WHEPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

**held in the Community Centre on**

**Friday April 21st 2017 at 7.30pm**

**Attendees:**

**Parish Councillors: Public:**

Cllr. Nigel Aitkens (Chair) Gillian Aitkens Florence Roby

Cllr. Mike Morris (Vice Chair) Phil Robertson Terry Smith

Cllr. Stanley Durrant Jill Harper James Reynolds

Cllr. Anne Robertson Linda O’Dell Graham O’Dell

Cllr. David Till Di Howe Aubrey Prout

Cllr. Nicola Mann Florence Roby Wendy Waugh

**Guests:** Richard Gleed Sara Feakes

SCC - Cllr. Terry Clements Keith Feakes Mo Orange

Police – PC Darren Marshall Rev. C Griffiths BabethThomas

Guest speaker – Jane Corcoran

**Clerk:**

Di Rix

**1. Welcome**

The Chairman, Cllr. Nigel Aitkens, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from the following: Cllr Angela Rushen, Cllr Linda Smith, Kala Nobbs, Mike McConnell, Lizzie & Steve Nutt, Jon Speggles, Marion English, Susan Quay.

**3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting April 22nd 2016**

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

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

Cllr Aitkens mentioned the ongoing flooding problem at the bottom of Harram Hill. He said SCC seemed reluctant to do anything about it. He said that the high turnout out for the annual village Litter Pick in February, was a credit to the community.

**5. Councillor Aitkens (River Walk)**

Cllr Aitkens said that the new and diverted footpaths at the bottom of Church Hill were now official and he had seen much more usage of the footpaths in the village now that they were linked up. He proposed that the clerk write to thank Theo and Rosemary Cutting for their generosity in donating the land. Graham O’Dell agreed. Cllr Aitkens said that the PC was going to discuss the planting of a wildflower meadow with the Cuttings and, with their agreement, work with Suffolk Wildlife Trust on planting a wildflower meadow next to the path. He hoped that it might be something youngsters in the village might like to get involved with.

**10. PC Daren Marshall Report** *(Cllr Aitkens brought forward agenda item 10)*

PC Darren Marshall said that there had been 9 reported crimes in the 12 months to April 1st compared to 8 in 2016. The crimes included a burglary in Straight Road where cash was stolen from an outbuilding, a complaint about the excessive cutting back of a boundary hedge. There were 4 common assaults (no injury) reported and a reported “gut-barging” of a delivery driver by a householder within the confines of a private estate!

Current crime trends include a rise in dwelling burglaries in West Suffolk. He said should any parishoner see what they believe to be furtive activity on their or neighbouring addresses, this is a definite 999 call. Since early March there have been 17 thefts from motor vehicles in the Sudbury and Haverhill areas.

PC Marshall said he was an avid reader of the Whepstead newsletter and as a result had put himself forward for a national plant monitoring scheme. He would try and bring some cadets to the village litter pick next year. Cllr Aitkens thanked him for attending and said it was great to have an idea of who was looking after us. PC Marshall urged villagers to look at the Police website link called “Ask the Police” for advice on the law. He said under “dogs”, for example, there were 28 facets of dog law. Cllr Aitkens thanked Cllr Smith, in her absence, for all the work she does with Neighbourhood Watch and liaising with the Police for the village.

**6. Borough Councillor Angela Rushen’s Report** *(Cllr Morris read report in her absence)*

Topics covered included planning in and around Bury, 25 planning applications in Whepstead over the past 12 months, rough sleepers, Bed & Breakfast accommodation, supported housing, civil parking enforcement, the farmer’s market, garden waste, West Suffolk Operational Hub and the donation of £500 from her locality budget towards the kitchen refit. Cllr Aitkens said it was sad Britannia House for the homeless was closing and that he would ask Cllr Rushen more about it at our next meeting.

**7. County Councillor Terry Clement’s Report**

Highlights from his report included a 7-year freeze on council tax, the implementation of an on-line reporting system for potholes, which 70% of customers now use. Suffolk Schools have gone from a 60% “Good” rating by OFSTED to a 90% “Outstanding” rating over the past 4 years which puts us in the top half of all authorities in the country for GCSEs. To honour its commitment to social care, SCC has introduced the adult social care precept of 3%. The money is ring-fenced for front line services. The county’s energy from waste plant now takes all of Suffolk’s domestic waste for incineration and powers 30,000 homes. Waste going into landfill has been cut from 44% to just 1%.

Cllr Clements said that since being diagnosed with epilepsy, it had taken him ages to get the right help and he wanted to work on improving pathways for people seeking help. Cllr Aitkens thanked Cllr Clements, who is retiring, for all his support over the years. He is to become St. Edmundsbury Mayor next year.

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

Cllr Morris explained that superfast broadband is now available and that villagers need to contact their provider to upgrade. Those in outlying areas of the village may benefit from some amplification in the near future. He said another green box was planned for the junction at Three Ways. Cllr NA said that it was a very substandard

way of delivering the cable via poles, rather than underground, and that we should keep up pressure on BT to make sure they deliver a good service.

**9. Councillor Anne Robertson (Defibrillator and Ladies Social Group)**

Cllr Robertson said that 50 people had been trained in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation and how to use the defibrillator. She had been disappointed by the poor attendance to the refresher sessions and would be holding more in the autumn.

Regarding the Ladies Social Group, Cllr Robertson said that numbers were continuing to rise and that they had enjoyed numerous interesting talks, visits and meals over the past year. Upcoming events included another talk by Horry Parsons who oversaw the building of the Millennium Tower at the Cathedral and a trip to a garden at East Ruston, Norfolk. Cllr Aitkens thanked her and Phil Robertson for all the time and effort they put into training villagers in the use of the defibrillator.

