

## HIGH HALSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL 2014 AT THE MEMORIAL HALL, THE STREET, HIGH HALSTOW AT 8.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Cllr George Crozer Chairman  
 Cllr Martin Andrews  
 Cllr Stuart Bailey  
 Cllr Ray Collins  
 Cllr Gary Jerreat  
 Cllr Mrs Lesley Munday  
 Cllr Gary Thomas  
 Cllr Mrs Chris Watson

Mrs Roxana Brammer Clerk

Cllr Tony Watson Medway Council  
 PCSO David Warren  
 21 parishioners

#### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Phil Filmer and Chris Irvine, Medway Council.

#### **2 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2013**

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs Munday, seconded by Cllr Thomas and agreed the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17 April 2013 be signed as a true record.

#### **3 ACCOUNTS**

The Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 was received. No questions were asked.

#### **4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Once again it is only right that, on your behalf, I thank councillors and the many volunteers who give their time (and in some cases money) to maintain the community of High Halstow. Please feel free at any time during my report to help yourself to our buffet and can I begin this report by thanking Lesley Munday for the preparation.

May I formally welcome one of our Ward Councillors to our midst and take this opportunity to thank them for their continued support and finance afforded to High Halstow this year. Thank you to Roxana our Parish Clerk for keeping us on the straight and narrow. Thank you to Carl Mitchell editor of our High Halstow Times.. I haven't had my April copy yet..!! Apparently he was "holding the front page" for someone !!! I can't guess who that was..! So it's my fault if there was no April Fool's joke ... Or perhaps I was the April fool and he was actually holding the front page..! Carl's efforts would of course be all in vain if we didn't have the team of volunteer "paper people" secretly delivering snippets of news to each house in the village, sometimes under the cover of darkness with total disregard of personal safety. Stealthily organised by "Mr Smith" ... !! - locally known yet unnamed and very, very much appreciated by all.

Thank you to Margaret Church for continuing to maintain our staff wages system. Margaret who now lives outside the village continues to be part of our community, she is very active with both our halls helping with Quiz nights and general fund raising.

Thank you to Jack and John for continuing to maintain the cleanliness of our streets. You may have noticed of late that Jack has stopped taking the sun on his bench outside the church. He has gone into hospital for a while for a planned operation. This means he will be out of action for several weeks. We are being kept up to date with his progress and wish him a speedy recovery and a full return to operational duties. In the meantime John has kindly taken on some of Jack's duties.

Thank you to all our Parish Councillors for their continued support and understanding. They all undertake their many unpaid duties with a great deal of zeal and dedication. Being a Parish Councillor does not just involve attendance here once a month. Councillors are expected to attend other meetings throughout the year. These could include: Visiting neighbours of planning applicants that we might understand the impact of the application, attending regular meetings of Finance, Planning, Personnel, Police Liaison, Rural Liaison and other forums and surgeries.

High Halstow Parish Council and its employees of course do not constitute the whole community of High Halstow. It is merely the final tier of government and focal point of political and statutory debate. The real community are us as a whole... The "Relief in Need" and "Friends of St Margaret's" charities providing support, the School, Church, Doctors, Shop, "Red Dog", Village market and others providing services to the village. The Hikers, Youth, Badminton, Cricket, Deep sea fishing, Drama, Investors clubs, they all provide opportunities for residents and others to become active within the village and feel that they are part of its community. Fundamental to any community of course must be somewhere to meet on a regular basis. We are fortunate here to have two great halls. This, The Memorial Hall, built to celebrate the safe return of our men and women from the Great War is lovingly maintained by its Trustees, chaired by Ann Smith. The Hall of late is probably best known for its monthly oversubscribed Quiz nights which provide a steady stream of additional finance to help with its upkeep. Many of us and our children will hold this building in their long term memory as the place where they had their first real party. The other, the Recreation Hall just across the road was built in 1961 with donations from BP when the village went through its post war expansion. Maintenance and recent refurbishment of this hall is in the hands of its trustees under the chairmanship of Gary Thomas. I am pleased to say that trustees have now completed phase two of the three phase project to bring the hall into the 21st century as a warm, inviting, safe place to meet. Thank you to both those groups of trustees for the work they do. It is much appreciated by all but a few who have problems containing the natural effects of youth and the sudden burst in testosterone. I must say a special thanks to one trustee in particular, Ray Collins who has seemingly dedicated his entire diary to the day to day maintenance of, I believe, both halls.

This year the Council resolved to budget additional monies for a youth project. We are currently considering bringing this project forward and we will of course be consulting local people as to their opinion.

I'm weary to announce that Father Christmas and his ever growing band of helpers delivered over 300 presents to both the young and the old all around the village on Christmas Eve. After already having delivered half that amount again to homes in Allhallows just two days before. I'm told it is hard work but very satisfying..!

I was pleased to see that finally this year we have resolved the issues around ownership of the Britannia Road/Longfield Avenue bus shelter site. The bus stop has raised some additional concerns, however it is the Council's resolve to maintain the stop in its present position for the foreseeable future. This has brought into question ownership of other parcels of land within the village and we continue to assess costs and the need to register Parish Council ownership of these, for the benefit of the whole village.

