

Newton Flotman Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2016

Present: David Gibbs (Chairman)	Parish Council
Bob McKelvey	Parish Council
Christopher Remer	Parish Council
Bob Kelf	Parish Council
Jean Wilson	Parish Council
Julie King (Clerk)	Parish Council
Rev Canon Sally Gaze	St Mary's Church
Wendy Adams	Newton Flotman & District Women's Institute
Barry Adams	Newton Flotman Village Centre
Mark Taylor	Newton Flotman Football Club
Neil Tracey	Emergency Coordinator
Colin Foulger	County Councillor
Phil Hardy	District Councillor
Darrin Sore	Norfolk Police

Members of the Parish: William Ball, Kirsten Remer, Amanda White, Andy Cox and Sandra Gibbs.

David Gibbs welcomed everyone to the Meeting. He explained that it was a relatively informal meeting to enable representatives to report on the past year's activities and to respond to questions from the floor.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Evelyn Domeyer – Parish Councillor, Nigel Morgan – Parish Councillor, Andy Pownall – Newton Flotman Allotments, Glennis Holmes – Newton Flotman Pre-school, Andrew Broad and Michael and Ruth Sida.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th May 2015

These were agreed as a true record of proceedings with no amendments.

3. Reports from Other Bodies

a. Long Stratton Safer Neighbourhood Team – PCSO Darrin Sore

Darrin introduced himself as the PCSO for the Parish. He said that previously Newton Flotman had been part of the Long Stratton Safer Neighbourhood, however following a rejig of boundaries, they were now part of Hethersett and Mulbarton. He said that he had been to a few Parish Council meetings, and was accessible via the Parish Clerk or the non-emergency '101' telephone number. His Beat Manager was currently PC Glen Hambling, however with his imminent retirement he would shortly be replaced by PC Andy Read who would be joining him in attending all 15 of his Parish Councils in due course.

Crime Statistics

From 22nd March to midnight on 17th May there had been just one crime recorded, that of the attempted theft and damage to the roof of St

Mary's Church in the early hours of 8th May. He said that rural churches would always be a target and appealed to parishioners to report anything suspicious including vehicle index numbers.

In 2015/16 there had been 12 crimes in the Parish compared with 11 the previous year. Norfolk and particularly South Norfolk saw a low number of crimes and Newton Flotman was no exception. In response to a question regarding the sorts of crimes recorded, Darrin said that he did not have the information on him but would provide it to the Clerk so it could be included in the minutes when they were published.

Post meeting note: There had in fact been 13 crimes in 2015/16, they were: Theft of Motor vehicle, Theft from Motor vehicle, Theft x 3, Burglary other than Dwelling (such as sheds/out-buildings), Production of Cannabis x 2, Criminal damage x 3, Attempted Burglary, Burglary Dwelling (House burglary).

He encouraged parishioners to sign up for the 'Police Connect' updates available via the website – www.norfolk.police.uk by clicking on the 'Homewatch' icon. It was noted that these along with the rural crime updates, were also posted on the Parish Council's website.

In response to a question regarding parking disciplines around the Flordon Road around junctions, he suggested that instances of dangerous parking should be reported so that action could be taken.

b. District Council – Phil Hardy

Phil said there had been seven planning applications in Newton Flotman during the previous year, all had been approved, six with conditions. A plot for 30 new homes adjacent to Alan Avenue had been accepted for future development however no planning application had yet been received.

Following a letter from the Clerk to Tim Horspole, Director of Growth and Localism at South Norfolk Council, asking the Council to take into consideration the impact the new developments and Long Stratton By-pass on the traffic using the A140, he would be raising the issue in Full Council the following week.

Finally he said that South Norfolk Council had been pleased to support the church project. It was unusual for the Council to support a project not at the stage of being delivered but that they had been sufficiently impressed by those running the project and had confidence that they would raise the money required to complete the project.

