**Little Thetford Parish Council**

Chairman: Cllr G James

Clerk: Mrs Amy Jacklin, c/o Little Thetford Village Hall, The Wyches, Little Thetford CB6 3HG

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting: Wednesday 28th April 2021 @7.30pm

**Attendees:** Cllr James (Chairman), Cllr Kilby, Cllr Chamberlain, Cllr Stubbs,

CC/D Cllr Hunt

David Gamble- CLT

Kate Hilton- Little Acorns

Jennifer Staines- Newsletter

Domingo Negroni- Village Hall

Jonny Wallace- Little Thetford Primary School

Judy Young- Church

Jane Dunseath- Brigade

Steve Merrell- John Townsend

**Clerk:** Amy Jacklin and minute taker.

5 members of the public present

1. **Introduction from the Chairman**

Thanked everyone for coming along and reason date was changed due to the mourning period for the Duke of Edinburgh.

Gave introduction to new Clerk- Amy Jacklin.

1. **Apologies for absence received.**

Cllr Lamb and Cllr Mitchell

1. **Update on What your Parish Council have been doing.**

In my first year, I have worked hard to improve communication within the village and to our partners. This has been a year like no other, with the pandemic, and I am immensely proud of our community pulling together and helping the most vulnerable people through lockdowns. Huge strain for our young people, who have been so supportive and abided by the rules in Little Thetford throughout.

Hit with flooding before Christmas 2020, lots of community support during this time to help prevent water damage. The Parish Council put together a comprehensive report on the flooding to engage with the drainage board, ECDC, Anglian Water and County Highways to begin to develop a 2/3-year plan to resolve the issues. Importantly, we have identified who we can go to for support.

I wanted to thank the sometimes-forgotten heroes in the village: Karen Hankins; who looks after the hedgehogs, Olive and Tom at Holt Fen; who helped to get potatoes when we needed them, Jackie Lamb; helped get COVID funding and Annie; for the bacon rolls.

1. **‘You don’t know what you’ve lost until it’s gone’.**

Has a deep meaning, the pandemic has thrown up all kinds of issues. The community have not been able to use the facilities that we take for granted, and are so used to. Beit the church, sports, social club, the conservation area and the Village Hall. I have asked everybody this year to talk about what’s to come and how we as a community can pull together to drag us out from this pandemic.

1. **Parish Council Accounts.**

The clerk showed on screen 2019/20 Audited accounts and 2020/21 accounts unaudited.

Precept has remained the same £17,250. Main expenditure last year was the cemetery extension and the fees for the Locum Clerk. During the pandemic, it was difficult to recruit.

Question from David Gamble: Balance carried forward there is a big difference, how much should you hold as a Parish Council? Answer: We had a pay out from the sale of the access to the new development on Holt Fen of £50,000. We will be completing a village questionnaire this year to identify the priorities for money to be spent.

1. **Representatives from the following Organisations will give reports and answer questions.**

*D Cllr Stubbs*- I will be focussing on what has been achieved by East Cambs in the last year.

**Council Tax**: Work to £11m budget. Responsibilities include planning, building control, business rates, car parks, waste and environmental services. We have once again been able to balance the budget, allowing the East Cambs element of council tax for the 2021/22 period to be frozen for the 8th consecutive year.

**Covid19**: My thanks to staff at East Cambs for keeping services going throughout the pandemic and responding to the new needs because of COVID. ECDC since April 2020 have distributed £21,672,293 in COVID 19 business grants.

Waste and recycling crews have also kept a full service during COVID. ECDC celebrating recycling/waste reduction, seen district go from 38th to 27th out of 341 local authorities across the country. Looking to achieve higher recycling rates from the current rate of 56.5% to a future target of 65%. Overall household recycling rate for 2019/20 in England is 45.5%

**IT:** ECDC was one of the first councils in the country to host online planning committee meetings which D Cllr Hunt chairs and I as vice chair.

**Corporate Plan:** Housing team achieved national recognition by the National Practitioner Support Service challenge and was awarded Gold for their approach to homeless prevention.

ECDC have been successful in delivering affordable housing through Community Land Trusts. 19 affordable homes have been delivered in the Haddenham CLT. The ECCLT has delivered 15 refurbished shared ownership homes at the ex-MOD site in Ely. ECDC purchased the site with a loan from the CA to enable these affordable homes to be made available. Residents will soon be moving into the first eight £100k homes built in Fordham by the combined authority in Cambridgeshire.

