

Newton Flotman Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24th April 2018

Present: David Gibbs (Chairman)	Parish Council
Bob McKelvey	Parish Council
Christopher Remer	Parish Council
Bob Kelf	Parish Council
Jean Wilson	Parish Council
Nigel Morgan	Parish Council
Julie King (Clerk)	Parish Council
Andy Pownall	Allotments
Kirsten Remer & Andy Cox	St Mary's Church
Wendy Adams	Women's Institute
Barry Adams	Village Centre
Phil Hardy	District Councillor

Members of the Parish: six

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 Eve Domeyer, Parish Councillor; Jeremy Johns, Head Teacher and Rev. Dawn Davidson.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th April 2017

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

3. Reports from Village Organisations and Groups

a. Newton Flotman Allotment Association – Andy Pownall

Andy read out his report:

“There are 27 allotments off Exchange Road made up of 17 allotments of approximately 30m x 7m and 10 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 small allotment has recently become available but the person that has the adjoining small allotment is likely to take the vacant one also. I have no names on the waiting list.

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 available turning area is very restricted for a tractor and trailer particularly when wet so I intend to create a tipping area at the bottom

of the allotments on the first allotment on the right, by using this it is less likely that mud will be dragged out onto Exchange Road.

There was one minor incident reported to me of sheds been broken into but nothing was taken. I tried four times to contact the police on their non-emergency number; although I got through I was passed to another number but got fed up waiting for a reply. The allotment holders affected were asked to contact the police themselves if they felt it was necessary – those that did were given an individual crime number.

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 all £3.00 is passed to the National Society. The fee is collected at the same time as the rent. There are 24 members. The AGM of The Newton Flotman Allotment Society, as previous years, will be held in the Church meeting room during September.”

David Gibbs thanked Andy for his work administering the allotments on behalf of the Parish Council.

Andy passed the allotment letting agreements onto the Parish Council.

b. St Mary’s Church – Kirsten Remer & Andy Cox

Kirsten Remer began the report saying that the Annual Church Meeting had been held the previous day at that there were currently 38 on the electoral role. During the previous year the village had said goodbye to the Gaze family and Sally Gaze, as Team Rector had recently been replaced by Dawn Davidson. The benefice was now on the hunt for a new Team Vicar. Following work done to the Church Room, it continued to be used for events such as the community lunch – organised by Andy Cox, Church Mice and a Wednesday social.

Repairs to the Church roof were currently ongoing thanks to a grant from Heritage Lottery for over £80,000, later there would be a separate contract for work to the Church tower. The bid to the Heritage Lottery had also enabled the establishment of a Heritage Interpretation project. Alongside the equipment that had been made available, a small group were in the process of compiling a village archive and there were plans for a village heritage website.

Andy Cox continued the report saying that one side of the roof repairs had been completed and the other side was in the process of being done. The lead was now alarmed, with an alarm that would eventually be linked to a call centre, this would enable the lead to be fully insured.

Andy explained that he was employed as a Community Outreach Worker in village, visiting individuals and Olive House. Along with the help of a range of volunteers, he organised the community lunch supported by the kitchens at the school. He also arranged outings

making use of the healthcare home minibus.

Finally he spoke of some of the other activities in the village including Café Church, and the way the church community were providing support to Rev Dawn Davidson during the period of staff shortages.

Kirsten finished by saying that they would be revising the plans to provide a community space within the church for daytime access and activities in June or July. They had agreed this with the existing grant providers and the certainty now around the fact that the village shop will not reopen, provided them with clarity in respect of a potential vending machine or other options.

c. Newton Flotman Pre-School – Ria Mickleburgh

No response received.

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

Wendy Adams read out her report:

“Newton Flotman & District WI had a slightly disappointing start to the year as several members decided not to re-join for various reasons and some had to leave because of poor health. However we are still able have a very full programme for our monthly meetings with lots of interesting speakers. We learned about felt making, medicines through time, hypnotism, bread making and had A Little Bit of musical Ireland at Christmas.

Members supported events in Newton Flotman, Flordon and Swainsthorpe.

Members continue to be involved with the Norfolk Federation of WIs, and several attended the Federation Annual Meeting in St Andrews Hall, and the Federation Autumn Meetings held around the county.

