

# **Minutes of Great Oakley Parish Council Annual Assembly**

## **Held at The Village Hall 7.00pm Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

**Present:** Mr S Huk – Chairman, Mr T Spurge – Vice Chairman, Mr M Keating, Mr J Tierney, Mr B Eaton

**Apologies:** Mr M Bransby, Mr N Daniels

There were eight parishioners present.

Annual Assembly was opened by Chairman at 7.00pm.

**Chairman's Report:** Chairman is pleased to be able to note that the Maybush re-opened in May as a "Community Hub", entirely down to the hard work of those involved and we congratulate them and wish them continued success. The Parish Council have been asked for permission for a sign to be hung from one of our Lamp Posts, near the memorial to help highlight the Pub. Subject to consideration of some comments received, we will endeavour to find a solution suitable to all to assist.

Miss Nicola Booth resigned as a Councillor in September and her contribution will be missed. Chairman thanked her for all her hard work.

Despite rising costs, we have been able to hold the level of the Precept this year at £19,755 and at the same time not increase either the Village Hall Hire costs or the Burial Ground fees.

The lych gates at the Burial Ground remain in very poor condition and we hope to have adequate funding within our budget this coming year to replace them.

Central Government rejected Tendring District Council's Draft Local Plan and as a consequence the entire District has seen something of a "free-for-all" with Planning Applications.

In light of discussion held at a number of previous Public Meetings, the Parish Council have consistently maintained the position that Great Oakley does not need the additional housing stock, generally to no avail.

In September TDC published their latest document entitled "Preferred Options Consultation Document 2013 – 2033 and beyond". This revised version of the Local Plan was generally unchanged for Great Oakley, however the Stones Green Building Development Boundary has been deleted, effectively precluding any development in that part of the Parish for the foreseeable future and we made representation objecting to this in line with decisions previously made.

The Parish Council website continues to provide information to residents and Chairman thanked Mr Tierney for his work in this area.

Due to the resignation of Tom Howard as District Councillor for our Ward, a by-election was held and we welcomed our new District Councillor, Mike Bush, at our last meeting and look forward to working with him in the future for the benefit of all.

Chairman thanked all Councillors, our Clerk and County Cllr Andy Erskine for their support and time and effort they have given for the benefit of the Parish.

**Public Transport Report:** There is no public transport report this year.

**Highways Report:** Chairman reported that parking at the school continues to be an issue but following the reinstatement of the zig-zags and the installation of Parking Restrictions signs, these are now legally enforceable and will hopefully improve the safety of our children in this area.

The railings at the school were damaged earlier in the year. Since then we have pursued Highways to get them repaired and extended further round the corner, so far to no avail.

We have finally seen some attention given to the roads within the Parish with resurfacing of the B1414 taking place last June, complete with the road closures and the chaos and disruption to both residents and businesses that caused.

Highways are resurfacing the road through Stones Green at the moment for the first time in over 20 years!

Outside of these areas, the numerous pot holes around the Parish continue to be an issue and are reported on a regular basis.

We have recently had problems with a car parked in one of the turning areas at Partridge Close causing an obstruction. The owner has been asked to move it and it has been reported to the authorities. Permanent warning signs are going to be erected.

Fly-tipping continues to be a problem, aggravated by the restrictions in what householders can dispose of at the Civic Amenity Sites and has occurred at The Soils, Colchester Road, Stones Green, The Avenue, Stones Green Road, Farm Road and Pesthouse Lane.

**Finance Report:** A preliminary finance report was presented providing predictions of the out-turn at the end of this financial year.

**Pre-School Report:** Oakey Dokeys continues to thrive as a popular pre-school both within the Parish of Great Oakley and with families from Wix, Dovercourt, Ramsey, Little Oakley and Harwich.

Their register is full for the remainder of this academic year and numbers for September 2017 – July 2018 are already looking very healthy and as a business are enjoying continued sustainability.

The departure of Hayley Forrest from Oakey Dokeys in July 2016 signified the end of an era and Shirley Funnell has been appointed setting.

They are open for 8 sessions a week and are considering the possibility of expanding this to 10 sessions in September when increased Government funding becomes available for working families.

Looking to the future they are considering the viability of continuing in the current building and are exploring opportunities for possible expansion to meet the changing needs of our community and target market.

**Church Report:** During the past twelve months the Ecclesiastical Parish of All Saints has seen some significant changes to the arrangement of local benefices, i.e. the groupings of parishes.

They welcomed our new Priest in Charge, Reverend Liz Barnes, who has taken up residence in the Rectory and is in charge of four parishes in addition to our own - Beaumont-cum-Moze, Tendring, Wix and Wrabness.

The pattern of services held here in the village church has been slightly adjusted to retain as much as possible of our previous regular Sunday arrangements which are detailed in the Parish Magazine “Coast to Coast”.

The choir thrives and sings regularly to support Sunday and other services and is keen to expand its membership, particularly with young people.

For some time they have been working toward providing improved facilities, not easy to achieve when dealing with a Grade 1 Listed Building, needing the support of English Heritage to minimize the impact upon the existing structure.

**Village Hall Report:** Chairman reported that the long term plans for a New Village Hall are progressing as an integral part of the proposed housing development at the Allotment Field. We understand Mr Thompson has now appointed a developer who he intends to continue to work with and has offered to put together an exhibition in due course outlining progress and potential house designs.

Un-authorized parking continues to be an issue in the Village Hall car park and new warning signs have been installed.

We have managed to obtain a more beneficial price for the Hall gas and will be changing suppliers imminently.

The future of the Post Office within the Village Hall has been discussed as the Postmaster informed us he is no longer able to make any contribution towards the costs of using the Hall. A final solution is still to be determined but the Parish Council will do all we can to ensure the current level of service at least is maintained in the Village.

Mrs Ling and others continue to support the hall and other causes with their fund raising events and I would like to thank Pat and everyone else involved for their efforts.

I would also like to thank Mrs Julia Turner for all her hard work as Caretaker.

**Playing Field Report:** Chairman is pleased to report that the play equipment on the Recreation Field continues to be well used and the village football team continue to make good use of the pitch.

At the beginning of the year the Football Team requested our permission to locate a small container in the corner of the Recreation Field with a view to serving refreshments. The Parish Council were supportive of the idea but so far nothing has been finalized.

Recently an infestation of moles has been identified and we are working with the football club to have them eradicated and the field re-leveled.

There being no further questions, Chairman closed Annual Assembly at 7.18pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....