



## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Memorial Hall Thursday 21 May 2015**

Present; Mrs. P Lees (Chairman), Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public; 9, Parish Councillors, Mr. P Johnson, Mrs. F Lambert, County Councillor R Gooding, District Councillors, Cllr. E Parr, Cllr. R Gleeson.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies; Mrs. M Jackson and Mr. R Franklin.
2. Minutes; The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 1 May 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. There were no matters arising.

### **3. County Councillor Ray Gooding's Report**

I would like to congratulate the Parish and District Councillors who have been elected in the recent election.

#### **Highways**

Unfortunately the white line and the re-painting of the mini roundabouts and the Zebra crossing were not carried out last year; I will push for this to be done, as soon as possible. I am meeting Frances and Louise tomorrow about the parking problem at the school which I will take forward to the Local Highways Panel.

Essex County Council is on track to reduce potholes on our local roads, having started a specific program to do so last October, and good progress has been made since then. Figures released for April 2015 show there are currently under 500 outstanding defects on Priority 1 and 2 roads in Essex. Outstanding defects on local roads have reduced over the past three months from 5,833 to 5,212, while 11,983 potholes were repaired on local roads during the same period. A total of 41,149 potholes and other defects have been repaired over the past twelve months.

## **Health & Social Care Bill**

The Care Bill was implemented from 1 April 2015; it introduces a new national minimum eligibility threshold to access services. The Care Bill introduced a cap of £72,000 for over 65's from April 2016 on the costs that people will have to pay for care and set out a universal deferred payment scheme so that people will not have to sell their homes in their lifetime to pay for residential care. The Bill will provide free life time care for people with eligible needs that arose before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and increase the asset threshold for financial support from the local authority with residential care costs from the current £23,250 to £118,000.

## **Schools**

Essex County Council have been liaising with planning authorities regarding proposed new housing developments and negotiating contributions towards meeting the cost of providing additional school places and financing of new schools in the area.

The Schools Commissioner for England has called for more schools to consider academy status to further boost the standard of education in Essex. Figures show how Essex County Council and schools in the county have embraced the government's academy program – to the benefit of their pupils. In Essex there are 137 academies the highest proportion in England.

77% of academies are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Forest Hall School in Stansted is now part of Burt Mill Academy in Harlow which has been rated outstanding by Ofsted. Finally, Elsenham is in need of a pre-school, we have the funds of ½ million pounds, all we need now is a place for the school to go.

A strong and vigorous debate then took place between the public and Cllr. Gooding on the decision to stop the free school bus to Forest Hall School. Parents were now put in a position of either allowing their child to walk 5.2 miles per day along paths that were unsafe or paying an extortionate price for a seat on the school bus.

## **4 Chairman's Report, Councillor Petrina Lees**

I have succeeded Nick Edwards as chairman who has resigned due to work commitments, and was excellent at chairing the meetings and brought in the new improved Smart Minutes.

Sadly three Councillors have resigned.

Bob Bayley, who was the major player in making sure that the school crossing was not closed, which was successful, he also worked with a huge amount of vigour against the housing development, unfortunately that was not so successful.

David Lucas contributed to the planning committee and the allotments and the general Parish Council, and his own time has been seen out sorting the icy paths.

And Mr. Woolvin, who well frankly always played to his own drum; which is no bad thing on the committee.

The Planning committee chaired by Peter Johnson has addressed over 35 planning applications this year. Writing insightful cognitive responses with salient points. Peter Johnson and myself have attended planning committee meetings at UDC (when I was dictating this, UDC came up as "sadistic", who said technology was wrong!) to represent the Parish Council.

The appeal to the 800 homes Fairfield applied is due any time now, and the inspector threw out the UDC local plan ..... We await his report x

The playing field which is the largest area of recreational land and used by a wide range of people and organisations. The committee chaired by Peter Clear continues to maintain the playing field to a good standard. Inspecting it regularly, with a lot of work going on behind the scene, we have also installed a new disabled bay in the car park.

