

Minutes of the
Beckingham Annual Parish Meeting

On Monday 1st June 2015, 7.30pm at the Village Hall

Present:

Meeting Chaired by Cllr. Lawrence Tatton –Chair of Beckingham Parish Council.
Minutes taken by Terry Brown –Clerk to Beckingham Parish Council.

County Cllr Ray Phillips, Parish Cllr. Graham Else, Parish Cllr. Trish Thorpe & Parish Cllr. Andy Brewer and 13 members of the public (including representatives from community groups and local businesses).

Apologies:

District Cllr Pat Woodman MBE & James Keane.

Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting:

19th May 2014 –signed and agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising:

Footpath between end of houses on Sutton Road and Sutton-Cum-Beckingham.

This remains unviable because of the cost.

Grass cutting on Sutton Road and Sutton-cum-Beckingham.

This has been raised again with Highways.

Hillside surface water/natural spring.

Highways have been chased but it will remain a perennial problem. (See the report from Cllr Ray Phillips)

Report from the Chair of the Parish Council:

Beckingham Parish Council Report for the year ending April 2015

Welcome to the 2015 Annual Parish Meeting for Beckingham, I am the Current Chairman and this is Terry Brown. Diana Johnson had expressed a wish to vacate the post, 12 months ago in order to expand her academic career and gave us 6 months notice. It has taken a lot longer than we all anticipated to obtain a suitable candidate to fill the post, after several false dawns we are fortunate to be in a position to have been able to appoint Terry Brown. There has been a handover period between the outgoing and incoming clerks and as of yesterday the 31st of May Diana is now free to go her own way.

The thanks of the PC go to Diana for her hard and tireless work during her period as Clerk to the PC and my personal thanks for the support, assistance, guidance and friendship that she has shown me in my role as councillor and chair.

Who are the PC and what have we as the PC done in the last 12 months?

Lawrence Tatton as Chair, Trish Thorpe as Vice Chair, Graham Else as responsible Financial Officer, or Treasurer in plain English and Andy Brewer. My thanks and my thanks on your behalf for the work carried that has been carried out, largely unseen by each and everyone of them.

You will notice the empty chair, this is a vacant position we are one councillor short of our entitlement, anyone within the parish that meets the requirements is quite welcome to put themselves forward and be co-opted onto the council.

We meet bi-monthly here in this hall to discuss and review events that have an impact on the Parish of Beckingham, the meetings are open to the public, time is set aside at the commencement of each meeting for questions, comments or even praise to be received from members of the public.

Regular attendees at the meetings are County and District Councillors, Ray Phillips from the County Council and Pat Woodman and Sue Howe from NKDC, both of whom were re-elected in the recent election, our congratulations to each of them and the PC would like to thank them for their unwavering support, advice and assistance that we receive from them, our task would be a lot harder without their presence.

A quick run through the past year in roughly chronological order of what has happened in the last 12 months.

May started with some remedial works to small areas of verge on School Lane, Chapel Street and Sleaford Road and also to a patch of land above the well at the side of the porch outside the hall. These to improve neglected areas.

A Grass Cutting and general land maintenance contract has been let for works that are the responsibility of the PC. The price and quality of work in the previous year has resulted in the same company being reappointed again this year, with an expanded length of cut, now reaching to the Beckingham sign not only on Sleaford Road but also to the village sign on Sutton Road.

May also brought a visit from Highways to instigate the removal of offending furniture that had been placed outside the pub on the public highway. I must take a little time to explain the role of the PC in this action, as members of the public attended a PC meeting and roundly castigated us for "picking on" the pub. At times we are approached by people with "you're on the council aren't you?", well there's fly tipping or a nousey dog etc etc. The usual approach is to inform the person that there is a number for fly tipping or whatever at NK, the usual response is "it's your job". Be clear we as councillors are not in job, we are just performing a civic duty. However our responsibility extends to then passing on the complaint to the responsible authority. We do not intervene as individuals, that is the job of the paid professionals.

I explain this to make it clear that the PC did not instigate a report about the pub having furniture outside on the footpath. There is nothing more quintessentially English than supping ale sat outside a flower bedecked pub in the sunshine. We worked with our contacts in NK and also the CC to try to assist in resolving the situation. It is not the first time that the public highway has had to be cleared by Highways, as each of at least the two previous landlords also suffered the same fate.

May brought a tree fall on PC land, onto a neighbouring property. I'll explain the consequences of this issue later in the evening.

August brought us some unwelcome visitors onto the Playing Field. The police were informed and as happens on these occasions nothing is able to be done and the unfortunate landowner, public or private is left to deal with the resulting litter, garden waste, old furniture, human faeces etc. We were lucky that the mess, three NK lorry loads was cleared away at no cost to the PC due to some behind the scenes string pulling and calling in of favours by the owner of an adjacent property, we are all very grateful to him and to NK.

September brought us some unwelcome visitors to everywhere, flies, hoards of them. We contacted the Environment Agency and the Environmental Health Officer at NK, as did some members of the public to see if the source of the flies could be traced. By examining a dead fly those who can are able to determine if the fly has come from a farm or particular type of farm, the firm belief of complainants being that a local chicken farm was the culprit. However the resulting visits and investigations could not identify a source and the plague was the result of "perfect conditions" for the generation of such an event.

Also in September a terse letter was sent to Highways asking for progress on our list of requirements, the spring on Hillside, the drainage on the A17 junction, potholes, pathway repairs.

October brought a result, whereby yellow paint was sprayed in various places on the roads and drains, this has now of course washed off.

A letter from Highways was received in November promising to do what they can, when they can, incidentally I saw LCC vehicle and more yellow paint applied as recently as Thursday last week, so who knows? Perhaps they have responded to another request from us in the past few days. This one included having the drain on Hillside unblocked again and the grips recut on the A17 in addition to the other previous requests.

December brought the PC's Christmas tree, sponsored by Jeremy Thorpe, with a well attended lighting ceremony.

January had the only known reported crime in the village, the theft of a wallet from a car on Sleaford Road.

April the first saw a new piece of legislation come into force from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

This requires the publishing of various Council actions, spends meeting minutes, etc., etc., very soon after the event, it allows for the use of the internet and as a result we have a revised village web site that is now operated by the PC, which enables us to be transparent and timely as the act requires. I'll hand over shortly to Terry who will explain the changes to the site as presenting the actions of the PC fall under his remit.

In May along with the General Election, your entire PC was returned unopposed, rightly or wrongly we took that result as a vote of confidence from you all.

Throughout the year we have received, examined and commented on various planning applications, ranging from a new build property on Sleaford Road, TPOs Chicken shed conversion, erection of solar panels, building of a swimming pool and so forth, around a dozen in all, about half the number that were received last year.

Finally thank yous to all those that worked for the benefit of the village, Mikki, with the Bugle, James for his litter picking, Glenn Goodier for his work on the web site and all the others that I may have forgotten.

I know hand over to Terry to explain the new web site, after that I am happy to listen to questions or comments.

End of Chairs report.

Terry Brown explained the reasons for the change in administration of the beckinghamvillage.co.uk website, principally the need to keep the information up to date and to meet the needs of the Parish Council under the new Transparency requirements.

The emphasis will be on running a simple but effective website that can complement the other sources of information in the Village. Ideas for its improvement will be welcomed

Reports and Accounts presented from Community Groups:

All Saints PCC – Mark Leggott outlined the Church's finances in the year. Some £3500 to £4000 had been spent on repairs in addition to £1000 on insurance.

A successful wine tasting event had raised in excess of £600 towards the next target which is to meet the £6000 to £7000 expected cost of installing a new lighting system into the Church. He explained that the Beckingham Highway Trust had made a £2500 donation towards this project.

Highways Trust- Mark Leggott reminded the audience of the problems faced in the past year with travellers and illegal flygrazing. This emphasised the need to maintain good quality fencing around the land: one small section alone had cost £1860. Therefore the Trust worked on the basis of having a reserve of about £2000 to meet fencing contingencies.

County Councillor Ray Phillips- gave an overview of some of the County Council's spending priorities in the last 12 months; for example £24m to restore Lincoln Castle and improvements to the County Fire and Rescue Service to help it meet its 9 minute response target. He could not be as optimistic about the future for Policing and in particular the role and use of PCSO's.

Highways remains a big problem for a rural County like Lincolnshire and the officials tend to target those areas of spend which will maximise the return. However **The Parish Chairman** commented

that this did not always help the problems seen as important in the local community eg Hillside and its flooding and that often this seemed to reflect a lack of joined up thinking on the part of the County departments.

Play Park Project –Diana Johnson gave a full summary of recent fundraising activities and Karen Ashworth's Annual report and accounts can be found on the website under Play Park Project.

Village Hall Committee- Trish Thorpe outlined the significant changes that had been made to the Village Hall in the last year helped on by receiving grant aid.

Randolph Pattinson Charity –Nick Ashworth (Trustee and the Secretary) had previously submitted an Annual report and the accounts and these can be seen on the website under Minutes.

Open Forum:

JHCS Newark (www.jhcs.com) – outlined a proposal to bring broadband into the Village. It would require a minimum of 20 users to subscribe with an initial outlay of £124.99 +VAT and then a monthly payment of £19.99. This would give a 10Mb connection.

15 people had already expressed an interest. It would require use of the Church tower as the highest point in the Village and Mark Leggott for the PCc expressed concern over the potential for damage to this Grade 1 building. But JHCS reassured him that the method of installation required neither drilling or the need for an existing electric supply.

Diana Johnson is to liaise between JHCS and the Village further on this.

Amenity Woodland - Lawrence Tatton outlined the history of the problem and the meeting discussed possible solutions. This is to be followed up at the next Parish Council meeting in July.

Grass cutting on Sutton Road and Sutton-cum-Beckingham – a member of public queried what should be cut in the Council's grass cutting program

Meeting Closed at 21:15

Refreshments served.