

# **BIRCHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2018**

Bircham Social Club at 7.30pm

**PRESENT:** **Parish Council** G Daniels (Chairman), M Sargent (Vice-Chairman) J Cuthell, C Morley, D French, D Howell, M Carter, C Wright-Thompson, B Mele

P Sewell (Clerk) Borough Cllr. A Morrison.

**Residents** P Watts, M French, Mr & Mrs Kuys, C Casey, R Laing and R Daniels

## **1. TO WELCOME ALL RESIDENTS TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Chairman welcomed councillors and residents to the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting and reported that she had received apologies from Mrs Maiden.

## **2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING IN 2017**

- **The minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting were agreed and accepted - Resolved**

## **3. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL CLLR G DANIELS TO PRESENT THE ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Finances**

The Council had kept to within the budget set last year and successfully secured grant funding to offset some running costs. The Council recognised that residents faced increases to the overall Council Tax, so had kept income requirement to the same level as last year. Any additional expenditure required to maintain services would be taken from the reserves. In 2018/19 the cost of a band D property would be £47.41 per annum, around a £1.00 increase for the year.

### **Parish Maintenance**

The Council kept the village as clean and tidy as means allowed by;

- Referral of problems to Highways and Borough Council
- The support of Malcolm Page to complete general handy work e.g. cutting grass, tidying the Spinney and improvements to the recreation ground's pedestrian access
- The splendid repair and refurbishment of the two Jubilee seats in Queen's Gardens by Malcolm Page and John Layton
- The work of Richard Foster and Peter Hambly who continued to look after the village pond and its surroundings with great dedication
- Agreement of a new streetlighting contract to maintain the Parish lights.

### **Recreation Ground**

The new play equipment had been well used over the summer months. The Council was grateful to Cllr. Mele for continuing to ensure the equipment was safe and passed ROSPA inspection. The Council had made provisional plans for further items with a broader age appeal, but these might take some time to install as they were subject to grant funding. The Council was also pleased to report that the agreement with the Cricket Club worked well in helping to keep the grass well maintained. The Council asked that dog owners kept their dogs on leads on the Recreation Ground and ensured any dog mess was disposed of in bags in the correct (red) bins and not the black bin by the play area.

## **Planning**

The Council had reviewed 6 planning applications over the year. The most significant were:

- The revised outline proposal from Sandringham Estate to build 10 houses on Lynn Road. The Council supported the principle of development but raised concerns about adequate footpaths and had requested the extension of the traffic speed restriction. Despite Highways objections, the application had been approved and a request to Highways to extend the speed limit restriction had been submitted.
- Benton Builders had submitted a revised planning application for Longmeadow, as the permission on the previous application had lapsed. The Council also supported this application but made recommendations to Planning regarding access and the footpath. The Council had also pressed for a strict local criterion to be applied to the affordable housing element of the development. – *Application had yet to be determined*
- There had been three applications related to Cherry Ridge on Docking Road, all applications had been approved, but the Council did successfully challenge plans to allow development to creep outside the village envelope and the plans were revised. The applications had been approved by the Borough Council, subject to conditions about future development and extension of the public footpath.

## **King George VI School**

The County Council had confirmed that they would be looking at alternative uses for the site, but as the land was subject to certain covenants it would not be a straightforward or quick process. The Council continued to insist that the village was kept informed and involved in the process.

## **Community Speed Watch Team**

Traffic speed through the village remained a key concern, the Council was grateful to the volunteers of the Community Speed Watch who gave their time to raise awareness and reduce speeding within the village. If anyone was interested in becoming part of one of West Norfolk's most successful teams, please contact Cllr Sargent.

## **Other matters**

On other matters of interest

- The continuation of the grant in support of the Community Bus Service, as the Council believed this provided a vital service and a sense of independence for residents who did not drive.
- Continued support of the Great Massingham Car Scheme.
- Continued contribution towards the maintenance of the church yard at St Mary's Church,
- Grant support for the work of the Norfolk Citizen's Advice Bureau.
- An inspection of Council assets was carried out in September and a rolling plan prepared for refurbishment and repairs.
- The Parish Council web site was launched in April, it would now be easier for those with internet access to keep up to date with council matters. The costs involved in setting up the website were covered by a grant. The website also promoted Bircham and provided links to services which residents and visitors might find useful. However, Council reports would continue to be published in the local Newsletter.

- 2018 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW1 and Bircham would play its part in remembering the sacrifice of those of the parish culminating in an event on 10 November 2018 to commemorate the Armistice centenary.
- Appointment of a Parish footpath warden to inspect and report on the local rights of way. Cllr.Langfield, who had taken on this responsibility and completed her first report, was thanked
- The future of CITB had been cause for concern. The Council had been in touch with both CITB and Sir Henry Bellingham MP over the past few months. A task force which included both the Borough and County Councils had been set up, and whilst the Parish Council's voice was only a small one, it would continue to monitor progress.
- Bircham Stores and Café had just won West Norfolk Independent Retailer of the Year vindicating the village's support of Mark to take over the business.
- The Council had continued to lobby the Post Office for services and had been notified that Bircham would be included in the new mobile post office route, which would see postal services available in the village once a week.

The Chairman expressed her gratitude to council members and staff for their support over the year. The Chairman also thanked the many volunteers who gave their time to help keep Bircham a vibrant and caring community.

#### **4. WW1 Centenary Commemorations**

Mr Laing reported on his research into the WW1 names on the war memorial, which he had started almost a year ago. It was his intention to complete the project by the end of April and then work with the Council to publish the information.

The Clerk said that a programme to mark the anniversary had been put together, part of that programme would be to publish the information collated by Mr Laing as well as putting together an exhibition for the French Fair. There would also be an event on Saturday 10 August to mark the centenary.

#### **5. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

**Speeding:** Concern was registered about the speeding through the village and in particular along Stanhoe Road. The Community Speed Watch Team would look at what they could do to monitor speeding in that area. There was a general discussion about speeding throughout the village and the Chairman said that the Parish Council would look at what measures were available to them such as village gateway signs and referred to the brochure on display. Cllr Sargent invited residents to volunteer for the speed watch team.

**Footpath:** Concern was raised about the mud on the footpath on Lynn Road. The Clerk said that it had already been reported and should be cleared by the Highway Rangers.

Signed .....

Dated.....