

**ALVINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2016**

Present: Councillor N Ashley (Chairman)
Councillor I Gleeson
Councillor A Graves
Councillor S Shucksmith
Councillor R Wahlberg

Apology: Councillor D Buckley

Clerks: Mrs L Ward (retiring)
Mrs S McFarland

In Attendance: Mr P Hewitt Brown

Member of the Public: Mr J Goolden

The Chairman declared the Annual Parish Meeting open and extended a very warm welcome to all those present. He called upon the Retiring Clerk to read the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 March 2015. These were declared a true record, proposed by Councillor Wahlberg and seconded by Councillor Shucksmith.

MATTERS ARISING

Road Surfaces – Councillor Graves commented that there had been little, or no, improvement during the year. Councillor Gleeson to report the various pot holes down Highbridge Road. It was reiterated that the more people who contact the Highways Department regarding the poor state of the roads in our vicinity the better.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Councillor Gleeson presented her last report as Treasurer before handing over to Mr Philip Hewitt-Brown. A cheque in the sum of £500 issued to Alvingham Village Hall has not been presented and a new cheque will be issued after 1 April 2016. She also reported the following:

- (i) a £70 increase in the grass cutting from last year
- (ii) £15.24 postage and stationery
- (iii) £157 brackets for speed sign
- (iv) £50 painting of telephone box

leaving a surplus of £1495.89 (In real terms **£995.89** when the Village Hall cheque taken into account)

Councillor Gleeson advised that the Precept had been submitted and accepted by ELDC and would be received into our bank account shortly.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report was proposed by Councillor Graves, seconded by Councillor Wahlberg and then signed by the Chairman as a true record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman opened by thanking Councillor Gleeson for her excellent work as Treasurer over the last few years and was delighted that despite giving up this responsibility she would be remaining on the Parish Council. He also said that after 16 long years we were saying goodbye to our clerk, Lesley Ward, and went on to record not only the thanks of the Parish Council but also his personal thanks for all she had done over this period. He extended a warm welcome to the new Clerk, Suzanne McFarland, and added that all councillors would do all they could to ensure a smooth transition.

There have been many changes at ELDC over the year which has left it in turmoil with further changes still to come. There have also been changes locally with the loss of Edward Mossop – such a fountain of information and knowledge. Fortunately we still have the same core of Councillors and Dan McNally is of great assistance from the LCC side.

Problems encountered during the year are ongoing. Some hairy chestnuts refuse to go away in particular:-

- 1) Dog problems – Some of these problems can only be sorted through co-operation from the dog owners rather than laying the blame on the actual dogs.
- 2) General tidiness of the village – improvement in some area not in others. Verges are being cut up due to transport and farm machinery getting bigger all the time while the size of the roads stays the same.
- 3) Roads – are still in a state of disrepair and have not improved much. The cost of bringing the roadways up to a reasonable standard is going to be incredibly expensive and the vast sum of money required takes a lot of finding in this difficult economic climate.
- 4) Speed indicator – We have managed to acquire a speed indicators for the approach to the Village which will be sited on the North and West entrances to the village. Devices have gone back to Grainthorpe where they will be calibrated to ensure a precise reading is given when they are next in the village. 30mph stickers will be displayed at this time.
- 5) Planning – we have seen several requests for development. In the main the successful applications have enhanced the village, even if the planners have not been through enough in keeping to the original permissions. How planning will turn out during the coming years is anybody's guess.
- 6) Finances - As a Parish Council we try to be frugal and keep the Precept as low as possible and will try to keep it that way if possible.
- 7) Grass Cutting – Mr Maurice Jackson does a superb job and offers excellent value for money.
- 8) Village Hall – Our community centre needs the support of the Parish Council and we will continue to support them as it is for the good of the whole community.

Finally, the Chairman thanked all of the councillors for their excellent attendance during the year and the effort put in by all during the last twelve months.

CLERK'S REPORT

This is my last report as your clerk after 16 years in the post. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Clerk to Alvingham Parish Council but feel it is now time for someone else to take over this role and I know, with certainty, that Mrs Suzanne McFarland will do an excellent job. I have said you are a very friendly bunch and I know you will not prove me wrong.

Alvingham Parish Council met on 7 occasions during the year with meetings being very well attended. One Councillor recorded an apology at one meeting during this period. 17 items of correspondence were received in paper format as against 29 last year – another significant drop. The majority of correspondence is now received electronically resulting in the day-to-day operations of the Parish Council being more efficient. The Minutes of meetings have been correctly recorded in the official Minute Book and a copy displayed on the Parish Noticeboard.

Last year one member of the public attended the Annual Parish Meeting. Perhaps it is time for a more innovative approach with a prize for the councillor who entices the most people along next year! The outgoing clerk said she would attend next year's meeting thereby increasing the turnout by 100%

Finally, there were 3 successful planning applications during the period – 2 full and 1 outline.

OPEN FORUM

Mr Philip Hewitt-Brown requested telephone numbers for all Parish Councillors. Clerk to supply.

Councillor Wahlberg informed the meeting that the defibrillator had been installed by East Midlands Ambulance Services on the outside wall of the Village Hall and training had been given. Councillor Wahlberg went on to give a resume of the procedure for its use. Another defibrillator is also sited on the outside wall of North Cockerington School. Councillor Wahlberg was asked to ensure that the Village Hall notify the police regarding where it is sited.

Mr Goolden raised the following points:-

Telephone Box – He considered its purchase for the village to be very good news and thought it looked extremely smart since painting.

Pot Holes – He felt the one outside the entrance to Mr Pridgeon's farm needed special mention as motorists had to swerve into the middle of the road to avoid it. Mr Goolden was informed that a website address for recording such problems is on the village noticeboard and he was urged to add his weight to highlighting this problem by reporting the pot hole to LCC.

Transparency Code – The Parish Council is required to have a website where audited accounts etc. have to be posted. Funding is available for 3 years from NALC. Mr Goolden offered to help the Clerk in this regard. ELDC might be willing to create a micro site. This resulted from The Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. Discussed at length. Councillor Shucksmith asked what purpose it would serve.

Messrs. Trafford Planning Application – Mr Goolden said that in the Supporting Statement there is a paragraph stating that originally 6 dwellings had been proposed – 1 near the village noticeboard. On advice from ELDC this was reduced to 5 dwellings on the grounds that 5 would not require an adopted road and the site of the 6th dwelling should be public open space. This would have to be offered by Messrs. Trafford in the planning process as a village green thereby protecting recreation in perpetuity for the village. The Chairman felt this facility would definitely be an asset to the village. Councillor Gleeson said there was some opposition to the proposed development and she had been approached in this regard. The main concerns were the runoff water and the height of the proposed development and it was acknowledged the main impact would be to the residents of Highbridge Road and not Church Lane. Mr Goolden urged the Parish Council to look critically at everything in the Supporting Statement to ensure if permission were granted that the development is built as described. He also highlighted that five big family houses would bring with it a high demand for internet usage in a village with poor connectivity. Cabinet 2 was sited opposite the school in North Cockerington and in his opinion it would cost in the region of £60,000 to replace the copper cable for the last mile and have our own cabinet. It is essential to have good broadband speeds if you are conducting a business from home and he considered that a proviso of larger applications should be a contribution to funding a cabinet otherwise Alvingham will be left behind because of its poor broadband speed. This planning application is delegated at the moment but it was felt these viewpoints could be made more succinctly if it went to committee.

There being no further matters the Chairman declared the Annual Parish Meeting closed at 8.40am and thanked all those present for their continued interest in the affairs of Alvingham.