The council met its £1m financial contribution in Ely Southern bypass. Work has begun on the new railway at Soham which has been initiated by District Council and delivered by the combined Authority.

£750k has been earmarked from CIL receipts for the expansion of St Mary’s Doctors Surgery. Also working with NHS to support redevelopment of Princess of Wales hospital.

Bus services review has been submitted to the Combined Authority following consultation from residents. Development of cycling and walking routes strategy is also underway.

National Environment and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents have also been adopted, all of which contribute to our commitment and actions to reach zero carbon emissions.

Ely Country Park and Jubilee Gardens have continued to be recognised as Green Flag open spaces, for seven years and sixteen years respectively

**Planning Matters:** ECDC have a 5-year building land supply, meaning applications outside the settlement boundary would be refused.

**Upcoming Elections:** 6th May 2021-Please vote.

*D Cllr Hunt*- Will be stepping down as County Councillor after 16 years. Will continue to stand as District Councillor for at least another 2 years.

COVID numbers coming down, extremely low death rates and infection rates.

2 for 1 Tree policy has been brought in. If a CC tree gets destroyed by disease or has to be cut down, they will replace with 2 trees.

Immensely proud to introduce Ely Zipper service, working very hard to keep the service going.

ECDC has given a grant to Soham Viva theatre of 2.8m, to spend on theatre which will be mainly beneficial to youths.

County Council provided food vouchers for those children in need over the Easter period.

A10 dualling is in County Council sights.

Mepal Outdoor Centre is impossible to re-open in same format due to loss making. In the process of pushing forward a crematorium.

Delivering 100k homes, additional to CLT, another way to satisfy young people who have a £5k deposit and £30k per year income.

Given away 13 laptops and 50 desktops, so people can benefit from home schooling.

Newham Street parking- Renovation creating 4 extra spaces and upgraded disabled spaces.

The office sends planning applications for Grunty Fen and all surrounding parishes to comment on.

Lancaster Way roundabout and BP roundabout are finished, funded by: mainly combined authorised and Lancaster Way business park.

*Domingo Negroni- Village Hall*

Back in December 2019, the country took part in general elections. Little Thetford hosted a Christmas party, where I played Father Christmas, we were given a Christmas grant that allowed us to put on an event for the children for free in the ‘Venue of our Community’.

Then COVID hit, spent 2020 trying to survive and to keep the hall going. Trustees support/help kept things going. Several grants obtained to help keep lights and heating working.

The Parish Council, Ladybirds, The Church and the Primary School managed to obtain a grant from the coronavirus community fund and Tescos to supply meals for the vulnerable people of Little Thetford community. A total of 1842 meals were served.

Grand opening of Village hall will be on the 23rd June 2021, this will be our APM.

*Steve Merrell- John Townsend Charity*

Charity was started in the 1850’s for the poor and needy, we have logs that go back to the 1850’s.

Jennifer Staines-Chair person.

Because of COVID no face to face meeting, conduct all business by email and post. Incredibly grateful for a £500 grant from PC, this assisted with two applications.

Accounts audited by Jackie Wardle and no mistakes found.

We have made two contributions to local residents in need. First of £216 for a fuel payment and second of £206 for a resident whose bag and car keys were stolen, (so the money paid for her excess and a new mobile phone).

Continued contact with Little Thetford and Stretham Primary School to help any students that may need support.

Re-designed our leaflet- Simplify it, message on ways we can help. Recently had 3 applications of help.

Ongoing issue: All income comes from rental of farmland; issue relates to access over our property. Advantage, by giving access to the land will help with funds for the charity.

Jennifer Staines- Would like to thank Cllr Hunt for his work as County Councillor. Cllr Hunt asks for permission to leave at 20.40pm.

*Kate Hilton- Little Acorns Pre-School*

As a ‘not-for-profit’ committee led preschool every year is a challenge - the struggle to get committee members, a lack of money, staffing fluctuations and the ongoing need to keep numbers high.

During the first lockdown we unfortunately had to close our doors, but our staff keep in contact with all children creating activities to do at home.

