WHEPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

**held in the Community Centre on**

**Friday April 12th 2019 at 7pm**

**Attendees:**

**Parish Councillors: Public:**

Cllr. Mike Morris (Chair)

Cllr. Nigel Aitkens (Chair) Anne Robertson Phil Robertson

Cllr. Linda Smith Pat Porter Bob Porter

Cllr. Terry Smith Adrian Wilson John Waugh

**Guests:** Lizzie Nutt Steve Nutt

St Eds Council - Cllr. Mike Chester Jill Harper Kala Nobbs

SCC – Karen Soons Susan Quay Mike McConnell

Guest speaker – Simon Parker Linda O’Dell Graham O’Dell

**Clerk:** James Reynolds Di Howe

Di Rix Gary Corcoran Jane Corcoran

Harry Edrich Kati Turner

Nick Turner

**1. Welcome**

The Chairman, Cllr. Mike Morris, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from the following: Deborah Stratford & Steve Bonney; Richard Gleed; Christopher Griffiths; Gillian Aitkens; Gordon Durrant and Cllr. Stanley Durrant.

**3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting April 21st 2018**

It was proposed by Cllr. Aitkens and seconded by Anne Robertson that the minutes were a true record.

**4. Matters arising from the Minutes of last year’s meeting.**

None

**5. Simon Parker, Waste Management and Recycling Officer, West Suffolk Council**

Mr Parker talked about how waste management services was a very regulated industry due to health and safety matters. He said companies are employed to look into our bins to find ways to improve how our waste is managed. The aims are to reduce, re-use or recycle it. A recent Food Savvy campaign aimed to reduce food waste which makes up 30% of our bins’ contents. The council holds composting workshops and runs regular recycling campaigns. The recycling facility at Great Blakenham has been refurbished and sorts everything by machine, magnet and hand. Everything is baled and sold around the world. He said that the Government is considering making brown bin collections – currently £43 a year per bin – free.

All black bin waste used to go into landfill. Now much of it is incinerated at the energy recovery site in Great Blakenham and provides electricity for 30,000 homes, while the bottom ash is added to concrete as an aggregate. He also talked of litter pick campaigns. The council has 360 regular volunteers who improve the ‘street scene’. One problem is tackling fly tipping. Di Howe said that when she complained about fly tipping the Council did very little to help. Mr Parker suggested making the community centre bins less easy to access. She said she now locks them. Mike Chester asked about the new recycling hub which should open next year while John Waugh asked for assurances that Suffolk waste wasn’t being shipped to places like Vietnam. There were no guarantees, but Mr Parker argued that if Vietnam was buying recycled plastic it at least meant they would not be burning oil to make more plastic. All agreed more needs to be done from central government. Mr Parker encouraged everyone to buy loose veg and use their own bags. Kala Nobbs said the household waste site needed to provide a better plastic recycling facility.

**6. District Councillor, Mike Chester**

Cllr Chester said that he was now a district councillor (no longer Borough) and talked about the various roles of the District Council compared to the County Council. For example, SCC deals with waste that can’t be recycled. He said he sits on lots of committees including the Police & Crime Commissioner’s scrutinising committee which is trying to redress the balance, as Norfolk currently has a bigger police spend than Suffolk. He said that bringing Forest Heath and St. Edmundsbury Councils together had brought enormous savings.

The first agenda item of the next meeting would be to discuss Borough status and the possible election of a Mayor. A show of hands revealed that people were not bothered about having a mayor. Cllr Aitkens said it was very different to an elected mayor who drives policy and has a political agenda like in London.

**7. County Councillor, Karen Soons (full report attached)**

Cllr Soons said grass cutting schedules would be sent to parishes within the next few days. Suffolk had seen its biggest boost to tourism for a decade with the visitor economy reaching over £2billion for the first time.

Last November, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership had received a national award for supporting local communities to be more energy efficient. She said to get in touch if we wanted a tour of the energy from waste facility at Great Blakenham. In January this year Suffolk won a grant of £4.4m to develop “smart” street lighting which will involve equipping them with wind vanes and solar panels to generate rather than consume energy. With ambitions to be the greenest UK county, it has also linked up with electric car charger EO Charging to provide up to 400 sockets at over 100 locations across the county.

Of this year’s approved budget of £517m, 75% or £390m will go on adult and community services and health, wellbeing and children’s services.

