



## **Minutes of the Elsenham Annual Parish Meeting held in the Memorial Hall at 8pm, Thursday 27 April 2017**

### **Present:**

Councillor S Pimblett (Chairman), Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk)

### **Members of the Public:**

20, including Parish Councillors, Cllr. M Jackson, Cllr. A Gleeson, Cllr. P Johnson, Cllr. F Lambert, Cllr. B Smith, Cllr. J Minor and Cllr. G Mott, Essex County Councillor, Essex County Cllr. R Gooding. District Councillors, Cllr. P Lees and Cllr. G LeCount.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr. R Franklin and Cllr. C Dunn.
- 2. Minutes;** the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 14 April 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. There were no matters arising.
- 3. County Councillor's Report - Cllr. R Gooding**  
Cllr. Gooding reported that he had attended 334 Parish Council meetings in the last four years. Most of the questions asked at these meetings were regarding Highways or development; but they were important for gaining insight into the local areas. He believed that Parish Councils are the back bone of the community. There is a great community spirit in Elsenham which can help the more vulnerable people living in the village as the community can be the eyes and ears of social services.

The road between Elsenham and Thaxted will be resurfaced and whilst the progress may be delayed because of the works by Affinity Water there is a commitment that it will be carried out this year.

A Highways Inspector has now surveyed the verges and carriageway on Hall Road. The original short term solution was to provide bollards until a permanent solution was found. But after examining the road, the inspectors now realised that as the verges are so soft, bollards would not be an option.

### **Schools in Essex**

Cllr. Gooding is the Cabinet member for Education and Lifelong Learning. Essex County Council (ECC) are raising the standards in schools, in Uttlesford 100% of secondary schools are now 'good' or 'outstanding', with 91.6% reaching this standard across Essex.

Over the next 10 years the Authority or Free School providers will need to facilitate the infrastructure that will see 15,267 additional primary pupil places added. For secondary schools the number of places that will need to be created to meet forecasts is 13,620. In Uttlesford 1,250 new primary places and 150 secondary places need to be found. 99% of children in Uttlesford were given their 1<sup>st</sup> school choice.

### **Social Care**

This year ECC has increased their precept by 3%, this is to help finance one of the increasing budgets for Social Care.

The total spend on social care for Essex is £600 million of which £480 million is spent on adults and £120 million on children.

Social care is a very important issue, yet residents are often more likely to complain to ECC about a pothole in the road than the social care of a neighbour or relative.

Safeguarding children and young people means protecting them from abuse and neglect, creating a safe environment and providing the right support as early as possible.

Social care is available to support some people who have learning disabilities, physical or sensory impairment or who have particular mental health difficulties.

Social care for adults includes health problems, staying safe from domestic abuse and crime, your legal rights and the financial help you may be entitled to. ECC give support and equipment to help people remain living in their homes.

### **Questions addressed to Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding.**

#### **What measures does ECC do to try and increase the standard of a school?**

ECC work with the school, they give help and support where it is needed, sometimes it does mean replacing the head teacher and the governing body.

#### **When will Elsenham be getting a new much needed pre-school?**

There is an issue with the funding and the lack of space for the pre-school at the Elsenham Primary School, both these would have been solved if the Bovis Homes development had gone ahead. Although the funding may be sourced elsewhere, the lack of space remains a big problem.

**The Uttlesford new Local Plan states that 420 places will be required in Elsenham Primary school in the next 20 years.**

The outline plans for the school caters for 420 places. However there is a need for more play areas and a drop off point, both of which would have been provided by the Bovis Homes development.

#### **4. Parish Council Chairman's report**

A year of change for the Parish Council. Back as Chairman after seven years of trying to keep my head down. I certainly was not expecting that!

Since being elected as Chairman in October 2016 we have welcomed two new District Councillors onto the Elsenham & Henham ward and three new Parish Councillors.

Elsenham continues to be presented with many problems and challenges and is under constant pressure from all the new developments that has arisen in our midst.

The Fairfield Development has not completely disappeared and is one of six sites in Uttlesford under consultation for possible development.

Councillor Gooding forewarned us last year of impending budget cuts to Essex County Council's spending review and the likely outcome of this measure to many services.

This I know has been very frustrating to many members of the public and the Parish Council. Pot holes, pavement sweeping, over hanging vegetation and drain clearing are constantly on our agenda.

Hopefully Highways will be able to find some money in their restricted budget for some much needed improvements to Hall Road in the near future. We would also like to think there will be funding available for Elsenham Primary school.

The Planning Committee have done an excellent job throughout the year and have been well supported by Graham Mott joining the committee. They all spend an amazing amount of time researching and looking after the interests of our village.

The new Village Hall still seems a long way off and has not been helped by the many Planning applications by Bovis Homes who are part funding this project.

The allocation from Section 106 money to the village remains a concern for us all and there has been very little dialogue between UDC and the Parish Council of where this money should really go to the maximum benefit of our village.

The Parish Council did form a committee to see if we could find a possible use for the Chapel of Rest in the village cemetery. As you know this is a redundant building and we feel it would be good to maintain and preserve this building by finding alternative uses for it. Unfortunately, our attempts to obtain grant aid from the Heritage lottery fund was unsuccessful but we will persevere and try and get electricity and water supplied to the building as a starting point.

The Elsenham Rights of Way and Open Spaces Committee have been kept busy throughout the year improving and maintaining footpaths as well as organizing Village walks. Other activities have included working on the spinney and planting fruit trees on De Mandeville. Responding to British Rail's Consultation on FP closures and diversions and trying to safe guard Alsa Wood with a robust management plan for the future.

