was noted that there had been no parish objection to planning proposals at Herons Haunt, Oak Lodge, Spring Studio and Lakeside House which were all approved. Discussion followed regarding the planning application at Billingford Lakes and there was unanimous outrage that this proposal had been approved, when there had been so much local opposition. It was also noted that the Breckland councillors who had approved the proposal were not local to the area with several substituting for absent members and being required to familiarise themselves with a huge agenda. Bill Borrett indicated that the planning committee had been recommended to approve the proposal and although it complied with policy he had written as the councillor for the ward to oppose it.

Even though the entrance to the Billingford lakes site would not be via the Swanton Morley Road in Worthing, Phil Cane raised concern that traffic would be directed along this route if relying on satellite navigation. The Chairman confirmed that the only entrance on the plans was on the Elmham Road and the one originally planned for Swanton Morley Road had been removed. He agreed to look into whether any further action could be taken now the scheme had been approved.

- Highways Issues. The chairman indicated that residents in Holt Road were still waiting after years of broken promises for speed management measures near their homes, our county councillor had not agreed to requests to visit them and see the problem first hand and there was no progress with obtaining a reduced buffer speed limit. They had attended the parish meeting to ask for urgent action. Carl Watling addressed the meeting, on behalf of the Hoe residents living along the Holt Road (B1146), regarding the number of accidents there. The neighbours agreed that they would like to see lower speed limits introduced but have been told by the local council and the police that there would need to be a cluster of deaths or life changing injuries before speed limit reduction could be considered. There would appear to be a discrepancy in the statistics between the Police reports and the local council records. The residents agreed to prepare a list of accidents that had taken place.

The chairman confirmed that he had repeatedly been told that unless there was a whole cluster of deaths or serious injuries in any location the county safety budget would not allow for any further measures to be considered there. He described the history of the considerable work that had been done to have a 'buffer' speed limit reduction introduced past hazards at our residents' homes, Gingerbread Corner, Quebec Hall and to Northgate School. After a presentation to Dereham Town Council its councillors unanimously agreed to adopt the 'buffer' limit as their official policy but had done nothing and the considerable correspondence sent to our county councillor and other councillors locally had not been answered. He indicated that an extensive paper that accompanied the correspondence was highly critical of the county's road safety policy which had targets for fatal and serious injury accidents, including one for children and had failed to meet them year on year for almost a decade. The budget for its operation had been repeatedly slashed to just 10% of what it was. The paper is now on our website and just after it was circulated the matter was discussed at a county committee, which agreed to form a working group with partners to look at why deaths and serious injuries were increasing. The chairman asked Bill Borrett if any date had been agreed to report back and he said it had not. The chairman asked if he had consent to continue pursuing the 'buffer' limit and wider safety policy issues and the meeting unanimously indicated he had. There had been an intake of breath and concern expressed by the meeting when the safety policy was described.

The chairman pursued the point that letters he wrote to councillors and highways officers were routinely now going unanswered and he was therefore spending many hours working for the parish fruitlessly. He had pointed out that his was very time-consuming, frustrating, stressful and insulting but had also received no response to that. James Keith confirmed that the parish attempts to address flooding problems in Hoe Road North had met with enquiries sent to our highways engineer being ignored and he expressed considerable concern about this. Bill Borrett said he had only recently become aware of the flooding issue and would arrange a site meeting for interested parties with the highways engineer which he would also attend.

The Chairman stated that in view of the time he would complete his report in writing.

5. Reports from Local Groups

Carl Watling reported that the Events Committee is organising a small village fete, to be held at Sunday 8th July at the Parish Hall. The committee is also providing hosts to the organisers of Norfolk Day on Hoe Common on 29th July.

Furthermore, there will be an event in November to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War and to remember the local servicemen who lost their lives. Planning is currently in its early stage.

Celia Daniel gave her report on St Mary's Church at Worthing. An art exhibition will be held at the church from 23-26 May, where visitors can purchase items. 'Norfolk by Bike' will also be taking place again during the first weekend of August. She announced plans for a two week exhibition to be held at the church from 4-18 November, displaying local archive material from the First World War. There will also be a special service of remembrance.

6. Election of Officers

It was proposed that the Planning Committee members, consisting of James Keith, Margaret Barrett, Simon Brock and Dick Malt for Hoe, and Danny Danson, Celia Daniel, Mike Mullins and Alan Hughes for Worthing, continue in their roles. This was proposed by Trevor Wood and seconded by John Tuckwell. Unanimous.

It was proposed that Margaret Barrett is re-elected as Treasurer. Proposed by Dick Malt and seconded by Bill Borrett. Unanimous.

The post of Vice Chairman remains unfilled.

It was proposed that Trevor Wood remain as Chairman. Proposed by Margaret Barrett and Seconded by James Keith. Unanimous.

James Keith thanked the Chairman, on behalf of everyone, for his time, effort and his diligence to the role of Chairman. This was followed by a round of applause.

Bill Borrett then thanked the Treasurer for her valuable contributions to the Parish which was also applauded.

The next meeting will be held on 17 October 2018.