We are planning our programme for 2019 and look forward to the future with optimism.”

e. Newton Flotman Village Centre – Barry Adams

Barry Adams said that 2017 had been a successful year for the Village Centre and the hall continued to be supported by regular and individual bookings, with Preschool providing a daily source of regular income. Fundraising continued to be a priority, the recent need to replace the boiler had put a stretch on the finances, although the benefit of a more economical model should be seen in the future. The regular quiz nights continued to be popular and lively and the tete continued to be successful with new attractions last year and plans well on the way for this year’s on 9th September. New additions to the play area were proving popular and the new cinema nights were well attended with a programme of events up until August.

The committee struggled to attract the necessary support with vacancies currently on the committee. Finally Barry explained that he

had stood down from the committee, thanked all who had supported him, but said that he would remain around for the regular supply of 'odd jobs'.

f. Newton Flotman Primary School – Headteacher Jeremy Johns

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

“The last year has been an active year at Newton Flotman Primary School. We have had a lot of new staff joining the school as a result of retirements, promotions, staff expansion and other reasons. We have, as ever, an excellent team working with the children and families across the school to give every child the best possible start in education, right from the start.

The school council has been active too. They worked with the Friends of the School to create a new play trail on the field, and whenever the ground is hard enough to play on the field, the play trail gets a lot of use.

We continue to work closely with the church – hosting some family events and visiting the church. The volunteer team that comes in on Thursdays to act out a bible story with the children in “Open the Book” has a great time, and the children always look forward to Thursday afternoons.

It was fun to be part of the September village fete – our musicians are always keen to perform. A large group of our older children travelled to the O2 arena in January to perform in a national singing festival – Young Voices – and were a credit not just to the school but also the community. The ukulele players and the O2 singers will shortly be performing in the Swainsthorpe Music Festival on Friday 4 May – tickets available from Margaret Robins in Swainsthorpe or from the school.

We have a broad curriculum which enables our children to make excellent progress and to enjoy their learning. There is plenty of sport, and we have sent teams to compete in football, cricket, athletics, cross country running, hockey, swimming, tag rugby, netball and more. This is helped by the minibus that was provided by the Friends of the School, and is also used by scouts and other community groups.

Thanks to the parish council, we now have a friendly noticeboard outside the school, which is seen by a lot of parents, carers and children, so do make sure you put up your events and news for everyone to read.

We have made strong appeals this year to try to get more adults involved in the school as volunteers to hear readers – we have some grandparents, some parents and a community volunteer so far.

Community lunch is an outreach from the church that the school supports and the school's caretaker, Andy Cox, runs – the kitchens provide the meals, and the church and school provide venues. It is a good way for older and more vulnerable community members to get together.

We have 3 vacancies on the governing body at the moment. Being a governor is a great way to be involved in the school and community to help shape the future for our children. It involves two full governing body meetings a term and a couple of committee meetings, and there is plenty of free training available.”

Andy Cox added to the report by saying that the school were looking for volunteers to assist with the school garden.

g. Newton Flotman Football Club – Mark Taylor

No response received.

h. Long Stratton Medical Practice – Keith Burnett

No response received.

Jean Wilson as a member of the Patient Participation Group, spoke of the diabetes event being held the following evening at the Village Hall in Long Stratton at 7.30pm, confirming that you did not need to be a patient at the practice to attend.

i. Newton Flotman Charities – David Gibbs

David read out his report:

“There were originally three individual charities: John Pye (1647), Thomas Clabburn (1815) and John Sewell (1931).

In today's terms, the value of each benefactor's legacy is relatively small. To ease administration they were combined under one umbrella as Newton Flotman Charities but the primary objective 'for the benefit of the poor in Newton Flotman' was retained.

We have three trustees; myself, Bob McKelvey and, following the move of the Rev Canon Sally Gaze to Suffolk, I am pleased to advise that Caroline Wolfe has been appointed as the third Trustee.

The assets of the Charity are 159.02 shares held by COIF from which our income is derived. We are a relatively small charity which currently has approximately £2,000 available to assist should the need arise.

We tend to be a proud nation and reluctant to seek 'charity' but if you are aware of anyone in the Village where you think we may be able to help, please let one of the Trustees know. This will of course be treated in the strictest confidence.”