Discussion took place regarding the impact of the development and bypass planned for Long Stratton. Phil confirmed that he had raised it in Full Council the previous year and had been reassured that the issues would be taken into account by the inspector.

c. County Council – Colin Foulger

Colin spoke on the following topics:

Devolution:

He said that Central Government had been pushing for Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to join together to form a 'powerhouse' which would see the transfer of significant resources and powers from central government to the region. He said that there had been some concern at the possible appointment of a 'Mayor' to oversee the organisation and suggested that 'Chief Executive' may be a more appropriate title.

He said that a draft agreement, suggested a combined authority be set up across the four authority areas in East Anglia, but that councils would still keep their sovereignty and deliver local services. He spoke of the advantages of Devolution, including more joined-up planning for road rail improvements. He said that between now and the summer each council in East Anglia would have the chance to debate the detail in the draft agreement, with a decision expected in early autumn.

Highways:

A new pot-hole and small project fund of £1.5million had been announced in addition to the existing budget.

Parish Partnership Scheme:

Funding of £380K for 122 small scale highway projects across Norfolk had been agreed by Council. The money from the County Council's Parish Partnership scheme would be matched by parish and town councils providing such items as vehicle activated signs, 'trod' paths and part-time advisory 20mph signs.

NDR:

Work had begun and was due to be completed by early 2018, although there was an ambition to complete before Christmas 2017. This would depend upon good progress with earth moving over the coming months, as well as key structures such as the bridges over the Norwich to Sheringham railway and Plumstead Road.

GCSE exam results:

Norfolk's schools had narrowed the gap on the national average at GCSE for the second successive year according to provisional results published. Early results suggested that Norfolk had climbed 35 places up the national league tables over the last two years. 53.8per cent of students achieved A* to C grades, including English and Maths, while 63.7per cent of students performed above the national average of 66.6per cent. Norfolk has seen a big rise in the number of 16-18 year olds in education, employment or training.

He concluded by saying that there were numerous other items of news that may be found on the council's website – www.norfolk.gov.uk.

Colin was asked about pot holes on the A140 and Pound Lane, he

suggested that the more people complained the more likely that action would be taken. The flooding under the railway bridge was also discussed and it was noted that the Parish Council were liaising with Highways with regard to this one. Colin said that the responsibility of ditch maintenance was often thought to be that of Highways whilst it was usually the responsibility of landowners.

4. Reports from Village Organisations and Groups

a. Newton Flotman Allotment Association – Andy Pownall

Andy was unable to attend the meeting but his written report was read out:

“There are 28 allotments off Exchange Road made up of 16 allotments of approximately 30m x 7m and 12 allotments of half this size. All of the allotments have been let this year and most are kept in reasonable condition, there are two or three that have become neglected and will probably become available at the end of the year. As the people with the neglected allotments have paid the rent for this year they will be given a chance to control the weeds before their contract is terminated at the end of the year. One has changed hands recently. I have two names on the waiting list.

In the report I gave to the Parish Council last year I omitted to thank them for having the water standpipes replaced with new taps conforming to the current regulations. All the allotment holders have asked me to thank all concerned, particularly the Parish Clerk, for the efficient way in which the letting of the contract was carried out. The two new taps at the same location as the previous are at a much better height making them easier to operate and less back breaking. I would also like to thank the Parish Council for having the ditch dredged along the western boundary of the allotments greatly improving the site. We are still waiting for the north boundary fence to be completed.

The grass on the access track through the allotments is kept cut. At the top of the allotments there has always been an area of land either side of the track left free for vehicles to turn and for allotment holders to have manure delivered and barrow onto their respective allotment, the area on the left has become a bit of a dumping ground for all kinds of waste making it difficult for vehicles to turn and leaves very little room for tipping of manure. It is hoped that at some time in the future the rubbish can be cleared by the Parish Council. A sign has been erected on behalf of the Parish Council asking for the dumping of rubbish to stop which seems to have had the desired effect.

All allotment holders are members of The Newton Flotman Allotment Society, affiliated to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. The membership fee was set at £3.00 of which £2.75 is passed to the National Society. The fee is collected at the same time as the rent. There are 25 members. The AGM of The Newton Flotman Allotment Society, as previous years, will be held in the Church meeting room during September.”

b. St Mary's Church – Rev Canon Sally Gaze

Sally highlighted a few items from the Newton Flotman part of the Tas Valley benefice's annual report which she had printed off for those present.

