

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday 15th April, 2010

Mr Alvin Hunt presided as Chairman of the Parish Council. 48 members of the public attended the meeting including County Councillor R H Leighton, District Councillor, PCSO Jamie Newson, representatives from local organisations, Four Parish Councillors and Miss M Verneti (Clerk).

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Mr B and Mrs J Morton , Mrs A Kiff Wood, Mrs B Lemmon, Mr M Waller.
2. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD 16th APRIL 2009**
The minutes had been made available for inspection and were taken as read. On the proposal of Mr K Webb and seconded by Mr B Tibbles they were **approved** and signed as a true record of the meeting.
3. **MATTERS ARISING** – None were raised

4. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman, Mr Alvin Hunt made his report – Please see *Appendix 1* attached.

5. **PRESENTATION OF THE ACCOUNTS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Miss Verneti introduced herself to those that did not know her and thanked Mrs Vivien Hunt and all the Councillors in helping her familiarize herself with the role.

She explained that this year the Parish Council had obtained Grants from Rural Action East for £500 for the Parish Plan Committee, and to enable us to put the two new climbing frames up on the common for older children we received £700 from Cllr Rae Leighton's SCC Locality Grant, and £900 from the SCDC Outdoor Playing Space Contributions". £1,000 came from the Crabbing Competition Organisers and the balance was made up by a very generous donation from two village residents. She also explained the rise in salaries, and village facilities, which included the last three years rent for the Bird in Hand Field and some general repairs to notice boards and the Green.

In light of the economic situation the Parish Council had agreed to only raise the precept by 2% this year, but after the Gratuity Payment was made to the Clerk on her and £2,312 being ring fenced in the Community Benefit Fund, the balance is very much lower than in previous years – like everyone else the Parish Council has tighten their belts for the coming year. It was proposed by Mr P Austin and seconded by Mr M Fisher that the accounts were accepted. For the accounts see *Appendix 2*

6. **REPORT AND PRESENTATION OF THE ACCOUNTS OF THE WALBERSWICK COMMON LANDS CHARITY**

Miss Barbara Priestman, the Chairman, gave a report. She stated that in September the new Scheme had taken effect. It had been updated to take account of legal changes to the regulation of charities over the past decade and to articulate more clearly the objectives and priorities of the Charity. The Trust website was now up and running and thanks to Kay Ungless for gave of her time and expertise unstintingly.

The Environmental Stewardship Scheme was now having an impact on the management of land, most noticeably on the Common and on Old town Marshes. On the Common, lowland heath is being restored by controlling the bracken and cutting back and removing some of the gorse to “enhance the integrity of the historic landscape character of the area” (*Environmental Stewardship Agreement*). Three new pools have been added to the existing three on Old town Marshes in the hope that they will attract and benefit birds such as avocet and little tern as well as the more usual species.

The Trustees are now working to bring Bennett’s Copse and Bennett’s Drift in line with the Charity’s environmental and management practices. Their objective is to balance the requirements of adjoining property owners with those of the village as a whole, now and in the future.

As far as the accounts were concerned income last year was derived from rents from land and property, from bank interest and from the car parks, from grants through Natural England and donations to the Sea Defence Fund. Expenses included administration and maintenance of the Charity’s assets as well as activities covered by the grants from Natural England. Allocations, as always, were made to individuals and groups in accordance with the objectives of our Scheme.

The Sea Defence Fund continues to be held by the Charity but is available whenever it is required by the Village.

Planned expenditure for the coming year included: Village Hall, the bus shelter, East Point bay and the footpath to the stages on this side of river, replacing the buildings in the Drift and the Copse, the Parish Plan (total estimated cost £40 - £50,000).

For full accounts see *Appendix 3*.

7. REPORT FROM THE SEA DEFENCE GROUP

Cllr David Webb reported that since the inauguration of the Sea Defence Group in 2006 a great deal of information and understanding has been gathered and pressure applied to the Environment Agency to ensure that the policy of “hold the line” is promoted whenever and wherever possible. Having consulted independent experts in barrier beaches we have concluded that the Walberswick/Dunwich shingle ridge cannot be maintained artificially to a standard sufficiently high to constitute a defence, but in time we may be able to build an inner wall to protect some of the marshes. Certainly the EA’s agreement to create an overflow sluice next to the existing one near Cliff Field is helpful because it will mean that the reed beds can drain far more quickly and suffer less permanent damage in the event of overtopping the ridge. The Sea Defence group feels that attitudes in the EA and Natural England are changing and in the future it may be possible to re-submit proposals for protecting these marshes but in the meantime the current focus must continue to be the Blyth Estuary Group’s work in protecting the River and the Harbour. .

WCLCT hold the funds (as detailed below) which will be used when the time is right to protect the village and surrounding areas, keeping you informed, maintaining close contact with SCAR and our sources of information and backing the work of the BEG.

