

WOODHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Wednesday 10th April 2019 at 7.30pm in Village Hall, St John's Close.

Present Cllr Andy Notman - Chairman
Cllr Shirley Firth
Cllr Alistair Marr
Cllr Martin Jones
CCllr Graham Bull

Sarah Mizuro – Clerk

Also present - 3 members of the Public

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – Cllr Pendered, Cllr Reynolds, CCllr Criswell, CCllr Tavener
2. **TO SIGN MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th April 2018 were read, approved and duly signed as a true record.
3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – A report was given by the Chairman.
4. **FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The clerk reported that the precept had been used on various projects this year including a maintenance contract to improve the appearance of the village with new planters being purchased and extra areas of grass being cut. The quarterly newsletters have continued at a cost of £198 for printing. One streetlight was repaired during the year and the Councillors agreed to take out a maintenance contract to cover any future issues with the streetlights. An internal audit has been carried out at a cost of £250, the first one completed for some years. A big change in the financial management of the Parish Council has been made with all bank accounts being moved to an online bank, enabling better access to information for Councillors and allowing the Parish Council to complete online payments and VAT returns. The majority of the monies remaining this year have been allocated to pay for the future purchase of traffic calming measures within the village.

5. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

- **Village Hall** – report presented by Louisa Jones
- **PCC St John the Baptist Church** – report presented by Shirley Firth.

6. **OPEN FORUM** – The Chairman invited thoughts and comments from the members of public present:

A member of the public asked there was a possibility of the island at the junction of South Street and Wheatsheaf Road being increased in size as this may help with traffic calming. Cllr Notman said he would contact the highways department as this was their responsibility.

The future of the Conversation area was asked about. Cllr Notman reported that the it has been locked due to insurance cost. The trustees of the Townlands Charity are looking at the best use of the land to benefit the village.

A member of the public thanked the Councillors for all they do and Cllr Notman for taking on the role of Chairman.

Cllr Notman expressed concern regarding the future of the council due to lack of people coming forward as Counillors and the ability of current Councillors to attend meetings.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19:59 and thanked those who attended.

The last year has been an unusual one for the Council. We started the council year with an “election” only two years after the previous one. This saw Alan and Liz Bosworth stand down and Shirley and Tony added to our merry band. This of course meant that once again we didn’t actually hold an election.

As we’ve previously noted, we’ve also had the sad loss of Councillor Huggins which will mean another vacancy will need to be filled, which will be advertised shortly.

We’ve had even more changes to personnel following Neil’s resignation as a councillor as he and Annabel prepare to leave the village for a new adventure in Cheshire. We are obviously sad to see them both go, but they do of course go with our thanks for all they have done and our very best wishes for their future. I imagine that mine will not be the only report this evening that includes such a sentiment, which is an indication of how much influence they have had in the village. We are pleased to have co-opted Martin Jones to fill the vacant council place, and I am honoured to step into the chairman’s role and I thank Alistair for agreeing to be my vice-chairman.

As a village we also recently lost our oldest resident in Joan Cade, so this year has seen much change in both the council and the village.

Change is not necessarily a bad thing of course, so we must look forward and embrace the challenges and opportunities that have been presented to us as a council, and the other village organisations I know will find themselves in a similar position.

For our own part, we must move on from the disappointment of our failed LHI bid and make decisions on financing our own highway improvements, which may include a speed indicator device but if we are to raise another LHI bid for next year, we will need to allocate funds to finance that, so we must be wary of overcommitting on our precept. However, the traffic survey held last year does indicate that villagers are keen for us to do something to ensure the village remains as safe as possible.

A further measure which will hopefully never be needed is the plan to install a defibrillator in the Telephone Box. This has been suggested by Lynn Crossland because we will shortly be without our own First Responder in the village. While it would be nice if we could get more volunteers for the service, the next best thing is for us to have the reassurance of our own defib device close by. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Lynn and Gary Davis for their service as First Responders.

With more and more regulatory change such as GDPR affecting the way we run the council and the number of policies and processes we are required to have in place increase, being a councillor inevitably involves more than just turning up to meetings and it is my plan as chairman to try and include all councillors as well as the clerk in the running of the council.