4. Reports from Other Bodies

a. District Council – Phil Hardy

Phil Hardy presented a summary of his report which is included in full below:

There are 380 Councils in England and South Norfolk Council is officially one of the highest performing. The respected Local Government Chronicle placed us in the top six councils nationally at its awards ceremony. And elsewhere, we were the first public sector organisation in Norfolk to win the coveted Investors in People Platinum designation for the work we do to enable our staff to work more effectively and efficiently to serve you better.

Last year 1300 new homes were delivered in South Norfolk. That's nearly 1pc of the entire national total of new homes. There are now many more affordable homes locally than before the right to buy started and our housing team are finding two socially-rented homes for families every business day.

But new homes need to go alongside investments in the infrastructure that improves quality of life. At Wymondham a £4m investment in better leisure & fitness facilities has seen a 60% increase in the number of visitors and we now teach 2,000 youngsters to swim each year.

We're just about to start a similar £2m upgrade at Long Stratton on top of the completion of a new All-Weather pitch so that more and more people have the chance to lead healthier and active lifestyles.

Broadband is another key piece of infrastructure and we have signed a contract with a local provider to increase the number of fast-internet radio masts from 10 to 28. This means that by this Summer the 5000 homes that BT cannot and will not connect to fast broadband will get proper access to the digital world – Broadband is a critical utility and we will be one of the first rural districts to get 100pc fast broadband coverage to everyone.

A planning application has been submitted for the Long Stratton Bypass and homes to be built alongside. There is a lot of work to be done before it becomes a reality but the finance is in place to deliver it with Council, Government and Developer Contributions. I am currently arranging a briefing for Parish Councils to help inform their consultation responses.

Together with improvements at the Hempnall Crossroads, the dangerous Hales junction and shortly after, the developer-paid George Road, Loddon roundabout, contributions to the Diss Market Triangle and a new school in Wymondham, housing development is paying the bill for improvements that improve quality of life for everyone.

It's not just about housing and infrastructure and strengthening the economy. Your Council seeks to solve peoples' problems one family a

time.

A good example is the way we help people stay independent in their homes for longer. This sort of work saves the NHS a fortune. In the last 3 months we have had a staff member sitting at the hospital as people are admitted to the ward. We identify the people who will be needing a little help at home when they get better: perhaps a hand rail in the bathroom, a wheelchair ramp or even something as simple as booster-feet under a favourite chair. We do this work whilst the patient is getting better so they can get home quicker. In just 12 weeks we helped 100 people, halved the average stay in the hospital and saved 380 bed-days and life was better for each of these people as they recovered – some of whom could have been one of your aunts, uncles or grannies. That's just one example of our work which covers preventing homelessness, sorting our debt problems, helping youngsters find a rented home or ensuring that landlords keep their promises to tenants.

We mustn't also forget the work we do to help small businesses and this year we have been able to reduce the rates bills of the smallest firms by more than the Government expects so that, especially, rural pubs, shops & garages can remain open for longer.

Everyone knows that finances are tight in local Government so we have invested in becoming a low-cost operator. It means that our Council Tax is 20% less than inflation since 2007 yet we do more. As an example, 62% of our ten most popular transactions are now applied-for online via our website. It means that we have fewer administrators, can deal with problems faster and at times when it is convenient for our customers – even if the office is closed.

These efficiencies are important but they are not enough if we are to deliver the 86 services for residents. So that's why we are looking to do more with our neighbours in Broadland Council. Both councils have similar geography, scale and outlook. We are seeing whether a single team that works for both Councils will benefit our communities on a scale residents can recognise and relate to. Working more closely together offers both councils increased capacity and resilience, together with greater financial stability whilst taking advantage of commercial opportunities to deliver better value for our residents. Our taxpayers expect a local government that moves with the times and innovates, while retaining and attracting the most talented staff, offering them positive futures and career development opportunities. Our joint aim is for two strong councils, working together with the ambition and resources to make our combined area one of the best places to live and work in the country.

Finally, all these things work on a district-wide basis. But we're delivering locally too. We still offer community grants and very locally have assisted projects in Newton Flotman like providing £1,500 funding from my member's ward budget for bespoke football equipment for two girls football teams so they are Football Association (FA) compliant. I

was also pleased to fund a new notice board. Further funding is available so let me know of any community based projects for which you require funding and I will see if I can help.

