



SOUTH CREAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Memorial Pavilion on Monday 13th of May 2024, from 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors, P. Abbey, J Amor, S Baldwin, P Collins, L Goodall, R Chantree
Parish Clerk.

Members of Public: 1

1. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting
2. **Apologies:** Cllrs Morley, Rosen, Allen and Sexton.
3. **Minutes**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th of May 2023 were proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Baldwin, and all in favour who were present at that meeting.

Reports

4. **Chairman's Annual Report:**

We have two annual meetings this evening, which are:

This meeting, The Annual Parish Meeting, is a meeting of the people of the Parish (peoples vote). The meeting acts as an annual democratic point of communication enabling your Parish Council to explain what they have been doing during the last year and to provide an opportunity for you to have your say on anything you consider important;

The meeting to follow, the Annual Parish Council Meeting, is a meeting of the elected or co-opted Parish Councillors at the start of which the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected (Councillors vote).

Both meetings are organised by our Parish Clerk, Caroline Boyden, who has been our clerk since last September when she replaced Sarah Harvey.

There have been no changes this year to your current Parish Councillors: Tim Allen (Vice-Chair), Lorna Goodhall, Susan Baldwin, Jacqueline Amor, Richard Chantree, Ben Sexton, Paul Collins, and Bob Rosen.

Once again, I thank them all for their help and support throughout this last year. Their time is provided for free and although we can't please everyone we all try our best.

REPORT

This last year your Parish Council has ensured that South Creake is kept at its best, by continually monitoring our areas of responsibility and ensuring that Parish public funds are wisely spent; talking of which:

Finance

Parish finances are carefully recorded by Caroline, in her additional role as our Responsible Financial Officer, and are reviewed at every Parish Council meeting.

Expenditure for 2023/24 was £49,028.70.

Income, including the precept set at £16,336 was £48,063.36

This year the precept application was set at £17,153.

The account balance at 31 March 2024 was £41,813.34.

Allotments & Trees

Thanks to the sterling efforts of our Allotment Team, both Back Street and Leicester Road allotments are fully used and we have a reserve list.

A tree survey was performed as part of our risk management and the removal of 5 mature (but dead) trees was recommended. I am pleased to report these have now been replaced by 7 cherry trees, with thanks for a contribution towards the purchase received from our County Councillor. In time, the remaining tree stumps will be carved or used to provide support for a new bench. The remaining trees obtained through the Norfolk County Council 'Million Trees for Norfolk' campaign are still developing well but we unfortunately lost 2 fruit trees as a result of the recent flooding.

Flooding

Unfortunately, this year we have had a repeat of the flooding we experienced in 2021 and the ground water level has been high for many months. Tankers were again deployed by Anglian Water and are still being used to help with the sewer levels. Once again we saw much evidence of: Anglian Water, Environment Agency, the NCC and our MP James Wild but we still await a course of action to prevent this happening again. The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance continues to exist and still provides the 'One Number to Call' (0344 800 8013) to report flooding.

Flooding continues as an agenda item for our monthly Parish Council meetings.

Highways

The Traffic Regulation Order, for the speed limits to be changed, has now been implemented with 30mph all through the village and 50mph through Creake Common, also with a reduction to 50mph between South & North Creake.

We continue to suffer badly with pot holes, mainly again as a result of the flooding. Some repair work is evident but more has to be done. This also remains as an agenda item for monthly discussion.

Open Spaces

Our BT Kiosk library continues to prove popular.

The Christmas lights team, for their final time, produced yet another amazing display, with appreciative comments being justifiably received.

Colkirk Football Club continue with their use of our pitch to provide some local football entertainment; it is good to see the pitch continuing to be used.

And, of course, we have our Tennis Club, Bowls Club and Table-Tennis clubs and our wonderful and ever popular Memorial Pavilion providing many activities and benefits to our village. Things don't just happen, and we thank all those who provide those excellent facilities.

The play area and adult gym continue to be well used. As planned, the children's play area was renovated to a high standard but at some significant cost.

We much appreciated the support received from: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Jack's Lane & Chiplow Wind Farm funds and the Egmore Play Area donation.

River Burn

After the Norfolk Rivers Trust constructed their 'Refugia' alongside the River Burn, it finally filled and has become home to a small population of village ducks and some herons. The Refugia has been significantly enlarged by the recent flooding but a NRT working party is expected tomorrow (14 th May) to perform maintenance tasks.

The population of ducks around the village green does remains low and the 3 new 'Keep Wildlife Wild' information signs provide an excellent source of guidance about duck welfare, with additional information regarding the environment and how to help protect our rare chalk river.

And to end;

Once again to say thank you to all involved with our Parish Council and for helping me get through this year.

5. Borough Councillors' Report

Annual Report from Chris Morley 23/24. Independent Councillor and Member for Bircham with Rudhams and Cabinet Member for Finance.

Following the election and gaining the most Party votes, we, the Independents, set about forging a "Partnership" with the Greens and Lib. Dems and coming to an "Understanding" with Labour Members.

Our Partnership Members then set about agreeing a Corporate Plan, Objectives and actions to complete for the financial year. All of which can be found on the Borough Web Site.

The first challenge was settling the wage claim from staff in a serious cost of living crisis, compounded by, for professional and managerial staff, a serious issue with recruitment. For example, our Planning and Enforcement team was seriously under strength and we were not attracting sufficient recruits. This Borough agrees its own pay awards based upon national trends but also our specific services. After much heated debate and opposition from both the Conservative and a Labour Member the award was agreed which included increasing the upper limit of pay

scales by 10%. We had the immediate budget for it and with permanent employees we will reduce the cost of Agency staff. But with a pay, insurance and pension bill of just over £20m, the need for efficiencies and productivity is of paramount importance.

We also faced a challenging financial position with our revenues not covering our costs such that, although we had the budget agreed for the pay award, we were facing having to use nearly £2.5m, for general operations, from our reserve savings. This situation is not sustainable and a Council's number 1 statutory priority is to be a going concern and we had to build that fact into our future plans.

Nevertheless, we did not withdraw any of our community help and set aside over £500k to help communities, with examples such as West Norfolk Community Transport (Go to Town), the Kings Lynn Ferry and the many festivals across the Borough, including one of the largest free festivals in Europe, Festival Too. Smaller capital and revenue grants were available via the Norfolk Community Foundation, Councillor Community Support Grants, the Defibrillator programme, Prosperity Funds and the big contributor CIL.

We suffered extra costs through the bad weather and Storm Babet which has put back our building programme and unfortunately delayed our anticipated rent revenues and capital receipts as well as increasing costs to manage. With further problems anticipated in coastal defence and flood protection. We have, however, maintained expenditure on our climate action plan.

In October Royal Assent was given to enable Councils to increase Council Tax on second homes and bring forward the surcharges on Long Term Empty Homes. The extra tax this could bring is around £18m with some £7m coming from West Norfolk. By law, 80% of this is allocated to the County with around 10% going to the Police Commission. We have started the process of negotiating, with our District Counterparts (apart from South Norfolk who do not wish to take up this opportunity) a common base position to seek return monies as grants from the County. We will be able to use these grants for whatever purpose but at present we are focussed on supporting homes for the affordable and rental markets. 2nd home owners may wish to sell and therefore the council tax for some homes may follow traditional allocations. If some can pass criteria for converting their home into a business, the Borough, but not directly Parish/Towns, will receive revenue through business rates.

October also saw the Assent given to new Government Procurement rules following Brexit and we are getting ready to implement the changes from this October '24.

In terms of Finance decision making, we recognised that Kings Lynn had no Town Council and could not set precepts or apply for Grants. This was a result, I believe, of the 1974 Local Government changes and to a larger or lesser degree, has made this Council a little Kings Lynn centric. We have, this year, given the Kings Lynn Area Committee Executive powers under the chair of Cllr. Jo Rust.

Late last year we also secured Council agreement to a Council Tax Support Scheme for 24/25 whereby working people who cannot earn or have saved sufficient money to meet certain criteria, will receive 100% support for their council tax demand.

In February we agreed, at a tortuous meeting with last minute motions, a budget for 24/25. The financial settlement from the Government is still not sufficient for our outgoings and we still may have to use some savings but fingers crossed, we won't. We did not wish to reduce our service levels, so I asked all Members, not only to accept a cost reduction programme but to increase fees and charges within their portfolios and which are not regulated, by at least 10% or to market levels if less.

The previous Administration, in an election year, had frozen fees but we could not sustain this, Our revenues from our services total around £20m, with the big contributors being our buildings lease and rent roll, the car parks and the parking admin service we offer across the County, the crematorium and various Licences. An increase on these revenues was essential with inflation at that time running at 11%.

We are also facing increased costs from the Internal Drainage Boards which, combined, levies over £3m on our cost base or around 43% of our Council Tax take. Last year we received £205K to contribute towards these costs and we await our allocation from the £3m set aside for IDB costs by the Government. At one time they supported the whole cost but have gradually reduced that support to virtually zero. The Secretary, Michael Gove, has said that a long term solution will be found but so far it remains buried. 31 small Districts, including us, have formed a Special Interest Group (SIG) to lobby for this offer to be realised; but no luck so far although we continue to press our 2 MPs.

The external audits of our Annual Statement of Accounts are very much in arrears but we have had an unqualified opinion for the 19/20 Accounts and the auditors were going to fast track 20/21 and 21/22 but that hasn't happened and 22/23 is still on the stocks. We are in the process of completing the figures for the financial year just ending and I trust the results will show that our financial prudence has borne fruit.

This is a run through of the year from my perspective as Cabinet Member for finance and no doubt other Cabinet Members would offer a different perspective. I trust it demonstrates that we have worked to support all communities and earned your support.

6. County Councilors' Annual Report – See appendix 1

7. South Creake War Memorial Annual Report, Mr. Paul Hart:

The Trustees of S.C.W.M.I are pleased to report a better year with trading back to normality.

The Pavilion has promoted soup and scone lunches "Winter Warmers" funded by the Norfolk Community Foundation earlier in the year. These events were well supported, and it was decided to hold social afternoons on the same day as the visiting Coastal Community Shop, but unfortunately, these numbers have dropped of late.

An interesting village yard sale was held on May Bank Holiday weekend organised by Jackie Amor and team.

The Coronation was celebrated by a well organised event at the Pavilion including the traditional "Beck Duck Race". Donations of £150 each were made to the Air Ambulance and Mind & Mental Health Charity from the proceeds.

It is a pleasing sight to see both the Bowls Green and Tennis Courts in such good use during the summer months. Congratulations to the Bowls Club for their Trophy winning season – well done! The Table Tennis equipment is being put to good use by some enthusiastic players and with three tables there is little down time. Thank you to Paul Collins for running the club.

The Soup and Pudding Quiz Nights continue to be well supported. A well fed, stimulative night out and thanks are due to all involved.

Our Financial situation as year-end 2023:

Community Account	£30,369
Business Bond	£ 6,982
Investment Bond	£50,000

The Pavilion Trustees value the support of our regular hirers, volunteers behind the scenes and those who regularly attend our functions.

Donations:

Jan 23	Barnardo's	£154
Feb	Dementia Group, South Creake	£125
March	Children's Event -Coronation	£129
April	Coastal Community Shop	£127
May	8:56 foundation (young mental health)	£135
June	Duncan's Club (Dementia Club)	£110
July	Norfolk Accident & Rescue Service	£125
August	Cancer Research	£136
September	Arranged by Macmillan fundraisers	£1200 (approx.)
October	R.B.L. Poppy appeal plus £86 tombola	£136
November	Hillside Animal Sanctuary	£128
December	Fakenham Salvation Army	£166

Village Hall Report – Mr. Nick Sanford:

The South Creake Hall (Memorial Pavilion) continues to be reasonably well used with a variety of regular activities, one off events for private or community functions, local sports clubs football, tennis, bowls and table tennis. However, there is plenty of scope for more activities in the building. All ideas welcome.

The Trustees are very grateful for the unstinting efforts of a small group who run coffee mornings, bingo evenings and quiz nights to raise valuable funds for the ongoing running and maintenance costs of the Hall as well as raising money for local charities.

The finances of the Hall remain healthy and most months thanks to fundraising and other activities the costs are covered .

Some improvements have been carried out to the building supported by grant such as a Jacks Lane Wind farm , they include the installation of a sound system soon to be followed by a screen which widen the flexibility of use of the hall for additional range of activities as well as making some of the regular events more enjoyable.

We would welcome some new members to the board of Trustees as through retirement and people moving away from the village we have said farewell to 2 Trustees this year.

The Trustees are grateful to the parish Council for their continuing support.

South Creake Tennis Club – Mr. Nick Sanford:

2024 is the centenary of the Tennis Club and we started the season with a celebration party on the 4th of May. Sadly the wet weather precluded any tennis!

Over the last year a great deal of work was done in preparation for the season including the installation of an irrigation system this is improved the quality of, grass and the ability to play

throughout even the driest periods and the courts remain in good condition throughout the 23 season. New nets and posts were purchased for 2024 .

Membership remains popular and the household membership is attractive to all those who live in South Creake and surrounding villages and we now have the option of a guest membership where by paying a little extra any members can invite guests at anytime to play.

Coaching continues for all ages, with free Saturday coaching offered to children who live in the village thanks to support from the South Creake charity and volunteer supervisors this will continue this season.

There are various events planned for this year including a vintage tennis tournament in August , the regular club nights welcoming all players and newcomers on Wednesday evenings. The club relies on volunteers and would be very grateful for any additional support from those interested in helping out.

Financial the club breaks even and is able to cover the costs of a part time groundsman but relies on grants from local funds and charities to supplement membership income.

The Tennis Club is grateful for the ongoing support from the parish Council.

South Creake Joint Charities:

During the last financial year, the Isaac Lane Fuel Charity has made a fuel allocation of £150 to 27 eligible households, distributed prior to Christmas.

The Dorothy Woodhouse Trust has made educational grants to two University Students of £953 in total to help towards their expenses. In addition, two college Students were awarded £350 each to help with their travelling costs, books and equipment.

The South Creake Charities have money available in an educational trust for college, apprenticeships or university, as well as grants to assist younger children with educational projects or field trips. The applicant must reside in South Creake. Applicants are asked to contact the clerk to request an application form, giving details of their courses, project or educational trip. Receipts are also requested.

A grant of £750 was awarded to South Creake Tennis Club to help towards the cost of tennis coaching sessions for the children of the village by a professional LTA Tennis Coach. Previous years have proven very popular and beneficial to the children of South Creake.

The balances at the bank as at January 2024 were South Creake Joint Charities £11,678.67 and South Creake Dorothy Woodhouse Charity £2,830.79.

The trustees meet twice a year for normal Charity correspondence i.e., April and November 2024 but an additional meeting has been arranged in August to discuss educational grants.

This report was prepared by the Clerk (Sue Hart) on behalf of the Trustees:

Father Clive Wylie (Chairman), Mrs Barbara Allen, Mrs Sara Freakley, Miss Lorna Goodall, Miss Amanda Mendham, and Mrs. Jackie Amor.

8. Parishioners Open Forum:

The sewage situation was raised, and the Chair advised that Anglian Water only lined the main sewer and they will come and make an inspection once the water has subsided to give access. The ground water is still quite high and Anglian Water will do a clean up when able. Concerns raised that the flooding could be a regular occurrence.

Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 19.44

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DRAFT

Signed :

Date