I am acutely aware that the majority of the council outgoings are for running the council itself and I am hoping that more of the precept can be allocated to projects within the village rather than being spent on the council administration. This is something that we have started to work on in the past few years, most notably by employing Mr & Mrs Jeakins as our village maintenance contractors. This is something that has improved the look of the village and I thank Joe and Carol for their efforts.

Finally I’d like to thank our clerk, Sarah, and the other councillors, past, present and future for their support in my short time as Chairman so far and in the coming term

Last year was an extremely busy year for the PCC of the Church of St John the Baptist, and I would like to thank all the people who have helped..

Our idea was to raise funds for the church while at the same time to introduce more people to the church by a variety of events and services. Events included a Pudding Club, a Summer Supper a Harvest Supper, Supper at Manor Farm, Advent Fayre, Easter Egg Hunt, and a Walk round the Village at Feast Week, finishing with bacon butties in the churchyard. One member took part in the sponsored Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust WALK DRIVE & STRIDE. At least £10,000 a year is needed to cover expenses, such as insurance, parish share heating etc so it is important that we continue to raise funds. This can be helped by people making a monthly contribution to the church by direct debit. This is then Gift aided. Last year Gift Aid and planned giving amounted to £5,500.

We also need to raise money for repairs and £3,000 has been put aside to do essential work (according to the church architect), This includes grouting external walls where the wrong grout was used to try and prevent damp getting into the church and looking at the drainage.

Numbers attending services vary from a very few to a full church. Last year in May the St Ives British Legion helped us celebrate the deaths of two Woodhurst soldiers in 1918. This was attended by some relatives of one of these soldiers. The feast week service included an exhibition about the village, The Carol Service was a great success the church being full and singing including the descants magnificent.

During the year there was one wedding and one memorial service.

The PCC are concerned about the falling numbers at some services and as a result wrote to all people on the church electoral roll to ask people's opinion. The question of whether to cut one of the services has been discussed at meetings, but no firm decision made yet.

Thanks to all members of the PCC for their hard work during the year. Brenda and Lois for keeping the church looking so well. Rod for the churchyard, and thanks to those who are on the rota for unlocking the church. This is done on a weekly basis and any else who would like to join this rota would be very welcome. It is very pleasing to see that people from outside the village are visiting our church and writing in the visitors book

The officers of the church are changing Martin Jones is now Treasurer and Louisa Jones is the secretary., and I am hoping to become Churchwarden. We are now short of one member on the PCC and would welcome anyone who would like to come and help us.

I am delighted to report a very successful year for the Village Hall.

Again the overall trend has been an increase in income as well as an increase in bookings from both groups and private individuals.

In June we held a very successful Feast Week. We were not only delighted by the income but also by the number of people taking part. Once again

It was agreed to donate 50% to the church and a cheque for £1,081 was presented to St John's PCC.

Our Bar Nights continue to go from strength to strength, again both in terms of numbers attending and income. It's lovely to see so many faces, old and new coming along and enjoying themselves.

Once again we hosted the village Harvest Supper to raise funds for the Church. That was another wonderful evening and it was great to see our community coming together to enjoy themselves and celebrate our farming heritage.

October also saw one of our most popular nights in the form of the Village Halloween party and Bar Night. Sadly, the weather was not kind to us and we were rained off halfway round the village. This did not deter from the bar night and a good time was had by all.

December saw one of our busiest weekends in the form of the Annual Quiz night and Pensioners lunch. Both were well attended and well supported! This was followed up by the annual Children's Christmas Party and new to the calendar a children's craft morning.

Our thanks as ever to Andy Notman for running the 100 Club during Feast Week and Christmas. It's something we all look forward to and which helps with our financial planning.

So a busy yet successful year! Our thanks go to everyone who has volunteered at an event, bought tickets, organised an event or made a donation.

Due to the resignation of Annabel we are looking for a new Treasurer and are pleased to welcome several new Committee members. We are looking forward to utilising their skills to plan another successful year in 2019-20