

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Assembly of Chalgrave held on Thursday April 13th, 2023 at the Memorial Hall, Tebworth at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr. Phil Parry (Chairman); Cllr Kevin Ludgate; Cllr Jan Day; Cllr Ken Green; Lesley Smith-Clerk

Also present:

Andrew Selous MP for Southwest Bedfordshire
Ward Cllr. Mark Versallion Heath & Reach Ward

Representatives from:

All Saints Church, Chalgrave; Rev Linda Washington
Chalgrave Memorial Hall; John Wojdyla
Chalgrave Sports Club; John Parker
Chalgrave Senior Citizens' Committee; Roger Fenwick
Chalgrave WI; Debbie Parry
Chalgrave News; Jan Day
Book Club; Noeleen Thomson (read by Phil Parry)

Public present: 21

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Harvey Greenwood; Cllr Peter Warburton; Police.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH ASSEMBLY-APRIL 14th, 2022

Approved by the council and signed as correct by the Chair.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed residents, introduced the council members and explained their roles within the council. Cllr Parry then gave a summary of the work of the Parish Council and its activities over the past year. He also mentioned:

- i. This year's precept is £8,664. About a quarter goes back into our community in the form of grants and awards. The amount the PC is allowed to allocate is limited. A third is kept for contingencies and the rest is used in the running of the council's activities. The accounts can be viewed on the website or via the clerk.
- ii. The PC's work this past year included reporting fly tipping and potholes, reviewing planning applications, keeping footpaths clear, keeping gulleys clear and so on.
- iii. We have two solar farms to be developed in the parish. The PC is in conversation with the developers of both solar farms to discuss community benefit or funding for projects in the parish.
- iv. The PC is pressing for a site meeting with Highways to discuss more substantial traffic calming measures and protection for 1 Home Farm on the first bend on Toddington Road. The property has been hit by speeding cars six times.
- v. The Speedwatch Team is out once a month in Tebworth and Wingfield to remind drivers of the speed limit.
- vi. The sight lines leaving Chalgrave Road onto the B5120 are not good as the bushes are overgrown. The PC is tracing and contacting the landowner to ask them to cut the bushes back.
- vii. The PC is in contact with CBC Planning Department about the development at Ivy Farm Barns. The current cladding on Plot 2 is not what was originally agreed, which was larch or oak.

- viii. The PC is looking into rewilding some of the verges in the parish and enhancing the area opposite the Queen's Head.
- ix. Chalgrave is a low crime area but there are break-ins and burglaries. Make sure windows and doors are locked and outbuildings are secure.
- x. Request for nominations for the Millennium and Community Awards.
- xi. Summary given of the West's Educational Trust and what the grants are awarded for. Applications to Lesley Smith, Clerk to West's.
- xii. A Street Party is arranged for May 7th, 2023 to celebrate the coronation of King Charles 111.
- xiii. Open invitation to any of the Parish Council meetings which are usually on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

4. POLICE REPORT

No report this year.

5. ANDREW SELOUS MP

Andrew Selous MP for South West Bedfordshire kindly joined the Parish Assembly. He updated the Parish Council and residents on the following:

- a) Education. Key Stages 2, 3, and 5 results are not as good as they should be therefore extra money has been provided for our area. However, Cedars School in Leighton Buzzard has the best 6th form in the county. Van Dyke in Leighton Buzzard and Houstone in Houghton Regis are highly rated.
- b) General Practice is a main issue in this area. General Practice is not expanding along with new housing. Land has been acquired in Leighton Buzzard. There is an integrated hub in Priory Gardens in Dunstable and the Luton and Dunstable Hospital is being expanded.
- c) Policing. Mr Selous met with the new Chief Constable recently. There is a record number of Police Officers in Bedfordshire. And there are 400 student officers. The Chief Constable wants to attend PC meetings at least once a year.
- d) Jobs. Growth in employment continues. There is 2.6% unemployment in Bedfordshire compared to 3.7% in the country.

Mr Selous then took questions from councillors and residents.

6. SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE REPORT

- a) Membership. Members are 65 or over. They receive a £20 supermarket voucher as a Christmas present and are invited to the Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner at Parkfields Middle School. They also receive a card on their birthday.
- b) Finances. The committee needs to raise £800 approximately for the vouchers. It has not had the benefit of the proceeds from the Round Table float last Christmas as it was cancelled due to the bad weather so needs to raise funds.. The year before was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. The committee received a donation for jobs that were carried out for the PC. A relative of a parishioner who recently died set up a Just Giving page and donated the money to the Senior Citizens.
- c) Senior Citizens' Committee. The committee is small and thanks go to all the people that help to collect money and distribute birthday and Christmas gifts. Members also help with odd jobs for people.

7. WI REPORT

- a) Membership has remained stable at 46 and is in its 13th year.
- b) Meetings and Activities.
 - Talks from a
 - Film, Television and Theatrical costume designer
 - Royal Butler
 - local crime novelist
 - man who had built an Orphanage and school in Mombasa
 - former policeman about the 2006 assassination of ex-Soviet spy Alexander Litvinenko

- Burlesque session and a show
- Guided Ghost Walk around Dunstable
- Christmas Afternoon Tea – Woburn Coffee House
- Christmas Party – Tilsworth Golf Club
- Escape room

c) Clubs

- Book Group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month. Meetings in either The Plough in Wingfield or in group members' houses. A wide variety of genres have been read over the course of the year and members have had some lively discussions. Currently reading Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver – a Hill Billie version of Dicken's David Copperfield.
- Supper Club. This takes place on the third Thursday of the month. The group has tasted a wide variety of food from tapas, Thai, Mediterranean to modern British.
- Craft Club runs on the third Monday of the month at Chalgrave Memorial Hall from 7-9pm.

d) 2023/24 Calendar Highlights.

Indoor curling; Pub walk; Birds of Prey; Suffragette Talk; Decluttering; Belly dancing workshop.

Guests are welcome to the meetings on second Tuesday of the month at 8pm; £5.00.

8. CHALGRAVE NEWS REPORT

The News is a quarterly parish magazine delivered to all households in Chalgrave. It is self-funded and aims to cover news and issues related to the parish. Last year the News marked the Queen's Jubilee with a bumper A4 edition.

Now that the Toddington magazine has folded The News would like to deliver more copies to organisations in Toddington such as the library and church but it needs to be mindful of costs. Some advertisers have been lost since Covid and The News is looking for others. The News also shops around for the best printing costs. A plant sale is being planned at the Pop Up Tearoom in May.

Contributors are asked to submit their reports promptly. A report from the West's Educational Trust would be welcome. Thanks are given to all the contributors including those who have moved away.

Help delivering the magazine and help from anyone wishing to be involved would be welcome. Thanks went to the editorial team, especially Lyndie Lothian and Tracy Malster who put the magazine together.

9. BOOK CLUB REPORT

The Book Club is still going strong with seven members. We read a wide variety of books, some of which have been fantastic, others have drawn mixed reactions.

We take it in turns to host a meeting, which usually happens every four to six weeks. We chat and discuss the book over a coffee and cake. We also have the occasional lunch and have recently been to The Green Man in Eversholt. It is a lovely pub and restaurant and the food was very good.

If anyone would like to join us please contact Noeleen Thomson on 07899 094777.

10. SPORTS CLUB REPORT

The club has 40 members and 80 on Face Book.

Some members have signed up to the MAD 2023 challenge, which involves walking a mile a day for 365 consecutive days.

Other activities are:

5 km Park Run at Houghton Hall every month

Yoga, Saturday mornings and Monday evenings. Dates of classes are on Face Book.

Cycling and walking trips

Golf days

Cricket at Parkfields Middle School

The club raises money for local schools e.g. St Goerges Lower School.

The club is holding a Quiz Night on April 22nd, 2023; £12 for members and £15 for non-members.

11. CHALGRAVE MEMORIAL HALL

Roger Masters has stepped down as chair of the committee after 20 years of sterling service. Will Randell and John Wojdyla have taken over as co-chairs. Roger is still an important member of the committee.

- a) Bookings have not improved after Covid so the committee will endeavour to pursue more fundraising; this is important for the upkeep of the building and surrounds. Fund raising events include a Bingo Night and a Jubilee Party last June.
- b) Maintenance. The hall's biggest expenditure this year will be an upgrade of the fire alarm system and emergency lighting. This has been ordered and work will commence soon. We are also getting quotes for repairs and replacement of some of the gutters, soffits and facias.
- c) Children's Playground has been dismantled for health and safety reasons. The playground was constructed at the same time as the hall out of the same funding source and a replacement is currently beyond the hall's means. Funding is being sought from the National Lottery and possibly from Tebworth Solar Farm.
- d) Hall Committee. Some members have left and new ones welcomed. The constitution has been redrafted to meet current governance rules.
- e) Events.
Chalgrave Games; Saturday, 17 June, 2023
Pop-up Tea Room in collaboration with Chalgrave Church continues to be a great success.

John thanked the committee members for all their work.

12. CHURCH REPORT

- a) Pop Up Tearoom has been very successful.
- b) Repair to Chancel Beam will be very costly. The church building can only be used for services but services can be held outside when the weather improves. In the meantime the Harpsicord Evening has had to be cancelled.
- c) Remembrance Service. Wreaths will be laid at the war memorial at the church and Chalgrave Memorial Hall.
- d) Parochial Church Council Meeting will be held on May 21st, 2024 at 10.30am.

13. WARD COUNCILLOR MARK VERSALLION

- a) Council Tax. At the full council meeting it was agreed not to increase council tax because of the cost of living.
- b) Social Services. More money has been found for children's and adult social services.
- c) Highways
 - HW has a new contractor.
 - CBC now has four jet packing machines for filling in potholes.
 - Head of HW has resigned and a new one is being recruited.
- d) Traffic Calming. Cllr Versallion is chasing the traffic calming measures that Cllr Parry mentioned earlier in order to protect 1 Home Farm, Toddington Road from further accidents.

14. TIME AND DATE OF 2024 PARISH ASSEMBLY

To be arranged.

Formal meeting closed at 20.23

The public were then offered refreshments and given the opportunity to chat to councillors and guests.

Signed by Chair.....

Dated.....