As well as the normal worship, weddings and funerals, Newton Flotman had a thriving children's focus and organised many social activities. The finances were strong and attendance healthy with the average Sunday attendance being around 40. Starting the previous year, the Cell Church, part of the Benefice, had employed Andy Cox to concentrate on community work. Amongst other things, he organised the Community Lunches which saw an average of 25 people come together and he was supporting Olive House. There continued to be a thriving under 5's group and the coffee drop-in on a Saturday morning. The Church continued to produce the Partnership magazine supported by the Parish Council and was grateful for the money for this and the maintenance of the Churchyard.

The links with the school remained strong. There were three representatives of the Church on the Governing body and members of the Church were in every week supporting the school as well as organising the 'Film Club' for families. The Holliday Club last summer at Newton Flotman School had once again been successful, with 40+ children attending.

Sally spoke briefly of the plans to make the Church building more sustainable for future generations and more usable at present. Being a grade 2* listed building, six organisations were being consulted on the plans, including: Historic England; The Society of the Protection of Ancient Buildings; the Victorian Society; and the Church Building Council. It was important that anything done was right, respectable and beneficial for the future. They had benefited from a grant from South Norfolk Council to employ a really good architect to draw up the plans. The plans were on display at the meeting and Sally encouraged those who had not had time to view them prior to the meeting, to do so afterwards.

Finally Sally said that during August repairs would be carried out to the church room, several items which had not been done at the time of building had come to light.

c. Newton Flotman Pre-School – Glennis Holmes

Glennis was unable to attend the meeting but her written report was read out:

"We are very pleased to announce that on January 21st we had an Ofsted inspection and we retained our OUTSTANDING rating. This is a result of all the hard work from staff and the committee. The inspector said: "All children make excellent progress. Their evident confidence and independence prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education and school."

We are approaching the end of the academic year 2015/16. Most of the children on role live in Newton Flotman but we have a number of children from surrounding villages.

Throughout the year we have had several open events such as sports day, open days for new parents and the annual nativity.

This year we swapped the children's Learning Journals from the old scrapbook style to an online system called Tapestry. Each parent has their own password and logs in to get a weekly update of their child's progress. This has proved very popular with parents because they are able to share it with friends and family as it happens, rather than waiting for a half termly update. It also enables us to keep track of each child's individual progress.

We continue to make use of the lovely premises here at the village centre and use the outdoor area every day of the year come rain or shine."

d. Newton Flotman and District Women's Institute – Wendy Adams

Wendy read out her report:

"We thoroughly enjoyed our centenary celebrations during 2015 which included a Buckingham Palace Garden Party for two members and the National Annual meeting in the Royal Albert Hall with HM Queen present as member of Sandringham WI. Closer to home we went to the Norfolk Federation Evening reception at Gressenhall Rural Life Museum and the Royal Norfolk Show.

Our membership has stabilised at about 20 which is lower than we would wish, but we are still able have a very full programme for our monthly meetings with lots of interesting speakers. We have learned about Classic MG cars, Genes and DNA, Sheepdog Trialling and Turkish weddings.

We were again joined by members from other WIs for our Summer Party in August, when we were entertained with songs from the music halls.

We decided to change our fundraising event from a Christmas Market to an Autumn Fair. The attendance was not as large as we had hoped but we raised funds to subsidise our meetings, but sadly not enough to be able to give a donation to any local charity for the first time ever.

Members supported other events in Newton Flotman, Flordon and Swainsthorpe.

Members continue to be involved with the Norfolk Federation of WIs, one being Chairman of the Board of Trustees and others on sub-committees. Members attended the Federation AGM in St Andrews Hall, and the Federation Autumn Meetings held around the county.

We are planning our programme for 2017 and look forward to the future with optimism”.

e. Newton Flotman Village Centre – Barry Adams

Barry said that the Village Centre had had another successful year, children’s parties continued to be popular and they had received good feedback. Pre-school was a valuable source of regular income for the Centre and they remained happy with the facilities provided.

