

# GESTINGTHORPE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 2013

Held in the Village Hall on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Parish Cllrs James Nott(Chair) A Cooper, S. Bolter, T Flower  
District Cllrs Hylton Johnson, Joanne Beavis, Wendy Scattergood  
County Cllr David Finch  
Mr Leslie Crumpton-Taylor – School Governor  
Jayne Laken – Village Agent  
John Sinclair – Neighbourhood Watch  
5 members of the public  
Parish Clerk

**Apologies for absence:** Parish Cllrs Richard Payne, M Cullen

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the 2013 Annual Village Meeting were agreed as a true record, proposed Terry Flower, seconded John Sinclair.

2. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman read through the various items on his report.

3. **Accounts for year 2012-13**

The annual accounts showed that income throughout the year had hardly changed, payments out were slightly less and the total balance carried forward was some £450 more. There were no questions raised.

4. **Report from Governor of Bulmer St. Andrew's School**

Leslie Crumpton-Taylor thanked the County Council for listening to small schools, which had resulting in an increase of funding. He advised that Bulmer had 3 full time teachers, plus assistant teachers for currently 62 pupils. He was unhappy that nearby town schools were full to capacity while Bulmer would be down to fewer than 60 pupils in September and the Governors are campaigning to raise the profile of Bulmer School to prospective parents. Leslie has stepped down as Chair of Governors and Mrs Jan Hoogewerf has taken on the role, however Leslie will still be looking after the finances. Leslie was thanked for his report.

5. **Reports from village organisations & village agent**

**Village Agent**

Jayne Laken gave an update on village agents' work and informed the meeting that there has been no huge demand for help from Gestingthorpe residents. There is now a food bank operating in Halstead. Jayne will be running a new a computer course at Hedingham School in September. Jayne was thanked for her report.

**Educational Foundation**

Ashley Cooper reported that the Charity Trustees were Steve Bolter, two churchwardens, Corrina Brown, Debbie Nott and the Reverend Ellis. The Foundation field had been inspected in November and was in good order. Income for the year was £1,020, with £250 from investments and a one off donation of £126 from the Village Design Statement funds. Grants of £1,372 had been made, of which £60 had been donated to the Captain Oates committee towards last year's events; other items were driving lessons, swimming lessons, music and extra tuition. The accounts were passed round. Ashley thanked Wilfred Teverson for auditing the accounts and Jane Winmill for her work as secretary. Jane has now stepped down as secretary after 9 years and a new secretary will be needed.

Terry Flower asked whether any surplus was carried forward each year. Ashley said that the committee aims to spend the income as long as it is on meaningful applications.

**Village Hall**

Terry Flower reported that James Donoghue had continued as chairman but a new chairman is needed. There had been no meetings held for a while and although the hall was in good repair, there does need to be some new people coming forward to join the committee.

Mr Smith asked whether this is something the Parish Council could take on the running of.

James Nott said it was concerning that no meetings had been held and that he would speak to the village hall committee and discuss further at the next Parish Council meeting.

Steve Bolter advised that there is now a cleaner employed to keep the hall looking clean and tidy.

**Neighbourhood Watch**

John Sinclair reported on the problems in the area, which include shed burglaries. There had been a few incidents in Gestingthorpe; a fence being taken and an unlocked car being turned over. There are also thefts of heating oil in this area. The new Crime Commissioner is very keen on NW but there is a shortage of funds and the area for our local representative has increased, resulting in less frequent meetings being held.

Terry Flower raised the points of the 2012 AVM where the phone box was reported as not working and in need of painting. There is also a pane of glass missing.

The Clerk advised that the phone had been repaired last year and due to the bad weather the box had not been painted and this will be chased.

**7. District & County Councillors Reports****County Cllr David Finch**

Cllr Finch replied to Leslie Crumpton-Taylor's remark about the falling number of pupils and informed that there is growth in the birth rate in larger Essex towns and also an increase in special needs. He had spoken to the education director who said that children cannot be moved out from Halstead, and if a school is out of catchment area they would have to pay for transport. Bulmer school will need to market itself to improve numbers. There have been 'school' signs put in place on the A131 at the Bulmer Fox and near to the school. Cllr Finch reported on the community and asset transfer, the Local Highways Panel, 0% Council tax increase; launch of the mortgage scheme for 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers; Essential Living Fund; any pot holes can be reported through him; there are 45 gangs dealing with pot holes and they hope to be in a better position by the end of May. Cllr Finch was thanked for his report.