Other changes for the Parish Council have been to appoint a new Grass Cutting Contractor, MD Contracts. So far they seem to have made a good start although they have not been really tested yet as this dry spring has slowed growth. Their contract will be on a one year probationary period to start with.

The Flower Bed Committee have received many favorable comments from village residents on the colourful flower beds in the village and all the hard work and input that

has been carried out in the Memorial gardens. Tom Belton has been appointed as the new gardener to look after these areas and will be helped by the committee and volunteers for watering and weeding etc. I must take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers for all their much appreciated work over the last year.

Mixed Begonias have been ordered for the beds for this summer and I am sure the Memorial gardens will be a show case for the village as it comes to fruition.

An annual Litter Picking event was organized this year a little earlier than usual to compliment the “Great British Litter Picking Weekend” and the Queen’s birthday. I would like to thank Campbell, Moyra, Frances and Annie for taking the lead on this one and for the many volunteers who turned out, young and old. It made a huge difference to our village and a mountain of rubbish was collected for disposal.

The Playing field has been maintained to a high standard and the Children’s Play area. Although vandalism seems to have subsided over the last few years we have had some incidents of cars driving on the field at night. Currently we are receiving quotations to install a low level boundary fence to solve this problem.

Dog fouling has been an ongoing problem within the village as the population grows and hopefully stronger action will be taken against offenders in the future.

We had an incident of arson in the village and the Elsenham Cricket Club Pavilion was burnt to the ground on the night of October 16<sup>th</sup>. Currently the Club are seeking to obtain a long term lease for the ground and have approached Sport England about possible funding for a purpose built building which is more secure for the future. The Club faces strong competition with other organizations competing for money. I am sure we all wish the Club well to preserve this amenity and the green open space in the village which are fast disappearing.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of our Councillors, County, District and Parish for all of their hard work over the last year and for the many volunteers whose work is vital to us all. I would like to think we now have a team whose efforts make a real difference and want to maintain Elsenham as a decent place to live.

Finally, I would like to thank our Parish Clerk Louise for coping so well with an ever increasing mountain of paperwork. As our Clerk she is very efficient in responding to emails and problems that arise. Louise always shows true professionalism and dedication to her duties and certainly keeps me on the straight and narrow as Chairman. We are greatly indebted to her.

## **Parish Council Financial Report**

**In the absence of the Finance Chairman, Cllr. S Pimblett read the report.**

It has been a year of challenges, fortunately our precept was not cutback.

The Village is growing and we will have greater expenditure without the guarantee of the Precept increasing in future years.

The Finance Committee members decided that the years ahead would become more challenging with Local Government financial restraints. Realizing that improvements could be made to committee budgets and accountability if all committees presented a statement of proposed projects and expenditure for the next financial year, and all complied.

The Parish Council is generously supported by members, village groups and individuals who give both time and knowledge for the benefit of the Village without financial cost. And I would like to thank all for the support over the year.

The most important point.

We finish this year on a sound financial footing.

## **5. District Councillors' Report**

### **Cllr. L Lees and Cllr. G LeCount**

A Memorandum of Understanding between East Hertfordshire District Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council and Uttlesford District Council

The Objective is to work with their neighbours assessing the housing need across the West Essex/East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area.

Local Councils including Uttlesford have spent more than £1bn on real estate this year, more than has been spent in decades. The reason for income-generating property assets is aimed at compensating for the impact of government cuts.

The projected forecasts for the total amount of housing needed and identified for the Uttlesford area is 690 per year until 2033.

The current population in Uttlesford is around 80,000, by 2033 it is projected that it will be around 106,000.

### **Questions addressed to Uttlesford District Councillors**

#### **May we have more bungalows in Elsenham?**

Both Cllrs agreed that there was a need in Elsenham for more bungalows. Uttlesford Planning group, when allocating bungalows on a development, always refer to ECC guide lines. Cllr. Lees is going to bring to their attention that ECC guide lines are just that, a guide, and do not have to be adhered to.

#### **Litter and dog bins on the new developments.**

Despite the number of new houses, Uttlesford District Council will not be increasing the number of litter and dog waste bins in the village. It would be the Parish Councils responsibility not only to buy the bins but for arranging and paying for them to be emptied. This is mainly due to lack of funds. Cllr. P Lees said she would find out if UDC have a ratio of houses to bins.

#### **Is there going to be further development in the village?**

The local plan is going through now, UDC were just waiting for a Government guideline white paper, before any information could be released.

**Footpath 21, behind the Crown Public House.**

Nigel Brown at UDC was still discussing Footpath 21 with 'Persimmons Homes'.

**6. Open Forum.**

A resident thanked the Councillors for arranging the road sweeper, it had carried out a much-needed job.

It was stated that whatever work was carried out on Hall Road it would not get any better, the road was not wide enough, and could not cope with the amount of cars and lorries that use it.

Cllr. B Smith introduced himself as a new member on Elsenham Parish Council. He had not realised that the Parish Council has many committees and working groups, involving Councillors and volunteers. The volunteers carried out lots of work and should be appreciated for all their help. Lots more could be accomplished if members worked together and were open with each other.

Cllr. Smith was looking forward to working on the Council and he was happy for residents to contact him if he could be of any help.

Network Rail are going to close as many crossings as possible, one of which is the Fullers End railway crossing. The existing public footpath over the level crossing will be terminated. A new footpath heading south will be installed, it will cross the railway via an existing underpass where new lighting will be provided, the route continues east on a new 2 meter wide tarmac footpath which connects to the Tye Green Road. Concerns were raised about the ongoing maintenance of the underpass. Clarification must be sort in the response to the Secretary of State.

**7. The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and hoped to see them again next year.**

The meeting closed at 8.54pm.