Accounts as at 31.01.2010: (*Full breakdown available from the Clerk or SDG*)

Opening Balance at 31.01.2009	£8286
Income	£2733
Expenditure	£77
Closing balance	£10,942

8. REPORT FROM THE POLICE

PCSO Jamie Newson reported on behalf of the police. He stated that there had been fourteen recorded crimes throughout the year. These included one burglary to a dwelling, 2 from other buildings, and criminal damage and thefts to cars. None of these cases had been resolved. He mentioned the 'Police Direct' service which was now up and running, and complimented the Village Neighbourhood watch team. He also mentioned that the next Saxmundham and Framlingham Tasking meeting was Wednesday 12th May, and encouraged people to attend and have their say on local policing policies.

7. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR MR R H LEIGHTON

County Councillor Leighton reported with the ongoing saga of the Local Government Review hanging over them it had been hard to plan that far ahead, but it looked like it had been put on the back burner for the time being. Council Tax was set with an increase of only 2.4% thanks to continued efficiencies and sound financial management.

However, these efficiency savings are going to be insufficient to meet the scale of the funding crisis, The challenge ahead is much greater as we all know that the country can no longer afford the present level of public debt. From 2011 there are going to be big cuts in the grant funding from government right across the public sector, and if the NHS is to be protected, then Local Government will take a greater share of the pain. Therefore it is highly likely that changes will be made to structure and partnerships, which may well prove good business and better for the people to Suffolk.

On a personal note last June he stated that he had been appointed to the Cabinet and was now Portfolio holder for Public Protection which includes responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service, 35 Fire Stations, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning, Flooding, Sizewell, Severe Weather, the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team, the Anti Prostitution team, the Domestic Violence Action team, and a member of the Police Authority which holds the Chief Constable and the Constabulary to account and ensures policing is efficient and effective.

8. REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MR P G AUSTIN

District Councillor Austin stated he had been elected in July following the resignation of Kevin Keeble who had moved out of the area. He reported that now SCDC shares both its Chief Executive and Head of Planning with Waveney District Council, resulting in considerable savings for both councils. SCDC has set its budget at £15.7 million of 2010/2011 requiring £7.4million from council tax and the rest from Government Rate Support Grant and Business Rates. This represents a 2.9% increase on last year.

Sizewell C will be a major on-going project and in the next 12 months the planning application will be prepared, which will involved detailed consultations with all the surrounding Parish Councils. EDF hope to submit the application next year with completion, should it get the go-ahead in 2017/2018. Sizewell C will have two reactors and the second will start construction immediately after the first. An estimated 5000 workers will be employed. National Grid have stated that the existing twin row of pylons from Sizewell when upgraded will not require more pylons.

The new LDF should come into force over the next few months and become the "bible" for determining planning applications, the next step is the preparation of the Site Specific Allocations and Policies, No sites have been proposed for the Parish.

9. REPORT FROM THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Mark Aldridge, Chairman, gave a report. He stated that this year had been another busy year – many improvements to the hall had been made including replacing the carpet and blinds, and painting the annex. And he made a vote of thanks to Jodie Ellis for donating a new marquee and for all the work she did on the committee. Fund raising events had been very successful, which was just as well as the Hall needed re-wiring to modern standards, an upgrade of the heating system and lighting and new insulation on the main hall roof, all of which is very expensive.

The fete had been organized by the Committee this past year and had been a great success, as had the Pantomime, which continues to be the biggest event of the year.

He paid special thanks to Suzanne Burlingham and Lou and Yash Kadan for all their hard work and a happy retirement, and finally thanks all the committee members for all their hard work “behind the scenes.

10. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Ms C Reeves reported that the new Pastoral Scheme is now in place and the revised Sole Bay Team now comprises the eight parishes of Walberswick, Blythburgh, Reydon, Southwold, Wangford, Uggheshall, South Cove and Sotherton. There will be the equivalent of three full time stipendiary clergy in the revised team. Reverend Rich Henderson is welcomed as Team Vicar in Reydon and a final allocation of clergy to parishes is expected in late summer. Brian Fisher who is a retired OLM continues to act as “Priest on the Spot” and continues to assume Pastoral responsibility for Walberswick.

Service patterns continue with publication of times in the Village News, and on the notice boards. The Church is of course available to all the community at all times but especially for occasional events.

The Committee thanked Parish Council, Walberswick Common Lands Trust and the village for their continued support of St Andrew’s both practically and financially. She also thanked Stephanie Anderson for organising the fete on behalf of the church last year, Maurice and Margot Godbold who organise sponsored historic churches cycle rides and Piers Ford Crush and Bill Ungless for their generous donations as a result of the sale of the Frank Jennings video. These events raised invaluable finances which contributed to the huge cost of running and maintaining the church.

11. LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- a. Blyth Estuary Group - Mr Richard Steward reported that work continued to object to all Government Agencies policies of abandonment for the Blyth Estuary. Planning Permission was granted to raise all the River Walls, but this will take approximately 6 years. Work will start on Tinkers Marsh in August then onto Robinson’s Reydon and finally Southwold Town Marsh. Despite what has been reported in the press there is no evidence that sea level rise has accelerated in the last 100 years and no evidence that storm surges have increased in frequency or severity. The main work in the next year will come from objecting to the EA relocating funds that should be allocated to the Blyth, elsewhere.
- b. Parish Plan Steering Committee – Mr Bill Ungless, the Chairman of the Committee stated that the drop in sessions gave a good idea of the things people were interested in and the questionnaires were being put together. The hope was that they would be delivered to all households in the summer. In order for the Plan to be as full as possible it is important that as close to a 100% response is achieved and to that aim he asked for volunteers to come forward to assist in hand delivering and collecting the questionnaires during the summer period.

- c. Neighbourhood Watch – Mrs Annie Kiff Wood had been unable to attend but sent a short report thanking the Safer Neighbourhood Team, and especially PCSO Newson for their help, especially as the Church had been broken into again with the unpleasant theft of the charity box, and the more seemingly professional and considerable thefts that took place. She reminded everyone to be vigilant
- d. The Village News – Mr Brian Payne stated that the Village News had now been in publication for 13 years, which must prove that what they were doing was ok'd by the readers and contributors. He thanked the team especially Jane Kirkeby who had resigned as Advertising Manager and who would be replaced by Lou Kadan. He stated that the newsletter depended wholly on the contributors and hoped it would continue in the same vein.
- e. The Pantomime Group and Sanderlings – Mrs Julia Sowerbutts reported for both organisations stating that the production of “The Wizard of Oz” had been a huge success and she thanked everyone involved. She explained that Sanderlings was a group that filled the gap between pantomimes and asked for more people to get involved with the next production which would be announced in the village news soon.
- f. WATTS – Mrs Judy Morton sent a report in her absence stating that the group continued to flourish with several play readings during the year and half a dozen organised theatre trips. She stated that had been several new and energetic members, and whilst she hoped it would continue to attract more it was important that the enchanting and charming way it was run would continue for many years to come.
- g. WI – Mrs Margaret Adkinson reported as New President that current membership was at 29. She mentioned several of the talks they had had during the year and the organized trips and welcomed anyone to come along to the meetings, as they were always pleased to have new members.
- h. RNLI – Mr Michael Fisher reported that there had been some changes in the committee, not least with the sad loss of Ben Sutton, but the new members had given the group a boost. All fundraising events had been successful and he hoped that would continue throughout the year. He thanked people for their time and not least their cash.
- i. Local History, Carpet Bowls and the Allotment Groups – Mr Philip Kett reported on all three groups stating that the History Group was going from strength to strength with exhibitions and lecture evenings, and the newsletter, and he thanked everyone for their interest and help. He stated that the archives were in the good hands of Bill and Kay Ungless. The Carpet Bowls Club had had a good year, but needed new members. For the first time in 15 years the Allotments are all full. There is no waiting list but room for a “buddies” on a couple of sections.
- j. Horticulture Show – Ms Betsy Lemmon had sent a report stating that last years show had attracted 365 entries from 45 exhibitors and was a great success. The Committee hopes to encourage more residents to enter the show this year. The Second Annual Seed Swap was also a great success, and the Committee sent a donation to the Heritage Seed Library in support of their efforts to preserve older plant varieties and to thank them for the seeds they donated to our Seed Swap.
- k. Crabbing Championships, Village Bonfire and Easter Egg Hut – Mr Robin Buncombe reported that all three events had been well organised and well attended and thanked the people who always get involved for their invaluable help. The Crabbing continued to support local charities and had donated towards the new play equipment, and a donation for the Eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt had once again come from the Walberswick Common Lands Charity.
- l. Natural England – Mr Adam Burrows made the report to the meeting detailing the works carried out in the past 12 months as well as the proposals for the next twelve months. He stated that numbers of breeding birds was up on the marshes and works to improve the banks would continue during this year. It was also hoped to

encourage the ponies to graze on the reserve at Hinton as well as in the forest, and to encourage all species of wildlife to the various sites as well as encouraging people to get out into the sites and see the works that are going on.

- m. Yoxford Primary School – The Head teacher had sent in a comprehensive report from the school stating that the school had had another good year carrying out many activities and school trips and improving links with the community. The School re-organisation meant that the primary school would have to expand to accommodate children up to the age of 11 with secondary schools taking young people from 11.
- n. Leiston High School – The head teacher sent a report stating that the school had achieved its best ever A Level results with a 98% pass rate and over 50 students going onto University Places and had obtained grants to improve facilities. He also stated that after two years of being runner up the school had been awarded the “Suffolk Coastal Sports School of the Year”.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman read out a letter from Mr and Mrs Jones from the Tuck Shop thanking the Parish Council for its support in preserving the National Lottery Terminal for the village, and also congratulated Cllr Keith “Wally” Webb for being Officially Commended by the High Sheriff of Suffolk for his work in the Community.

Signed.....
Mr D Webb Chairman Walberswick Parish Council 2010/2011

Dated.....