Elsenham rights-of-way committee, who I have to say have the most interesting meetings for me, work tirelessly in the background, they keep the Spinney looking super, they consistently ensure the local footpaths are maintained and are accessible.

The village is looking much more pleasing to the eye this year, with planting the flowers around the village to add to the existing areas of daffodils crocuses and snowdrops. With our flower beds, new flowerbed boxes at either end of the village and the wildflower section in the Spinney

Mr & Mrs Newland do I love you, make a lovely job of planting all the flowers.

The Memorial Garden continues to look great and the war memorial has been cleaned.

We've had our annual cleanup day arranged by Councilor Franklin and unfortunately our little picker has resigned after working for 13 years to keep this village tidy.

We have banned sky lanterns and balloons being released on parish land.

And after 15 months we have finally made an agreement with the PCC and the allotment holders; which took onerous research and tireless work from Peter Johnson and Peter Clear.

In the last year we have seen the loss of the free school bus to Stansted school after a vigorous fight led by Mrs. Terry, but the Parish Council will still continue to question why this is so and also to try and find out why it costs more for children to go to Stansted Mountfitchett school from Elsenham, which is a distance of 3 miles than to go to Bishops Stortford which is seven miles.

Due to the amount of effort and work we are all putting in, our Clerk's hours have increased to 72 hours a month and Louise continues to be an excellent Clerk and Financial Officer dealing with members of the public and the Councillors and keeping us all in check !

I would like to thank our County Councillor, two District Councillors, members of the Parish Council and Parish Clerk who have all given the time and energies to supporting our village and its community and for the members of public who do attend all meetings.

We have been inundated with the new housing in this village and though we have fought against those applications they have been approved, I would like to say that we will welcome new members to the village and hope that they support the Parish Council and become involved in village life, I love living here and I'd like everybody to do the same!

## **5. District Councillor Lizzy Parr's Report.**

Cllr. E Parr reported on the following;

- Thank you to David Morson,
- School crossing.
- School Bus.
- Development – Full permission: Land adjacent to Hailes Wood, David Wilson Homes, Former Goods Yard.
- Update on Fairfield and Hill Top Yard.

## **6. Parish Council's Financial Report.**

The financial report was circulated.

Mrs. P Lees reported that Elsenham Parish Council had a good financial year with a surplus of £5,000; this was despite spending funds on fighting against planning applications in the village. The £5,000 was put back into the budget with extra funds added to the maintenance of the public footpaths and the project to add the names to The Memorial Cross of the men who had lost their lives in conflict.

## **Open Forum.**

7. Mr. Segar reported that the markings at the junction and mini roundabouts at Ambrose Corner were still in urgent need of re-painting, the condition that they were currently in was a danger to the public; he asked if the Parish Clerk could send a letter every month to Highways reporting the mini roundabouts and the repair to the The Croft, until this work had been carried out.
8. Mr. Segar asked if any decision had been made at the Playing field meeting with regards to the kicking wall that had been requested; Mrs. P Lees said that she would ask for this to be addressed at the next Parish Council Meeting.
9. Doctor Mott thanked Mr. Nick Edwards for the past 3 years as Chairman, stating he had done an excellent job.
10. Doctor Mott said he had taken a keen interest in planning applications due to where he lives; Stansted Road have had two large planning applications agreed and are in the process of fighting a third. He praised Mr. P Johnson and Mrs. P Lees for all the sterling work that they had done in the fight to save our village. Doctor Mott said it was always good to be a nuisance and contest detailed applications.
11. Mrs. M Shaw asked if the Parish Council had agreed that a sign denoting the dangers on Hall Road by Abotham Bridge was necessary, Mrs. P Lees said it had been agreed and the Parish Clerk had contacted Highways.
12. The Chairman closed the meeting, thanking everyone in the village for their help and support, in making Elsenham a fantastic place to live.
13. Mr. R Franklin thanked Mr. N Edwards for his sterling work over the last year.
14. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9 pm.