Everything we do aims to make Better Lives and Stronger Economies for everyone whilst keeping the cost down with a dedicated team of staff members and Councillors working with the other parts of Government. On a personal level, I'm always here and will respond to all issues and requests raised with me."

b. County Council – Colin Foulger

Colin Foulger was not present.

5. Parish Council Reports

a. Chairman's Report – David Gibbs

David read out his report:

"The full Parish Council of seven elected members meets six times a year. Three of us also meet as necessary on a rotational basis to consider planning applications. In this respect one of us will talk to any neighbours affected although the final decision rests with South Norfolk. I am sure you all know the members but in case you don't we have myself as current Chairman, Bob McKelvey Vice Chairman, Eve Domeyer, Bob Kelf, Nigel Morgan, Chis Remer (PC representative on the Village Centre Committee), Jean Wilson. Of course we also have one member of staff without whom the Council would not function as efficiently namely our Clerk, Mrs Julie King.

Snippets of the following information have been published in Partnership, but I will just refresh memories and give you the opportunity to ask questions or make comment.

Parish Precept

We considered it prudent to increase the precept for 2018/19 by 2% to meet anticipated expenses. This has the effect of Band D costing £25.46 pa (up by 50p) which is still one of the lowest charges in the area. Our Clerk, Julie King will talk a bit later in more detail about Financial Matters.

Long Stratton Area Plan

We have finally received a copy of the Traffic Assessment which is quite technical. The report does indicate that the A140/Flordon Road Junction needs attention but later! We are therefore pursuing Short Term Proposals – Stop Sign & Double Yellow Lines for which we have some support from Highways.

South Norfolk have received plans for the Long Stratton Developments but before we comment we are awaiting a Parish Briefing. This should enable us to reemphasis our concerns re the effect of increased traffic flow on the Flordon Road junction.

Potential Housing within the Village (5 or more units)

Off Alan Avenue - 30

Olive Avenue - 8

Site suggested for 35 off A140 (old Herb Farm)

Saffron Housing Trust – Affordable Housing Survey

Leaflets were distributed to all residents of Newton Flotman with the result that a local need was identified for a further 19 properties of which 11 would be for 'affordable rent'. Saffron are now canvassing local land owners for potential sites which may be outside the development boundary.

Community Action Plan

Although well advanced, the designated Coordinator has been unable to progress the plan further due to work commitments consequently, we are looking for someone else who can finalise the plan.

We have also had a volunteer come forward to act as the Parish's Tree Warden, it is anticipated that this appointment will be made at the next Parish Council meeting.

General

We have a new village sign on Flordon Road entrance to the Village. There is a new notice board outside the school for public use. Unfortunately the horse chestnut on the Green was diseased and had to be removed for safety reasons. A replacement tree will be planted later in the year.

Thanks to Nigel Morgan, data on traffic speeds from the SAM2 device which is moved from time to time within the Village is analysed and passed to the Police.

Current Issues

The Parish Website is being updated by our Clerk, Julie. We are having to get to grips with the 'latest' General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which has seen Julie appointed as the Council's Data Protection Officer supported by committee. The possibility of a 'trod path' on Flordon Road is being investigated as are the costs involved. Funding will of course be a major issue.

More detailed information on all these matters is of course available on the Parish Council website"

b. Parish Council Financial Report – Julie King

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2018 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 spoke of expenses such as insurance, grass cutting, tree work, the new notice board outside the school, donations including the one to the

church for the cutting of the churchyard and the new litter bin on Kings Green.

The Parish Council had started the year with a balance of £3,491.93 and ended with a balance of £3,820.82 which once the VAT for the year had been reclaimed would be more like £5,000. Councillors had set an aim for reserves of £7,000 and when setting their budget for the current year had agreed on a 2% increase partly to fund an increase in reserves.

6. General Parish Issues

Kirsten Remer thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the Church for their donation towards the cutting of the grass in the churchyard. She also spoke of a project to refurbish the village war memorial housed inside the church, including the addition of Edward Trory who died close to the end of the First World War and had previously been missed off. Quotes were being obtained and it was hoped that a grant for 75% of the cost could be sought from the War Memorials Trust. It was possible that the Parish Council would be approached to assist with the remaining 25%.

Thanks

Bob McKelvey thanked David Gibbs for the work he had undertaken as Chairman during the previous year.

David Gibbs ended the meeting by thanking all those involved in village organisations.

The meeting closed at 8.26pm.