**11. Parish Clerk, Di Rix (Website Access)**

The clerk apologised that she didn’t have time to keep all of the pages on the website up to date but said that any villager wanting to take responsibility for their own club/group’s page could do so. She would just need their name and email address. She said that One Suffolk was currently upgrading the system and hopefully by October it would have much more modern features. It would be mobile and tablet-friendly and we would be able to run village polls more easily on it. She urged anyone with fresh ideas for the website to get in touch.

**12. WCA Chairman, Richard Gleed (Kitchen refit, Cricket Club)**

Mr Gleed said that despite a number of fund raisers a lot of money was still required to fund the new community centre kitchen. The Parish Council had donated £2,000, Cllr Rushen £500 and they had received £900 in pledges. The WCA had applied for £7,500 in RIGS funding, but would need to match that £ for £. Linda O’Dell asked if it was possible to see the plans. It was suggested that they are put in the next newsletter, on the website and displayed at fundraising events. Di Howe said the plan was to create more worktop space. The bain marie would go in favour of a warming cupboard and there would only be one sink which would create more cupboard space.

Regarding cricket, Mr Gleed said the team played simply for pleasure and was not interested in winning leagues. He said their oldest team member was 79 and he encouraged anyone regardless of sex or age to get involved or just come and watch and enjoy a free afternoon tea.

Cllr Aitkens thanked Mr Gleed saying that without people like him in the village things simply wouldn’t happen.

**13. Jane Alfred (Community Speed Watch) *read in her absence***

There are 9 signed up members of CSW, although not all are active in holding and participating in sessions which has meant fewer monitoring sessions have taken place this year. Six active members are needed to continue and she urged anyone interested in helping to get in touch. A speed watch sign for a resident in Old School Road was removed soon after it was erected and they are awaiting a replacement. Additional bin stickers have also been ordered, but not delivered, so a new provider is being sought. Deborah Stratford and Steve Bonney were thanked for managing the VAS speed monitor which is shared with other villages. They alternate between putting it up at either end of Brockley Road. With speeds having crept up to where they were before winter, more monitoring sessions are planned, though she feels a more permanent solution to speeding is required near the school bus stop. Ms Alfred plans to stand down as the co-ordinator at the end of the year, but will remain a volunteer.

**14. Graham O’Dell (Volunteer Working Party)**

Mr O’Dell said that the volunteers meet on Wednesdays and did a lot of work in the children’s play area at the Community centre. Over the winter they had helped paint the hall and corridors of the community centre. They were now involved in clearing brambles in the churchyard and in so doing had uncovered numerous hidden headstones. Cllr Aitkens and Di Howe thanked the volunteers for all their hard work and said they were a sign of a great community spirit in the village.

**15. Lizzie Nutt (Whepstead Walkers, Book Club, History Society, Art Group)** *Report read*

History Group enjoyed a variety of activities focussing on visits outside Whepstead in the local area. One of its projects is to transfer information of historical interest to the village website. It continues to collect evidence for storage at the Records Office concerning life and events in our village in the past.

Whepstead Walkers meet one Sunday a month, everyone welcome. Mrs Nutt thanked the village volunteers who regularly clear the footpaths. Book Group currently has 14 members and meets every two months. The last two meetings have been held in The White Horse which has been ideal as it frees members from providing food and hosting.

Art Group enjoys sharing creative ideas and has been running for over a year, has a regular attendance of 11 and meets on Friday mornings fortnightly.

**16. Florence Roby (Hips n’ Haws)**

Mrs Roby said the club was in its 10th year and that people shared one another’s lives so much they were quite self-sufficient from the need for outside speakers. Cllr Aitkens thanked Mrs Roby for providing another fantastic forum for villagers to get together socially.

**17. Public Forum**

None

**18. Rev. Christopher Griffiths (Church news)**

Rev. Griffiths thanked everyone for the warm welcome he received in July and would welcome invitations from groups in the village to speak. He said he could do one on the history of the common prayer book! There has been one funeral and one baptism over the past year, He said work had been done to repair the medieval window in the chancel and thanked the volunteer workers for clearing the churchyard. He also thanked the Draytons, Gillian Aitkens, the PCC, flower arrangers and cleaners for all they did at the church and said he was always available if someone wanted a listening ear.

**19. Wendy Waugh (Chapel news)**

Mrs Waugh said that the youth group now attracted 24 youngsters. The social lunch group, started two years ago, on the second Monday of the month was going well. Friendship Group, which meets on the third Tuesday, had enjoyed an eclectic group of speakers. A recent coffee morning raised a lot of money for the Hospice, while they had started collecting for the food bank at Gatehouse in Bury St Edmunds.

**20. Jane Corcoran, West Suffolk Beekeepers Association**

Mrs Corcoran said she only moved to Whepstead 18 months ago, but has been beekeeping for the past 8 years. There are five beekeeping associations in Suffolk. She spoke passionately about the ancient art of beekeeping - which has been going since 13,000 BCE - and gave a fascinating insight into the variety of roles honey bees perform in the hive. Interesting facts: bees cover 55,000 miles to produce 1 454g jar of honey, they love blue flowers, can’t see red and once they have taken the pollen from the yellow flower of the horse chestnut tree it turns pink! There are undertaker bees, hive guards and in the summer, worker bees survive only six weeks, three of them cleaning cells in the colony and three foraging.

**21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Di Howe thanked the PC for its contribution to the newsletter. Cllr Aitkens thanked her for all the work she did in the village.

**22. CHAIRMAN’S SUMMARY**

Cllr Aitkens thanked Mrs Corcoran for a fascinating talk on honey bees, thanked everyone for coming and invited them to join him for a glass of wine.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.