Barry was pleased to report that the toilets had been refurbished during the previous year.

Fundraising continued to be priority, a number of quiz nights had been arranged, the next one being on 9th July with a ‘Royal’ theme. The annual fete would be held on 11th September and would build on the new attractions from the previous year.

Barry said that the drainage of the football pitch continued to be problematical.

The priority for the coming year would be the improvement of the play area following this it was also hoped that a ‘multi-purpose games area’ could be installed, both would require costing and grant funding.

Finally Barry said that the success of Village Centre relied on the work of the committee members and to those he gave his thanks. They continued to struggle to recruit new committee members and said that if anyone knew of anyone who would like to assist or had ideas as to how the Centre could be improved they would be pleased to hear.

f. Newton Flotman Primary School – Headteacher Jeremy Johns

No response received.

g. Community Speedwatch – Evelyn Domeyer

Evelyn had been unable to attend the meeting, so David Gibbs gave a brief report. As well as the Community Speedwatch team there was now a Speed Activated Monitoring sign or SAM 2 being used on Flordon Road which required to be moved periodically. David understood that, due to a problem with the radar gun, the Speedwatch team had not recently been particularly active.

h. Newton Flotman Football Club – Mark Taylor.

Mark introduced himself at the Secretary of the Football Club.

He said they had Under 10’s, Under 11’s, Under 19’s, First and Veteran teams as well as the introduction of an Under 7’s this year. He said that the only issue they had was that the drainage had not been as effective as hoped, and as a result several games had had to be played at Topcroft, sometimes just to save the pitch.

i. Long Stratton Medical Practice – Sheila Curtis

No response received.

j. Community Emergency Plan – Neil Tracey

David Gibbs welcomed Neil to the meeting and explained that the establishment of an Emergency Plan for the parish was a new initiative that Neil had volunteered to be the coordinator of. Neil spoke of the questionnaires that had been distributed the previous year, 77 had been returned, 61 with offers of assistance – four in particular had great experience – and 12 expressing a need in the event of an emergency. He said that the Newton Flotman area was quite large and he envisaged using the four with experience as a way of feeding down help and information should the need arise. He said he had completed a draft Emergency Plan which made an assessment of village, emergencies that might occur and action that could be taken. He would be circulating the draft amongst councillors and inviting comment and suggested improvements.

It was agreed that Neil’s contact details be include amongst those listed on the Parish Council’s website.

k. Newton Flotman Charities – David Gibbs

David read out his report:

“This is a combined Charity amalgamating the small Charities of John Pye (1647), Thomas Claburn (1815) and John Sewell (1931) with non-disposal assets valued at approximately £2,000.

Income derived from the assets is approx. £91 pa and currently totals approx. £1,800.

All three Charities were formed when residents had no access to Social Services or financial support and as a consequence the objective is recorded as ‘For the benefit of the poor in Newton Flotman’.

Despite the political rhetoric, we, the Trustees have found it extremely difficult to identify ‘poor’ needy recipients who would benefit from what little support is available from the Charity.

If anyone is aware of any individual in need (in confidence) please let a Trustee know so we can see what we can do. Sally, Bob McKelvey or myself.

Questions were asked regarding whether the money could be used to pay for village amenities such as the children’s play area. David confirmed that the money had to be used for the benefit of ‘poor’ individuals resident in village.

5. Parish Council Reports

a. Chairman’s Report – David Gibbs

David read out his report:

“Parish Council responsibilities continue to expand as a result of

various Government initiatives with the associated increase in administration. We are grateful to our Clerk, Julie King for her expertise who has taken on much of the additional work.

Co-option of Parish Councillor

Following the resignation of Barry Adams who has decided to relinquish his position on the Council to concentrate on Village Centre matters, I am pleased to advise that Nigel Morgan has been co-opted to fill the vacancy.

ROAD SAFETY IS ONE OF OUR MAJOR CONCERNS

SAM 2 Traffic Sign

The part funded sign was purchased last year. We are indebted to Councillor Nigel Morgan who has taken on the responsibility for administering and analysing the data. Speeds of 65mph have been recorded in both directions on Flordon Road, however the sign doesn't identify individual cars but does record the time.