Once again the Council has renewed its contract with Turfsoil to maintain our green spaces around the village. I am pleased to say this will include the regular cutting of grass around the graveyard at the Church.

We are now at the end of the first season of the newly ensconced High Halstow Football Club who now consider the Recreation ground as their "Home" We have received no comments from residents and trust this return to regular organised sport on the "Rec" is a positive move.

I welcome the further new speed restrictions across the Peninsula and echo residents of the Isle Grain who say that the cameras on the A228 have drastically reduced fatalities. New road surface improvements in and around the village are a much needed improvement too and I look forward to their completion. I note however that the dissemination of information about road closures was a little lacking, perhaps closer liaison between the Parish and Medway Councils would have helped with the confusion.

On a wider note I was very disappointed to learn that the Ministry of Defence and their delivery partner, Land Securities submitted a revised Outline Planning Application at the end of February to build around 5,000 homes at Lodge Hill, now the only nationally important site for nightingales. Medway Council's Core Strategy was withdrawn at the end of last year after an independent planning inspector found that the allocation of housing at Lodge Hill was in conflict with the Government's flagship national planning policy. The proposal fails to meet the tests set out in Government policy to protect places important for wildlife. If it is allowed to proceed, it would set a deeply damaging precedent for many of this peninsula's most special sites for wildlife. This Parish Council will this evening lodge its objections to this proposal. I strongly urge you to do likewise as even if you have already objected to the former proposal this new proposal will not take into account the objections previously submitted. Perhaps our Ward Councillor present would like to comment later on the Ward Councillors' and Medway Council's position.

The Peninsula continues to be under the threat of the possibility of having its own airport..!! The last Government said it shouldn't be built here..! Many say it will never be built here! Many say we shouldn't even be considered by the Davis Commission. I suspect that when Howard Davis delivers his interim report (in December I believe) we will still be under consideration. Please don't become complacent.. !! Please remember and continue to shout our unique argument .. The Greater Thames Estuary is this country's second most important site for migrant wintering wildlife. 350,000 wildfowl fly here every year and have done so for thousands of years and will continue to do so for the next thousand years. In fact it is so special for birds here that our own Government, the European Community and the International Ramsar Convention have declared it a special place for birds... And don't forget the RSPB already have 1.2 million members saying the same message!!! Their motto gives it all away "For Birds For People Forever"

Thank you

## **5 MEDWAY COUNCILLORS' REPORT**

Recycling – Medway Council introduced weekly recycling collections last October and they have been very popular with residents. In the first three months of operation Medway residents recycled or composted around 7,300 tonnes of waste – the weight of the Eiffel Tower!

Lodge Hill – Your Ward Councillors are opposed to a new town being built at Lodge Hill in Chattenden. We feel it would damage the character of neighbouring villages, cause traffic disruption and destroy the natural environment. A refreshed planning application is currently being consulted on and is expected to go before Medway Council's Planning Committee in May.

Primary School places in Hoo – We are working to increase capacity for primary school children going to school in Hoo. Hoo alone has seen a population increase of more than 21.6% since 2001 – impacting on local amenities and services. We are campaigning for the existing primary school to either be made bigger, or for a completely new school to be built.

No Estuary Airport – Your Ward Councillors and local MP are strongly opposed to an airport being built anywhere in the Thames Estuary. Although the Grain option wasn't short listed in the recent Davies Commission's interim report, the Thames Estuary option wasn't ruled out. We therefore encourage residents to submit their feedback to the Davies Commission's interim report by the deadline (23<sup>rd</sup> May). These can be sent by email to: [estuary.studies@airports.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:estuary.studies@airports.gsi.gov.uk)

Cllrs Phil Filmer, Chris Irvine and Tony Watson

## **6 REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

### **a Police**

PCSO David Warren said he covered Strood and that the local PSCO was Tina Fursey. There had been only 6 reported crimes in the previous 5 weeks and the call rate had been relatively low in the last month. An operation to do with nuisance vehicles was about to start and would run until September. He explained how Section 59 orders worked. There had been break-ins on allotment sites and these would be visited over the next few months. Regular surgeries were still being run and there were mobile stations.

Written reports from other organisations would be included in the next issue of High Halstow Times.

## **7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a Speeding in The Street**

An email had been received from Cllr Filmer concerning speeding near the school in The Street.

### **b Skate Park**

Cllr Mrs Watson reported that children had been shown drawings of equipment available and had been consulted on what they would like.

**c Building Site Eden Road**

Mrs Forward referred to the building site at the corner of Eden Road and Longfield Avenue and said she had taken up the matter with Cllr Filmer, who had promised to get it cleared.

The Chairman thanked Parish and Medway Councillors and parishioners for attending and Cllr Mrs Munday for preparing the buffet and closed the meeting at 9.33 pm.

Signed .....Chairman

On the .....day of .....2015