

# GESTINGTHORPE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 2016

Held in the Village Hall on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Parish Cllrs James Nott (Chair) Ashley Cooper, Steve Bolter, Terry Flower, Richard Payne, Jane Halls  
County Cllr David Finch  
Leslie Crumpton-Taylor – School Governor  
Lloyd Felton – County Broadband  
Chris Harman – village hall committee  
Rev. Gay Ellis  
8 members of the public  
Parish Clerk

**Apologies:** District Cllr Wendy Scattergood– attending BDC training event  
Wendy Jones

1. **Lloyd Felton – County Broadband update**

Lloyd Felton reported on the recent storm damage which had affected Gestingthorpe, their attempts for equipment to be placed on the church tower which have now been agreed, future changes to reduce tariffs and increased broadband speed. Lloyd thanked everyone for their support in using County Broadband. He was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the 2015 Annual Village Meeting were amended to read that the Educational Foundation accounts were audited by Ginny Craig; the minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

3. **Chairman's Report**

James read out his report which included an update on the playing field and thanked Chris Moulton for his hard work and Mike Smith for dealing with the mole hills. Other items were the village hall, bus shelter damage, County Broadband, Byway 13, Parish Precept, future village hall events and proposed defibrillator. He concluded by thanking the Councillors for their support.

4. **Accounts for year 2015-16**

The Parish Clerk reported that income had reduced, mainly due to reduced funding from Braintree DC and this is expected to continue to reduce each year. Additional expense had been incurred for water regulations work on the playing field.

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

Leslie Crumpton-Taylor reported on the loss of the Head teacher at the school and the resulting changes in staffing. The school had received poor advice from County and this has delayed new staffing arrangements. Due to a decline in the number of local children Bulmer is now classed as a small village school. There had been problems with broadband service which had resulted in pupils not being able to access the system and Essex CC now have a temporary arrangement with County Broadband to improve the problems. It is hoped that when BT put in fibre optic cables it could help the school in the future. Leslie was thanked for his report.

6. **Reports from village organisations & Community Agent**

There was no report from the Community Agent.

***Educational Foundation***

Ashley Cooper reported that since 1970 rent from the Parish field has been used to support education. Every year the Trustees walk around the field; the Trustees are the Rector, Peter Collett, Alice Nolda, Stephen Bolter (Parish Council representative) Debbie Nott and Corinna Brown. The field is being farmed well and is environmentally and ecologically pleasant. There has been a rent review resulting in the rent being increased from £1,020 to £1,200. Investment income was £370, with £1,350 disposable income. The accounts and annual report were passed around. Ashley was thanked for his report.

### ***Village Hall***

Chris Harman reported on the various fund raising events held during the year and the project to replace the current toilets. The committee are applying to Braintree DC for the hall to be categorised as having Charitable Status for council tax for the next few years. The hiring out of the hall is increasing and they are hoping to increase the hire charges by a small amount. Chris was thanked for his report.

### ***Neighbourhood Watch***

There was no report.

### ***Report from Rev. Gay Ellis***

Rev. Gay Ellis reported on the theft of lead from the Church, the approval of equipment for the church roof which will enable Wi-Fi for both the church and village hall, the various events held to raise money and the increase in weddings held in the church, outdoor church services in the bluebell wood and at Goldingham Hall. She concluded by thanking the PC for their continuing financial support towards the cost of keeping the churchyard looking good.

### ***Braintree DC Local Plan***

Steve Bolter reported on the meeting he had attended the previous evening; BDC had accepted Gestingthorpe PC's report. There will be more consultations and a tidying of village envelope. There will be a review of village boundaries in 2 years' time. He advised keeping an eye out for information on the PC website and for village organisations to make sure their details were up to date.

A member of the public raised the Governments 'Right to Buy' scheme with regard to affordable housing and asked whether the PC has some form of future planned growth. James Nott advised that the PC would be happy for small growth in the village, such as the development of an existing barn, rather than mass development.

## **7. District & County Councillors Reports**

County Cllr David Finch reported on ECC finance and the pressures of funding a growing elderly population. He reminded that there is the Community Initiative Fund which is available for village halls. He is happy for anyone to write to him if they have any issues and he will try to help. There is future opportunity for funding to PC's to carry out work around their villages.

Steve Bolter asked how devolution would affect Essex if Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridge joined together. Cllr Finch advised that there are no deals yet, negotiations are on-going. He felt that if Essex split from Suffolk it would not have a big affect and there would still be a mutual working relationship.

Other points raised from members of the public were the cost of the change. Cllr Finch was asked whether he felt let down by Central Government. He said that he was disappointed with the LGA revenue support grant and that things could have been done better.

He was asked how the infrastructure would cope with extra housing. He said the funding is there for this.

He confirmed that it was his own personal view that we should stay in the EU, re the article in the Telegraph newspaper.

Leslie Crumpton-Taylor asked about the transfer of funds from one district to another, as recycling had been free but would now cost Bulmer school £1,000 per year. Cllr Finch wasn't aware the ECC funded this. He will ask about broadband services. He was thanked for his report and left the meeting.

District Cllr Wendy Scattergood's report was read out. Subjects included the boundary changes, the new Local Plan, Government cutbacks, ceasing of the Mi Community fund and funding for the Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project.

8. **Any Other Business**

**Public questions:**

The maintenance of the children's play equipment was raised. A member of public said that she had spent time and money on repairs and that no work had been done since then.

James Nott explained that we have Mr Hasler to do any repair work advised by RoSPA and that there is a cost issue and suggested that a volunteer, possibly someone retired, could help out in this respect.

The cost of a RoSPA check is around £90 and is a legal requirement.

There was a suggestion to increase the Precept to help with equipment funding.

A litter bin had been asked for near to the children's play area– Cllrs said they had installed a bin near to the play equipment.

There was a suggestion to have a Perspex bus shelter to replace the current damaged shelter - this was thought to be not in keeping.

The PC has not got details of the person who damaged the bus shelter but are pursuing an insurance claim.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 9:18pm

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