

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 8PM ON WEDNESDAY 13th MARCH 2019 IN THE DAY CENTRE, 72 CHAPEL HILL, STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

PRESENT Cllr M Caton (Chairman of the Parish Council) and 8 other Parish Councillors
Ruth Clifford - Clerk to the Council
Trevor Lloyd - Assistant Clerk
County Cllr Ray Gooding and Dist Cllr Alan Dean
23 parishioners

The Chairman, Cllr Maureen Caton, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised everyone of the fire exits.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C Dean, S Dunn, M Jessup, J Kavanagh, R Rands and J Salmon.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2018 were approved.

3 ACCOUNTS

Cllr Jones reminded the meeting that a copy of the full audited Annual Governance and Accountability Returns for 2018 and the budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 have been available on the Parish Council website. The report in The Link had stated that a hard copy was available on request to the Parish Council.

Having been proposed by Cllr Sell and seconded by Cllr Barnes, the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 were unanimously accepted.

4 FINANCIAL REPORT

Cllr Jones highlighted the following:

- Longer than expected rental income from the clinic and the failure to recruit a PSCO had a positive impact on the budget.
- ECC announcement in November of their intention to review their library provision, which carried with it a threat that our library would be closed, was a major hammer blow and left the Parish Council with the possibility of losing £20,000 of income.
- In the light of the loss of income an increase in council tax would be needed to maintain the reserves at the required level.
- The final cost of building the Mountfitchet Exchange was likely to be £1.2m.
- An early decision on the future of Crafton Green House was vital to stop it becoming a drain on resources.
- The future of the Day Centre was currently being discussed with UDC. There is a potential saving of £5,000.
- If savings can be made, then the Foresthall Park S.106 Fund, which has been used to help finance the Mountfitchet Exchange project, should start to be re-established.

Cllr Jones stated that this would be his last financial report as he was not seeking re-election after 43 years on the Parish Council. Whilst he regretted the delays that had been caused to The Mountfitchet Exchange project, he had no regrets at all about embarking on the project; he believes that it will contribute to the wellbeing of the whole community and become a focal point for a variety of local services. He then invited questions from the floor.

Mr Hollis asked how figures could be so precise. Cllr Jones explained that many of the items of expenditure were known well in advance and were not estimates.

Dist. Cllr A Dean sought clarification on the £109,000 figure shown as free reserves for 2020/21. Cllr Jones explained that the new Council would have to monitor this and decide how much it wished to allocate to specific projects.

Mr Stiles stated that he had first joined the Parish Council 40 years ago, and Peter Jones was then already an established councillor. He has been at the core of the Council, and the community owes him a huge debt of gratitude for his outstanding service.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Caton updated her report which had been circulated via The Link. Copy attached.

6 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

Cllr Trundle presented her report on the work undertaken by the village NhW group.

7 RESOLUTIONS None

8 OPEN FORUM

a Mr Snow asked why the Stansted Pharmacy was not open on a Saturday. Cllr Richards explained that it was not economical for them to open on Saturday but this would change if they were granted a dispensing licence. Cllr Caton agreed to approach the management to raise the issue re Saturday opening.

b Mr Woodcock:

- thanked the Council, particularly retiring members, for supporting him.
- requested that the Parish Council continues to fight for a dispensing pharmacy in the south of the village.
- stated that poor air quality was still a major concern. He is seeking access to the data that has been collected and is prepared to use a freedom of information request to make sure the data is in the public domain.
- reported that the Speedwatch team are still recording vehicles doing disturbing speeds. He appealed for new volunteers to join the team.

c Mrs Hollis:

- commented on lights not working at pedestrian crossings which she considered presented a serious road safety hazard. County Cllr Gooding said he was working with Highways to try and get improvements.
- reported cars being parked at Linden House. The Chairman agreed to remind them of the clause in their planning consent which restricts parking on the site.

- expressed her relief that work had started on the Three Colts site and that the original building was being restored.
 - reported problems encountered by Day Centre customers because of a lack of parking spaces at Crafton Green. Cllr Jones explained that spaces would be released once the Mountfitchet Exchange was open. The Parish Council were also working with UDC to add additional parking spaces.
 - added her thanks to Cllr Jones for his years of service.
- d Mr Stiles commented on poor illumination of traffic bollards and posts on the B1383 near the Swords' Sale Rooms entrance. County Councillor Gooding explained that there was an issue with UK Power Networks but he was trying to persuade Essex Highways to install some internally-illuminated posts, even if only as a temporary measure.
- e Mr Snow expressed concerns about the mini roundabout at the bottom of Chapel Hill which he considered a significant hazard. The Clerk explained that a recent audit had recognised a number of issues but there were very limited options to improve the layout.
- f Mrs Wellings asked if there had been any prosecutions for fly tipping or littering. The Chairman responded that there were none known to date.
- g Mr Stiles requested an update on the pedestrian crossing proposal in Lower Street. The Clerk reported that UDC and Essex Highways were pressurising the developer to fund the work as he is required to do as a condition of his planning permission.
- h Cllr Trundle commented on the difficulties of accessing different parking areas in the Lower Street Car Park.
- i Mrs Gott raised the issue of vehicles being parked on pavements creating a hazardous obstruction for wheelchair users and carers with buggies. The Clerk explained that obstruction was a police issue but she agreed to write to residents again and appeal to them to park more responsibly.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited them to stay for refreshments.

Mrs Hollis proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council for all that they did on behalf of the community

The meeting closed at 9.00pm