The Speed Watch Team is also undertaking surveys from time to time which enables speeding 'vehicles' to be identified and their details passed to the Police for action.

Parking Discipline

This is still an area of concern especially near the Flordon Road junction with the A140. The Police have been asked to monitor the situation.

Proposed 'Stop Sign' at the Short Street Junction with Flordon Road

Highways have rejected our request as inappropriate, the area didn't fit rules.

Long Stratton Area Action Plan and Long Stratton Bypass

A letter had been sent calling for an assessment of the impact of the development on traffic on the A140.

GENERAL ISSUES

Grass Cutting

This went out to tender and Norse have subsequently been reappointed to maintain the playing field and King's Green for the following three years, with a limited increase year on year.

Kings Green – Trees

It was decided to arrange for the sympathetic pruning of the trees on the Green as this would improve the visual entrance to the Village and also enable the daffodils to be more visible in the spring.

Ditch Maintenance

To improve drainage, the ditch between the playing field and the allotments has been cleared, the Council is awaiting the reinstatement

of the fence.

Village Centre – Broken Basketball Board and Hoop

The Parish Council funded the repairs partly by money received from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

ONGOING ISSUES

Community Emergency Plan

Last year South Norfolk District Council printed a questionnaire with a supply of pre-paid envelopes which were distributed by Parish Councillors. Approximately one eighth of those were returned and these are currently being analysed by Neil Tracey.

Long Stratton Action Plan

We continue to be concerned at the lack of attention being given by Planners to the potential impact of additional traffic using the A140.

Village Notice Boards

The possibility of providing additional notice boards is being investigated, subject to securing grant approval.

Parish Precept

Because of recent legislation and increasing demands placed on Parish Councils, it was considered prudent to request an increase which equates to an additional £3.16 for a Band D property.

This is a very brief report on a number of issues but please do visit the Parish Website which contains the Minutes which are far more detailed. I would encourage those who have not done so to register via the site so they are notified immediately when new items are posted.”

A question was asked about whether this information was available via social media such as Facebook. The Clerk confirmed that she often forwarded items onto the administrator of the community Facebook site but that the Parish Council did not disseminate information that way.

b. Parish Council Financial Report – Julie King

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2016 – see attached – explaining that the figures were, as yet, unaudited and unapproved by the Parish Council but none-the-less hopefully represented the spending of the Council for the year. She explained many of the payments and receipts for the year particularly where they differed significantly from the previous year or budget. She detailed the charities that had benefited from small donations and spoke of the projects the Parish Council had undertaken including the purchase of the SAM 2 device, clearing of the allotment ditch, work to the trees on Kings Green and the purchase of the new basketball board and hoop. Uncommon income for the year had come from a grant from Norfolk County Council which had part funded the purchase of the SAM 2 device, CIL (Community Infrastructure Level) and a grant assisting the

Council with the obligations under the new Transparency Code.

The Parish Council had started the year with an opening balance of £1,519.20 and ended with a balance of £3,807.17.

David explained that the Council still had reserves that were less than recommended and that there would continue to be a need to build these up.

6. General Parish Issues

A Parishioner had suggested that a sign indicating the entrance to the village be installed on Flordon Road.

Thanks

David Gibbs thanked all the Parish Councillors and those who undertook activities on the Council's behalf namely, Barry Adams, Andy Pownall (Allotments) and Neil Tracey along with all those who organised activities for the benefit of Newton Flotman saying how much it was appreciated. David also thanked Colin Foulger (County Councillor) and Phil (District Councillor). Finally, on behalf of those present, he thanked Sandra for the refreshments.

Bob McKelvey thanked David Gibbs for the work he had undertaken as Chairman during the previous year. He said he had done a very good Job and that the Parish was lucky to have him.

A Parishioner asked whether it would be possible to map out the walkways around Newton Flotman. It was acknowledged that there were very few Public Rights of Way but there were perhaps a number of 'permissive' paths that were used regularly.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.