Terry Flower asked whether it would be useful for ECC to put funds aside for a more efficient way of filling pot holes each year.

Cllr Finch explained the history of the construction of rural roads and that ECC do carry out research on materials. The exceptional weather has caused problems getting out to fix pot holes. If there are any problem areas let him know.

Steve Bolter requested thanks to be given for the exemplary way roads were kept open during the bad weather.

Mr Smith said that pot holes have been caused by National Grid (NG) and asked what ECC are doing to get NG to reinstate.

Cllr Finch said that NG should be reinstating and to inform Highways if this is not done.

Mr Smith also advised that damage is being caused by a leaking fire hydrant. Cllr Finch said that Fiona Bailey is the area inspector.

Mr Smith said that Delvyns Lane is in a terrible state of repair.

Cllr Finch said he is looking at what can be done and the Parish Council have requested a closure during winter under the Local Highways Panel meeting. There are problems with closing byways and it is a slow process with no timescale but he will let us know of any news.

(Ashley Cooper left the meeting)

Steve Bolter advised of the problems with road closures last year, with poor advertising and disruption to bus routes and although he had written to complain, the same thing has happened again this year. This is affecting parishioners adversely.

Cllr Finch said that ECC do advertise and inform the bus companies.

Mr Smith said that NG had closed the road without a road closure order and Mr Cannell also said that he had questioned a utility workman and discovered that they were using the notice as a means of protection.

Cllr Finch said that they are using this excuse under the H & S Act due to a past fatal accident but he will take back our comments to see what can be done.

Cllr Finch was thanked.

***District Cllr Jo Beavis***

Cllr Beavis informed that BDC one of the largest Councils, with 50% in rural area; the Core Strategy has been adopted; priority is being given to development around the district with a target of 20,000 jobs by 2026; she is fighting for improvements to the A120 and for more trains; BDC are working closely with ECC; she had recently represented Gestingthorpe over a controversial planning application; she has attended many meetings of NG and is supporting developing a substation at Braintree and undergrounding of cables. Cllr Beavis was thanked for her report.

Mr Smith asked what was being done about supporting the expansion of broadband.

Cllr Beavis said she had been to a presentation at the Braintree Association of Local Councils, on the roll out of fibre optic broadband in rural communities.

Cllr Finch said the County was putting more money into the broadband roll out.

The PC had asked for a speaker for tonight's meeting but despite chasing there had been no reply.

Cllr Finch said that ECC are reviewing the case for 20mph on some roads.

Mr Smith asked about the Boundary Commission review public consultation and how are members of the public being made aware.

The Clerk advised there is a notice on the board.

Cllr Beavis explained how the consultation would work and the timescale. She will look into some information for Mr Smith. She is in favour of a reduction and believes the workload has reduced; Cllr Scattergood said she was opposed and felt the workload was still high.

(Mr Cannell left the meeting.)

**District Cllr Wendy Scattergood**

Cllr Scattergood informed that she had met regularly with ECC, SuffolkCC, Babergh DC and the meetings had been beneficial. There are issues with NG repairs to roads. She is going on a site visit with Balfour Beatty to identify the problems. The schools allocation document has been published and there is a problem as none of the villages want housing; there is strong opposition She would like the villages to have more housing to help local schools. She is stepping down as planning committee chairman to take on the role of chairman of the Council. BDC have responded to NG consultation that they don't want a substation on the A131, they want undergrounding.

Mr Collett asked what BDC are proposing.

Cllr Scattergood said that they wanted the substation located at Braintree and underground cable to Rushley Green.

**District Cllr Hylton Johnson**

Cllr Johnson reported that there had been a lot of consultation with NG; he thought the ECC mortgage scheme was of interest; he agreed with Cllr Scattergood on housing in villages; the Mi Community scheme had been a very good scheme so far and is worth looking at; he is involved in the Citizens Advice Bureau who will help people with their financial difficulties.

**8. Any Other Business**

Leslie Crumpton-Taylor asked whether the Essex sign located at Rodbridge Corner could be brought back, as it is currently a blank board. Cllr Scattergood will look into this.

Mr Collett asked whether the PC would consider an approach to local farmers to give notice of when spraying. James said it was difficult to know exactly when spraying would take place and he would speak to Mr Collett further after the meeting. It may be possible to inform some residents via the village email list.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 9.13pm and was followed immediately by the special meeting to consider Site Allocations and grounds maintenance contract.

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Signed ..... Chairman                      Date .....