

# BIRCHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2017

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, S Langfield, B Mele and P Sewell (Clerk)  
**Residents** P Watts, M French, R Daniels, C Casely and R Laing

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

The Chairman welcomed councillors and residents to the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting.

## 2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING IN 2016

- **Minutes of the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting accepted and agreed as a true record – Resolved**

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

The Council compliment remained the same as last year. Kate Sayer had resigned as Clerk, but the Council were pleased to introduce the new Clerk Philippa Sewell.

### Finances

The Council had maintained its stewardship of the Parish within budget. We were mindful that residents face increases to the Council Tax from the Borough and County Councils as well as the Police, so for the coming year we have limited the level of income required to the same level as last year. The cost of meeting Bircham's needs in the coming year would be £46.39, for a Band D property.

### Parish Maintenance

We have kept the village as clean and tidy as our means allowed, through

- instructing the County's Highway Rangers on work priorities; (feedback on areas in the village that need tidying helps no end).
- using the able assistance of our friend Malcolm Page on general handy work e.g., painting the bus shelter, cutting grass and tidying the Spinney
- Richard Foster and Peter Hambly continued to do a splendid job looking after the village pond and its surroundings. To ensure this natural and scenic asset is retained, the Council has set aside funds from the reserves for future repairs and maintenance.

### Recreation Ground

The Council were successful in securing a grant of £5k for additional play equipment and engaged with neighbouring residents at an on-site meeting as to its placement.

In September, the additional play equipment was installed. My thanks to Cllrs French and Wright-Thompson for identifying suitable items, the best supplier and managing the installation project. The Council is also grateful to Cllr Mele for continuing to ensure the equipment is safe and passes ROSPA inspection.

The equipment has not been in place for very long, but we welcome your feedback now and in the coming months. We have made provisional plans for further items but these, if needed, may take some time to arrive without separate fund raising.

Having created a lovely place for children to play, we ask that dog owners keep their dogs on leads on the Recreation Ground and to bag any dog mess, disposing of the bags in the correct (red) bin. We have a contract for the dog bins to be emptied, whereas the black bin by the play area is emptied by volunteers, who do not wish to handle filled doggie bags. We would also prefer it, if soiled nappies could be taken home.



## **Planning**

The Council has reviewed 12 planning applications over the year. Significant ones were:

- An extension to the cricket clubhouse, which we fully supported and very much hope the club can secure the necessary finance to provide more up to date facilities for the many children and adults who benefit in so many ways from the use of the club's facilities and this village asset.
- We supported the proposal from Sandringham Estate to build 11 (now 10) houses on Lynn Road, subject to adequate footpaths being laid and the traffic speed restriction signs being moved further south.
- We supported Mark and Lynn Orton's submission to extend the facilities in the Country Stores. In fact, the future of the shop was the biggest and most vocal issue for residents over the last year. We received a significant lobby at our June meeting to ask us to ensure that Sandringham was aware of the depth of feeling for Mark and Lynn to secure the store lease and restore the shop's prominence in the village. We were more than happy to do this and are very pleased with the outcome. We wish Mark and Lynn every success in their new, expanded, venture.
- We also approved plans for further detached dwellings at No75 Docking Road and at Church Farm, but these were refused by the Borough.
- As stated in last year's report it is disappointing that Benton Builders have yet to start at Longmeadow, but time is still on their side.

## **School**

The Norwich Diocese have relinquished its rights to the village school in favour of the County Council. We have pressed the County Council to reveal their ideas for the site, but to date they have been non-committal.

## **Community Speed Watch Team**

Traffic speed remains a concern and we continue to support the Community Speed Watch Team along with the camera enforcement team to try to reduce speeding within our village. If you are interested in becoming part of one of West Norfolk's most successful teams, please see Malcom Sargent.

## **Other matters**

On other matters of interest

- The 2 redundant phone kiosks have been removed.
- We hope that you consider our support of the Community Bus Service has been worthwhile as we believe this provides a vital service and a sense of independence for residents who do not drive.
- We continue to support the Great Massingham Car Scheme
- We also contribute towards churchyard maintenance.
- We completed a review of our Assets to ensure that the Council was properly insured. In looking at that which we own, at external furniture for example, it has prompted us to consider if we should buy some additional items, e.g. picnic tables, and would welcome residents' views.
- We are developing a Council web site which will make it easier for those with internet access to keep up to date with council matters and for you to provide ideas and feedback. The site will also help to promote the Bircham to the wider world. Please be assured though, that for those without internet access we will continue to report on Council matters through the local Newsletter.
- We do urge you to use and support the Norfolk Libraries Van when it visits the Village. We will be publishing visiting times in the Newsletter by way of encouragement.
- Next year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW1 and Bircham should play its part in the national tribute. We would welcome any suggestions. Also, if there are any parishioners whose

relatives lived in the village and served in WW1, particularly those named on our War Memorial, we would love to hear from you so that we could record their story for posterity.

The Chairman thanked fellow councillors for their hard work and support as much had been achieved over the past year and where tasks had not come under Council control, the correct authorities had been lobbied on the Village's behalf.

**4. TO OPEN THE MEETING TO RECEIVE THE VIEWS OF THE RESIDENTS**

No questions were raised.

Meeting Closed

Signed .....

Dated.....