

BRAYBROOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish
Sunday 18 March 2018
in the Village Hall at 3.00 pm

Present	Councillors	Mr G. Normand – Chairman Mr. N. Glazebrook – Vice-Chairman Mrs A. Ayton Mrs A. Beardsmore Ms F. Kinnear
	Clerk	Mrs F. Allbury
	County Councillor	A. Matthews
	Public and Speakers	23

Introduction

Cllr George Normand opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and introduced the other members of the Parish Council present. Unfortunately Matt Kingston was unable to attend due to a family commitment in Norfolk.

Continuing, he said that all parishes are required to hold an annual meeting. In recent years at least, this Annual Parish Meeting had been squeezed into the evening before an ordinary Parish Council meeting and had attracted a declining attendance. With the intention of making it a genuine opportunity to discuss local matters, it had now been moved to a Sunday afternoon. Brief reports from all the village organisations had been invited. All the reports would be published on the Council website. He invited comments or questions at any point.

1. Apologies for Absence:

Cllrs: D. Howes, M. Kingston. Parishioners: Linda Davis, Sue and Gary Fellowes, Steph Canning, Dinah Berry and Alison Ullman.

2. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman gave an overview of how the Parish Council fitted into the democratic system. It has provision for 7 elected councillors the main task being to represent the views and interests of parishioners to the higher levels of government and other authorities. They in turn are required to consult us on matters that affect the parish. We have few duties; limited powers; and very limited resources so we have to proceed by persuasion and influence.

The Parish Council conscientiously responds when consulted, mostly on planning applications and where not specifically consulted we press for action where necessary. We continue to challenge KBC on the provision of traveller sites; meet with NCC highways officers about problems with roads and drains; and support our Footpaths Warden in his efforts to keep our rights of way open and passable. We have also fussed about dog mess and parking problems. Results are not always positive but we keep trying.

Even if the Parish Council did nothing at all, it would cost money to run and parishioners would pay for it through Council Tax. Parishioners will therefore want to get something out of it so the Council want to hear if there is something you think we should be doing. In the coming few years the Parish Council would like to sponsor two initiatives – an Emergency Plan and a Neighbourhood Plan.

Because of Northamptonshire County Council's much publicized financial situation, it now seems clear that there will be major local government reorganisation, which is likely to lead to more work and responsibility for us.

One significant power the Parish Council has is to raise money from residents through Council Tax – the precept. At present, only sufficient to cover our administrative costs are collected. In Braybrooke, funds are traditionally raised by community activities like the fete and bazaar. Raising money through precept would spread costs across everyone, regardless of whether all residents could afford it. On the other hand, money raised through events like the fete and bazaar is given voluntarily, and these events are an important part of the glue that holds our village community together. Current policy is not to interfere with that but will consider using Council Tax to support activities of clear community benefit but it will be exceptional. The Parish Council is keen to know whether you agree with that approach, because the policy can be changed if that is what is wanted.

The ability of the Parish Council to be influential depends on appearing to have the support of the parish and to reflect its views, so your views are important. There has been a vacancy for a councillor for the whole of the past year, and sometimes struggle to get a quorum for a meeting. All decisions are made in meetings that are open to the public but there are seldom more than one or two people parishioners present. The Parish Council will be unable to proceed with an Emergency Plan or Neighbourhood Plan unless volunteers come forward to help.

The Parish Council tries to explain what we are doing, for example in Gossip and the web site where meeting minutes are displayed. Is there more that can be done to engage people? The matters dealt with are not exciting, but they are necessary. If any resident is interested in becoming a councillor, please speak to me at the end of the meeting.

The Chairman then expressed thanks to all his colleagues who each has their own role and especially to Nikki the very active Vice Chairman who doubles as Rivers Warden and to Frances who is efficient and dependable. In the best traditions of a parish clerk she has without complaint consistently absorbed more work than can possibly be fitted into the meager hours for which she is paid. To all of these I give thanks on my own and your behalf.

And special extra thanks today to Fiona who has offered to provide tea and cakes at the end.