Broadband coverage in the county is now at 93% with the current contract due to reach 98% by 2020. A new £1.725m of extra funding will help reach the remaining 2% of the county not covered by existing contracts. In response to questions regarding the empty shops in BSE, she said that Palmers may become a residential development. Cllr Morris thanked both Cllr Chester and Cllr Soons for coming.

**8. Parish Councillor Mike Morris (Broadband)**

Cllr Morris said that two blackspots remained in the village the Lawshall end of Tuffields Road and the Plumton Estate. Cllr Soons said that if you signed up for Business Broadband it appeared you were more likely to get help.

**9. Parish Councillor Linda Smith, Neighbourhood Watch Scheme/Police Report**

Cllr Smith explained the aims of the scheme and urged villagers to let her know if they wished to receive emails regarding the latest burglars/scams etc. locally. Despite never meeting him, we apparently now have a community engagement officer who she was hoping to meet in June when she would know more about what he could/does do for us. She urged everyone to remain vigilant, mark their belongings and look out for their vulnerable neighbours.

**10. WCA Chairman, Richard Gleed (Full Report attached)**

In his absence Cllr Morris read the report which said that Richard Gleed was stepping down as chair. He thanked all his committee members, those who have contributed both physically and financially to getting the new kitchen up and running, the Doughnut Boys who keep the community centre looking smart and in working order and he gave a special thanks to Di Howe without whom the community centre would probably not function.

**11. Anne Robertson, Defibrillator (Full report attached)**

Anne explained where the defibrillator is, how it works, when training sessions are taking place and said so far 64 people in the village are trained in its use.

**12. Steve Bonney, Community Speed Watch (full report attached)**

In his absence, Cllr Morris read out a report which mentioned that 3 new villagers had signed up as volunteers and with the better weather they hoped to be able to monitor traffic more regularly. He mentioned that the PC and Council are working on getting VAS posts moved on Brockley Road in an attempt to deter speeding drivers.

**13. Terry Smith, Volunteer Working Party/Doughnut Boys**

Terry said that Mike Morris had recently joined the group which met every Wednesday morning. Their biggest role was monitoring the monthly play area reports from the Council and making sure it is always safe.

**14. Kala Nobbs, Village History Group and Nature Group (full report attached)**

Kala said that after 8 years, the History group had scaled down its activities and instead was focussing on building a history of the village on the Whepstead Website.

She said the wildlife group, formed in January, had around 20 members. It had already put up some bird and owl boxes and had lots of visits arranged during Spring.

**15. Lizzie Nutt, Whepstead Walkers, Book Club and Art Group**

Lizzie said the walking group met once a month. She thanked the Doughnut Boys for keeping the paths – not cut by the Council – cut. Art Group meets twice a month from 11-1pm in her “Red Shed” where they sometimes had speakers or made visits to other artist’s studios. Book Group meets every other month in the pub. Cllr Morris thanked Lizzie who has provided words for a village footpath that the PC is currently working on and hopes to get published in the summer.

**16. Public Forum**

Di Howe thanked the Parish Council for its contribution towards the printing of the newsletter and the Doughnut Boys for all the work they did in the play area. She said the inspector was so impressed and had told her it was one of the best in the county.

Cllr Aitkens said that there was an election on May 2nd and that the five current councillors nominated would automatically be re-elected. He said that the Clerk would let villagers know about co-option opportunities in due course. He thanked David Till for his few year’s contribution and expertise on financial matters and Mike Morris for the enormous 15 year contribution he had made while on the PC. He would be sorely missed.

**17. Church News (full report attached)**

In Rev. Griffith’s absence, Linda Smith said that the church now held a Sunday service every week bar one in the month when it alternates with Brockley. As well as coffee mornings and plant sales, to raise money for running costs and outside charities, it hosted concerts and ‘lecture’ mornings and evenings with lunch or supper. Its most popular event was the Harvest Lunch which annually attracts around 100 people.

**18. Chapel news (full report attached)**

In Gordon Durrant’s absence Cllr Morris read his report which said that services continue at 11am on Sundays with children leaving early for lessons which involved craft and writing activities. The social group meets on the 2nd Monday for refreshment and chat and the monthly friendship group features a variety of speakers. ‘Prayer and Praise’ is every Thursday.

**18. Any Other Business**

None

**19. Chairman’s Summary**

Cllr Morris thanked Cllr Aitkens who only recently stepped down as chair of the PC and said his experience was invaluable to the PC. He invited everyone to join the Parish Council for a drink and some nibbles.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm