

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – STRUMPSHAW, BUCKENHAM AND HASSINGHAM

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Strumpshaw Community Hall on Tuesday, 18 May 2021 at 8 pm

1 Welcome by the Chairman of Strumpshaw Parish Council

Maureen Hammond Chairman of Strumpshaw Parish Council, welcomed everyone.

Also present: Parish Councillors: Sheila Ashford, Paul Dexter, Tina McAuley, Eric McCormick, Martin (Olly) Page. There were five other residents present.

Apologies: Councillors Sue Prutton, Grant Nurden and Andrew Proctor

2 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 15 May 2019

These were agreed to be correct, and were signed by Maureen Hammond as Chairman of the meeting.

3 Parish Council Report

Maureen Hammond said she had taken over as Chairman of Strumpshaw Parish Council in February 2021 when David Varley had resigned because of ill health. She welcomed Eric McCormick as a Councillor. Maureen Hammond said as there had been no Parish Meeting in 2020 she would broadly cover events from 2019/20 as well as 2020/21. Many of the particulars would be covered in the agenda or could be found in the publicly available minutes.

Maureen Hammond said that her first very pleasant task was to introduce Megan Wilby, the Parish Clerk. Pauline James, the previous Clerk had resigned in March 2020 but had initially remained available to provide support and Hilary Hammond had become Deputy Clerk as an interim measure. Megan and the other candidates were interviewed by post and email and Megan began work on 6 April 2020.

The most important and urgent matter affecting the village has been the intermittent flooding which occurred on Norwich Road at the eastern edge of the village. There have been 48 flooding incidents in the last nine years but this had been an ongoing problem which has occurred over a longer time. There have been six floods in the last 12 months.

The Highways Authority and Anglian Water were involved in attempting to find a solution to the problem. In February the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance had been set up. The chairman was Lord Dannatt. Maureen Hammond had written to Lord Dannatt the day after hearing of this initiative to outline the situation in Strumpshaw. Lord Dannatt having written back immediately and his response have been positive. It was understood the Alliance was drawing up a prioritised list of historically unresolved

issues and it was believed that there was no reason why Strumpshaw should not be on that list. The latest development was that water infiltration tests were being carried out to the north of Norwich Road and in Snook's field at the junction of Mill Road/ Norwich Road.

Maureen Hammond said that the referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan had been held in July 2014 when the community of Strumpshaw had agreed to new housing being built (as an exemption to the settlement area). The reason being that the builder would agree to build a hall as part of the social benefit. The Parish Council had been determined not to incur a long-term debt which the parish would then have had to shoulder. Crabtree had built the hall but the specifications had not covered all the standards that were required. The standard of the hall was largely down to David Varley's almost daily involvement with the building works. The parish pit had been sold by closed tender at Christmas 2019 which had provided the funds to complete the building.

A bid had been submitted to the National Lottery which would have covered the cost of equipping the hall. These bids were extremely time-consuming and rightly demanded a great deal of detail. The day the bid went to the board of the National Lottery the Parish Council had been told that the criteria had been changed that very day and as a result its bid could no longer be considered. Hilary Hammond who had written the bid then began to raise money by other means. An acknowledgement of the people and organisations that had provided support was posted in the entrance of the hall.

The next step had been to form a Community Hall Committee to run the hall. It had been important that the format of the Community Hall Committee complied not only with Council regulations but that it also adhered to the spirit of community, which had always been the focus.

After months of work everything had been ready and then the lockdown occurred, then two months of relief, followed by restrictions, a short window of a few weeks and then the last lockdown. Maureen Hammond said she wanted to sing the praises of the Community Hall Committee who had throughout everything remained positive and proactive as well as entrepreneurial. Many groups who use the hall had remained loyal and were enjoying using the hall because it was Covid safe. The attention to detail had been outstanding. The Committee had remained cheerful and addressed any issues in a straightforward and positive manner. There were still some outstanding issues to resolve and it was hoped to settle these during the coming year.

The government and Broadland District Council had supported community halls during the lockdown and that had been a tremendous help. Realistically the hall had to pay its way and that meant maximum use. The Community Hall Committee had done some excellent work in achieving this under the circumstances. The next steps were to address the community side of the programme with a church fair at Christmas, a Macmillan event in November and birthday parties.

Along with the hall came the other part of the community benefit, the allotments. It had been planned to build a shed for the six allotment holders. Liaison with Lingwood led to Lingwood Parish Council giving Strumpshaw Parish Council money for the shed. Strumpshaw Parish Council has asked that Broadland District Council direct the section 106 sports development money from Oakland Mews to upgrade the running track in Lingwood which was used by parishioners from both parishes.

The community hall grounds would come up under correspondence and again at the beginning of item 14.

Finally, the last initiative to report on was the infrastructure money from the Mill Meadows development which was to be used for the environment by November 2024. Buckingham Wood had been bought by the Parish Council 21 years ago for the people of Strumpshaw. During those years a minimum of maintenance has been carried out. During the pandemic and as a result of social media there has been a large increase in footfall in the Woods with paths being widened and the bluebells been damaged. Buckingham Woods is an ancient woodland that needs to be preserved. The infrastructure money would be used in a project to protect the ancient Wood, control species which have and are invading and protect the bluebells. The aim was to enable visitors to enjoy the Wood and its special nature by ensuring paths were as safe as was possible, repairing broken sections including the gates and using noticeboards to inform about footpaths, the history of the Wood and to delineate boundaries.

The pandemic lockdown's have not been quiet, it has been busy and productive. Maureen Hammond said there was even more that she could report on but the areas that she have covered have been the main points she wished to raise. Maureen Hammond invited attendees to raise any matters that they wished to be discussed.

Maureen Hammond thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....