3. Reports were received from the following:

- **County Councillor A Matthews**
Report attached
- **Borough Councillor D. Howes**
Unfortunately Cllr Howes was unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman said that David 's portfolio with Kettering Borough Council related to rural affairs and that he works very hard on behalf of the village at all times.
- **Police – Rob**
No report available for this meeting.
- **WI**
A report was read out
- **Braybrooke Gossip**
Very well funded due to two donations being received during the year.
- **All Saints' Church**
A report was read out.
- **Braybrooke Baptist Church**
A report was read out. A parishioner queried whether the church was investigating raising revenue by installing a telephone mast on the spire. This was being investigated and that the possible £5,000 generated would be kept and used towards the upkeep of the church building. The process would need planning permission and would therefore come before the Parish Council in due course.
- **Braybrooke Chapel**
A report was read out.

- **Village Hall Committee**
A report was read out. Responding to a query from a parishioner it was confirmed that any parishioner could make use of the wifi system installed in the building if the room was not already in use.
- **Cricket Club**
A report was read out.
- **Footpath Warden**
Mr. Frank Taylor said that he was working hard to preserve and maintain all footpaths which were a village amenity, but it was proving very difficult to obtaining any co-operation from NCC Brixworth Depot. It was agreed that the Chairman would suggest a meeting of all local footpath wardens in order to exchange information.
- **Neighbourhood Watch**
A report was read out.
- **Morris Dancers**
A report was read out.
- **Singing Group**
A report was read out.
- **Village Fete Committee**
A report was read out.
- **The Heritage Group**
A report was read out. Frank Taylor expressed a wish to join this group.
- **Bazaar**
A report was read out.
- **BEER**
Various events had been organised through the year for the benefit of parishioners with further events planned in the future.
- **WEBSITE**
A comprehensive report attached.
- **Knitting Group**
A report was read out.

Copies of all reports are filed with the minutes and also published on the website and available from the Clerk on request.

4 Proposals for Emergency Plan and Neighbourhood Plan

4.1 Emergency Plan

Cllr Glazebrook said that as River Warden the proposal to formulate an Emergency Plan fell within his remit. The village has signed up to Pathfinder II, a Northamptonshire County Council initiative offering support to vulnerable villages in preparing a flood risk plan. A detailed inspection of the village had taken place last year and a full report from the surveyors was due at any time. Volunteers were required to assist with ditch and drain management in order to keep the village safe.

With regard to an Emergency Plan, the aim was to sign up a number of volunteers who would offer assistance to vulnerable people in the event of an emergency. A list of those who might need assistance would be drawn up

4.2 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Kinnear introduced the proposal to create a Neighbourhood Plan, which planning authorities must by law adopt as part of their policies sitting alongside their own Local Plan, when making decisions about the parish. Neighbourhood plans give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development of their local area. Eg. Where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, what new buildings look like and what infrastructure should be provided. It is not a legal requirement but a right which a community can choose to use. It is not the only way to influence planning, but whichever route is taken a community must be proactive if it wishes to influence the big planning decisions taken for it by District or County. BBC's Countryfile programme had illustrated the risk in an item about the development of green field sites in the countryside, where an increasing number of land

promotion companies apparently targetted local authorities without an up to date development plan.

In 2013 Braybrooke carried out a Village Survey which included planning and development issues. However, a NP forms part of the overall development plan for the area, The Village Survey cannot affect the planning process until assembled into a document which is approved by the community through formal processes. This is not something the Parish Council should do on its own but, the PC is well placed to reach out to the community and garner its views.

A notice in the Gossip had asked for volunteers to help the process along. Sadly, we received only one offer. This is clearly too few to drive the process forwards, we are looking for half a dozen people who, perhaps working in groups, will reach out to the village and then contribute parts of the plan before a draft is put out to consultation. A grant is available to help cover the costs of developing a plan which would include consultancy, administration etc.

5 General discussion and future format of Annual Parish Meeting

It was generally felt that the holding this annual event on a Sunday afternoon rather than squeezed in prior to a regular Parish Council Meeting was a good one.

Work was taking place with regard to the provision of a defibrillator. Various options are being considered with regard to the type of equipment needed and how it would be funded. Progress would be reported through the Parish Council.

Pru Normand reported on the provision of a table tennis table which would be available for regular use by residents on a regular basis with refreshments provided, starting on Monday 19th at 10.30 – 11.30.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm