

# MINUTES OF THE FLEGGBURGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

20<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021

Comprising Billockby, Clippesby, and Fleggburgh

PRESENT: 24 members of the public

Meeting was chaired by June Pratt.

Also in attendance: Parish Clerk Jimmy Miller

Prior to the opening of the meeting the Parish Clerk warned everyone that the meeting was being recorded.

1. **Apologies** had been received from PC Gary May
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019** were circulated and signed
3. **The Parish Council Chairman gave a report** of the activities of the PC in the years 2019-21.

Due to Covid 19 the Parish Council were unable to hold an Annual Meeting during 2020 so this report covers 2 years from the last one held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

The installation of the fencing around the Playground was completed in June 2019 and it has been a great success, not only for tidying the whole area but for the safety aspect of children restricted from running out into the car park near a busy main road.

The litter picking around the villages has continued with Julie Osborne and a team of volunteers, and we are grateful to them all.

Dog poo bins have been purchased and placed in various areas around the village. There are a Team of volunteers led by Diana Fossit who empty these bins each week, and we are indebted to them for giving up their time to do this for the good of our village. As you can appreciate, this is not a pleasant task and I commend you all.

The footpaths are kept very tidy by Simon Crook, and the cemetery, graveyard and playing field in Fleggburgh are tendered by Garden Guardian; our grateful thanks go to them both. On the issue of footpaths, I wish to make it known that the Parish Council are responsible for cutting 5 footpaths which are cut up to 8 times a year by Simon, but the rest are the responsibility of Norfolk County Council and they are cut up to 2 times a year. The complaints which have been received recently from a Parishioner referred to paths maintained by NCC and were forwarded to Norfolk County Council within 2 hours of receipt, as it is their responsibility to keep these safe and tidy. Fleggburgh Parish Council have not received any complaints concerning the footpaths we are responsible for.

The Speedwatch Team have been monitoring the speeding in our villages, and their efforts must be acknowledged as they are contributing to reduce the speeding on our roads. With the help of Borough Councillor Thompson we have acquired Sam 2 sign which is contributing data to monitor speeding, and we are awaiting another one which will be used regularly between Billockby and Clippesby villages.

As you know, the Neighbourhood Development Plan has identified the need for a crossing on the main road and we are working hard to get one. The survey which was carried out by Highways was a complete disappointment as it was done during a very quiet period during Covid lockdown. The cost of this survey which we were told is a requirement was £3,500.00 which was kindly donated by Norfolk County Cllr Thirtle, Borough Cllr Thompson and Cllr Frank Brown. It came as a bitter blow to be told we would not qualify for help with the crossing. However, not to be beaten we have requested that they revisit the village at no expense to us and complete a survey during normal conditions when the roads will be busy in the summer holiday.

A petition has been drawn up by former Cllr Walshe and I urge as many of you as possible to sign this in support, one can be found at Filby Post Office.

On the issue of NDP a special mention and thanks to Cllr Docherty for all her hard work in pulling this document together, we should acknowledge that Fran is a volunteer and gives her time freely to this document in progress.

I would like to mention BC Thompson who has been a great support to FPC helping us buy dog poo bins, encouraging us to work alongside Filby to combat speeding with Sam 2 signs, gifting us bulbs which have been planted by him and volunteers in the village. In addition he has strimmed the grass verges helping to make the village look tidy and welcoming and he is key in pushing to get a crossing along the A1064. Currently we are awaiting a decision if we have been successful in receiving a grant towards new play equipment. Many thanks for your welcomed support Adrian, it is much appreciated.

During 2020, for many months during Lockdown the Parish Council tried to continue its role and began using Zoom to conduct the meetings. Interestingly, we have acquired more public interest and followers but as from May onwards we are only allowed to have face to face meetings. I commend all the Parish Councillors who have worked hard to get accustomed to using Zoom, this was no small challenge!

My thanks go to Cllr Hacon who applied for saplings on behalf of the Parish Council and was successful in receiving 30 which have been planted on the playing field.

The War Memorial has been refurbished by the kind generosity of Cllr Brown and the work was completed before the Remembrance Service held in 2020.

I was elected as Chair of Fleggburgh Parish Council three years ago taking over from Cllr Peake. I have taken this role of responsibility very seriously, however, I have been constantly undermined, harassed and bullied by a former Councillor throughout this time. Despite following the rules and the correct protocol reporting breaking Code of Conduct to the Monitoring Officer at GYBC his actions have been relentless. Receiving abusive e mails and finding numerous posts on Social Media which includes spreading misinformation and lies has only resulted in dividing our community. I have reported many incidents to the Police during Covid lockdown and have lodged formal complaints to the Borough Council, who in turn have held a Standards Hearing which this former Councillor was found guilty of intimidating, bullying and harassment.

Since the hearing which was featured in the local press, this Councillor has resigned. We were asked by the Press to give a comment and we stated that we want to move forward and carry out PC business, and we wished him well. However, this former Councillor continues to write lies, spreading misinformation and in effect he is bringing the Parish Council into disrepute. Not only does this cost the Parish Council and the Borough Council financially but also in terms of reputation and putting off

people from becoming Parish Councillors in the future knowing that they may be subjected to similar abuse to that which has already manifested itself.

As well as myself he targets other Councillors, but worst of all our Clerk who we as a Parish Council employ. We have a duty of care to our employee, but this has been very difficult for me as Chair to stop this ex-Councillor from his actions. On the legal advice we have obtained, this matter will be taken further, the police are involved and the Parish Council must do everything in our power to stop this behaviour from progressing. Parishioners should be aware that this former Councillor and his actions will cost this Parish dearly. Notwithstanding how much tax payers' money has been spent at GYBC, dealing with all the complaints and the investigation work and holding Standards Hearings.

Finally, I wish to close on a positive note. I thank the Councillors for all their dedication and hard work through some very difficult times. Our Parish Clerk has tolerated so much from one person, causing him hours of work and interfering in his personal and family life which is not acceptable. This Parish Council fully supports Dr Jimmy Miller, and on a personal note I thank him for working alongside me through some pretty awful times.

#### **4. Parish Council annual accounts**

The Clerk said that for the financial year ending March 2021, income was just under £22,000 and expenditure was approximately £22,700 meaning that there was a deficit. His salary had increased as a result of an ex-parish councillor putting unfounded allegations on Facebook and dressing them up as facts. The former parish councillor had also engaged a barrister against the Clerk

#### **5. Reports were received from village organisations:**

##### **Village Hall**

Julie Osborne informed the meeting that two litter picks had taken place during the year: one at Fleggburgh in September 2020 and one in Clippesby and Billockby in October 2020.

##### **Billockby and Fleggburgh Churches**

Margaret Alston said that, with Covid-19 restrictions easing, weddings and baptisms were now back in the diary. Meetings had often been held on Zoom.

She said that Billockby church had had its windows broken by vandals and that these had now been replaced.

##### **Clippesby Church**

A report from Jean Lindsay was read out by June Pratt.

She said that Clippesby church was shut during lockdown.

The doors are now unlocked four days per week between 10am and 5pm. If all goes well in June, evening prayer services will take place at 5pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month. We are hoping to start a "wild church" for the young ones.

In the meantime, there are Zoom morning prayer services at 9:30 and night prayer services at 8pm every Sunday.

A lime tree came down at the church in a storm, causing damage but thankfully no one was hurt.

## **Bowls Club**

Ray Jennis said that Covid-19 had meant that the Bowls Club had been inactive but they had recently started playing again. They now had 15 members.

## **Speedwatch**

Keith Osborne said that Jackie Payne was the co-ordinator of the Speedwatch team and that there were 12 volunteers on the team. Since the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, the group has been out once a week at various places within the Parish. They liaise with the Police and Keith thanked everyone who adheres to the speed limits.

## **Village Hall**

June Pratt read out the following report:

*The last Annual General Meeting was held on 19/02/2020 and because there has not been an AGM for 2021 as yet, the minutes of the last meeting have not been signed off and agreed at this time.*

*Due to the Covid lockdown the village hall was closed for business and has not been hired out since the first Lockdown. During this time in Lockdown Travellers stayed on the village hall car park, the police were informed and because of strict Covid Rules they were moved on as they were breaking the Law. They left behind a considerable amount of rubbish, empty beer bottles and human faeces, which I and my husband cleared. Also, it should be noted that a parishioner misinformed the public that "it was an elderly couple, not Travellers"; there were several adults and children and the parents had broken the ties on the locked gate of the playground area and their children were using all the equipment unlawfully.*

*A village hall committee meeting took place in September 2020 to discuss the purchase and installation of a barrier and gates to stop travellers revisiting the car park. The Parish Council supported this and it was agreed the village hall would pay £1765.45 and the Parish Council would pay a similar amount with the vat added which they would claim back. The installation of the gates was paid solely by the village hall and amounted to £1186.80; all money was paid by their funds and not from grants.*

*There has been a considerable amount of discussion and various posts on social media including a significant amount of misinformation concerning who has the right to use the Village Hall car park.*

*The land was bought by the village in 1947 with specific use for erection of a village hall and playing field allowing village activities such as cricket and football. Since then, concessions have been granted for the School for road safety purposes avoiding the main road to use the car park. The Bowls Club is part of the playing field amenities and parishioners who wish to use the play area and of course the patrons of the village hall are also entitled to park there. There is no provision for commercial use, but the fact that when the village hall is hired, the people using it are entitled to park there. Therefore, it follows that The Trustees of the village hall should be ensuring that their first priority is to ensure space is available for this very purpose. It should be noted that prior to lockdown, we lost a customer who was a regular user because they could not park on the car park provided due to commercial use by the Kings Arms. It is problematic when for example there is a Bowls match, coupled with parents dropping off children for school and afternoon pick ups without taking into account commercial use factored in. This has no reflection on any particular commercial business, but there must be a way forward to resolve this issue.*

*At the last meeting held on 29/4/21 it was reported that the village hall has received grants in 20/21 years amounting to £21,376.00 with a possibility of a further sum to be paid shortly. Thanks go to Adrian Thompson who supported and helped them to apply for these grants.*

*With regards to the gate/barrier it was reported in the meeting that a letter was sent to commercial property (Kings Arms) in the hope of commencement of discussions regarding a formal agreement between the Village Hall and appropriate parties, when Covid restrictions are lifted. No acknowledgement receipt of the letter was received from the Kings Arms.*

*Throughout the meeting there were a number of resignations from Helen Farman, Richard Jordan (Trustee Chair), Judy Stewart (Trustee Vice Chair, Margaret Easen (Trustee Treasurer) Liz Durrant (Trustee Secretary), Maddie Rowe (Booking Officer) Marion Jordan, and Jacky Isle. The Chair announced the committee having sought advice as there was not enough Trustees to form a committee after the resignations, this was a breach of Trust and consequently the Parish Council, who own the building and land would need to take over the responsibility of the village hall until such time that a new committee was agreed at a future Annual General Meeting. It was evident at the meeting that the unpleasantness caused by issues concerning the car park, and the comments posted on social media has played a part in most members resigning, but there were also sadly members dealing with some very difficult personal issues.*

*Mrs June Pratt, Chair of Fleggburgh Parish Council, was shocked by this news and saddened that the recent events have brought about this situation. June Pratt thanked all the Village Hall Committee members for all their hard work and commitment demonstrated throughout their terms of office.*

*June Pratt was then asked to close the meeting and was handed various keys and books and paperwork.*

*It is now the role of Fleggburgh Parish Council to try and get the Village Hall open for hire as soon as possible and advertise the vacancies for Trustees to enable a new committee to be formed.*

Julie Osborne argued that there was no provision for the village hall to be handed over to FPC according to the conveyance document of the village hall. She said that herself, Janette Ely and Frank Brown were still trustees of the village hall.

June Pratt said that there had been a breach of trust by the village hall committee and that was why the village hall had been taken over by FPC.

### **Borough Councillor**

Adrian Thompson said that he'd donated his pay rise back to community projects and Fleggburgh Parish had benefited by over £2,000. Bulbs had been planted and Gateways signs would be installed at a later date. Busses would also be coming through Fleggburgh from Norwich to Great Yarmouth on an hourly basis. The Neighbourhood Development Plan was moving forwards.

Adrian asked everyone to work together for the community as this was the best way to help everyone in the community.

June Pratt then thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 7:21.