The restrictions that have been put in place due to Covid have had a serious impact on the preschool in many ways both financially and socially. Our fundraising activities have been seriously hampered. Our yearly fundraising target is approximately £2,500, and every year we get there (or there about) but due to Covid restrictions we will miss our target two years running. All our fundraising money goes back into the preschool to enhance the setting, buy new equipment, and provide our staff with additional training. The impact of this will not only be felt by our current children, but also by those children joining us over the next few years.

The pandemic has also left many of our families felling isolated which has had an impact on our committee. We have struggled to recruit new members to the committee, and this poses a serious problem for the next academic year as we cannot run without a committee.

Over the last year our numbers have risen significantly, and we have welcomed many new families into preschool and new staff. Numbers for September is looking promising.

We continue to adhere to the strict cleaning and hygiene routines we have put in place and are ensuring that our risk assessments and guidelines are being followed. We are very excited to be thinking about school transitions, end of year parties and the possibility of face-to-face parent consultations in June.

The preschool is really keen to get out into the community once again and start connecting with both the people and our wider environment**.**

**Would like children getting involved with some community activities, such as a village litter pick. We would also like to welcome the local community into the preschool, once restrictions allow of course, to share their talents, skills and hobbies with the children or even spend an hour reading stories with them. Offering the children these experiences, especially now, is so important.**

**Need the support of the community, whether that is with fundraising activities, joining our committee or helping out with a bit of DIY or gardening. Any help, however small, makes a massive difference to a small setting such as ours.**

**We are extremely grateful for the support we have received from the Parish Council this last year and cannot thank you enough for your help in what has been a difficult and challenging time for the preschool. In the coming year, any help or advice you can provide us with accessing grants and other possible funding avenues would be most gratefully received. We would also appreciate your support with any potential problems or difficulties that may arise because of the new housing development taking place next to preschool.**

*Jonny Wallace- Little Thetford Primary School*

Incredibly challenging year, but important to take the positives. I feel like we have got much closer to the community and the parish council this year and that is something I want to continue. Important to support each other by working together.

Delighted to get involved with meals in the community by lending out our school kitchen and our cook to support vulnerable people.

Would like to thank the Parish Council for the support in obtaining additional devices; this has enabled our digitally disadvantaged children to all have access to remote learning.

Devices now back into the school which has allowed us to enhance what we can offer, which benefits all the children.

Looking ahead, I would like to see a mutual partnership between the community and the school to move forward, we have a lot to offer to the community. If we can get involved in any events, we are more than happy to support. The children are the heart of the community.

We have so many skills/ Knowledge in our community that I know could really benefit the children. For example, we run a hugely successful chess club.

**I would love to talk to anybody who is interested in sharing their skills, please get in touch, we will be starting after school clubs in September.**

*Judy Young- Church*

St Georges Church was closed April-August 2020 due to lockdown rules. When we were able to reopen we had to stick to a strict clean daily. Unfortunately, we closed after Christmas 2020, due to another lockdown. But since Easter we have opened our doors again to everybody.

We are not allowed to display any information or activities inside at the moment. We have no vicar, our services are lead in corporation with Stretham via zoom.

Pop in: Time for coffee and chat, this used to be inside the church, now held by the village sign.We sit outside and have a get together, once a week.

The link between us and school is suspended now, but we hope to have that back very soon.

The building itself, some large cracks have appeared at the West end on the South side. Being monitored by a structural engineer.

The memorial roses are looking very healthy and growing well, thank you for the village support.

*Jennifer Staines- Newsletter*

Newsletter began in April 1974, put together to make village aware of up-and-coming events.

1974 to now, we have produced and delivered to every home in the parish with exception of 2 a bi- monthly newsletter, making 270 editions.

Ethos of the newsletter hasn’t changed. The number of deliveries has increased over the years with the development of houses, we now deliver 318 copies. Last year the bi-monthly pattern was broken, we didn’t produce a newsletter in June/July and February/March was posted on Facebook.

Thank you to the team of volunteers that make this newsletter happen.

I have been editor of the newsletter for 43 years**; I think it’s time to refresh the way we do the newsletter in the near future. I will call a meeting for any willing participants.**

*Jane Dunseath- Brigade*

Members have received various projects to do at home for Easter, Christmas and mothering Sunday. Working on our 50th Anniversary to display artwork on the railings.

Regular zoom meetings with Sawston Boys and Girls have been happening, we are planning to start face to face meetings outside in the near future. Our plan is to do some gardening. We were successful in getting a grant for our annual feast from the councils COVID funds.

**I would like to improve our kitchen area and maybe get a dishwasher fitted. If possible, we plan for a camp weekend in the village. Members miss meeting up. We are incredibly low on helpers at the moment, but we are working on it.**

*David Gamble- CLT*

CLT- Community Land Trust, creates accommodation that is truly affordable for people that live in the village. Development is inevitable in some way, we are hoping with CLT developments that residents can have a say in what they would like, more importantly funds from the CLT are fed back into the community.

What’s happening at the moment- It’s very early days, we have put out a call for land and had some submissions for potential sites.

**We have put our survey out, please complete this if you have not already to have your say, in where you would like the development to be and what amenities you would like to see in the village etc.**

Village is slightly dormant now, I would like to see a couple of things like a shop, developments to village hall, development for the school etc.

**If you would like to become a member, with the survey we sent an application form. It’s £1 to join, it will give you more of a say about the future.**

*Cllr Chamberlain- Open Spaces*

Autumn 2019- Woodland Trust gave us some advice on our Conservation Area. In the last few years it had got very overgrown, some of the trees were diseased and overcome with brambles. The parish Council carried out some of the woodland trusts recommendations when they were able, the ground has been cut back and the orchard has been pruned.

The end of March 2021, 300 samplings have been donated by the Woodland Trust and planted in and around the conservation area. Next steps are to research some wildflowers to introduce to the area, also explore how we can utilize the pond.

We are planning to improve the path that leads to the conservation area, to make it more accessible.

The Parish Council would like to thank residents for all their help with all of this work, without the volunteers we couldn’t make this happen.

We were successful thanks to Jackie Lamb, getting a lottery grant for more seating in the village. We purchased five picnic benches and four seated benches to add to our existing stock. All the new benches are made of 100% recycled Plastic, they are good solid pieces of furniture. Located on the Recreational ground, the Conservation area and Holt Fen.

Robert Bullen’s bench has now been put into its permanent home by the pond in the conservation area. I would like to thank John Skipper for his time and project management, and everybody else that was involved in the smooth running of the weekend we installed the bases for the benches.

*Cllr Chamberlain-Children’s Playpark upgrade.*

We have put in a funding bid to upgrade the playground, the feedback from the surveys that were completed by the residents has been extremely helpful.

We now must wait and see if we have been successful.

*Cllr Chamberlain-Trees*

Last year we had a tree survey completed on all the parishes’ trees. You will have noticed all the trees now have silver identity tokens, this tells us the age of the tree, the name and what maintenance is required, if any.

The clerk has used the survey to create a ‘find the tree’ treasure hunt, for a family activity, this is on the Parish Councils website.

Cllr James adds we will be looking at footpaths this year.

**Jennifer Staines asks if our survey shows trees with preservation orders on (Jennifer knows there is some preservation orders and will try and find out which have).**

**Judy Young adds: the school is collecting the green plastic milk tops which are recycled to make furniture, please could they be collected and dropped to the school.**

*Cllr James- Friendship Club*

Started in April 2019, under AGE UK. Meeting on a weekly basis: divided into three sections, health and wellbeing, coffee/chat, and some form of activity along with a meal.

Joined in on trips with other friendship clubs before Covid hit.

**Plan is to start meeting up again, our intention is to do a relaunch of the friendship club at the Village Hall with a fish and chip lunch. We would like to know what people would like the future of the club could look like.**

*Cllr James- Sports and Social Club*

Reopened but awaiting more government guidelines on next steps.

*Cllr Chamberlain- Feast Committee*

Unable to organise a village feast in 2020, but were able to hold a very successful Ceilidh before covid restrictions. Planning another Ceildh for the end of 2021.

Village calendar was produced in 2021, sales were down due to not having the opportunity to sell at village fetes.

Planning on organising another feast this year if restrictions allow. We haven’t decided a date as yet or how it will look re numbers. We will be looking for the Parish Council to help with the insurance costs, for this one day event, this has always been much appreciated.

Busy transforming the land outside the Village Hall into a communal garden. We have achieved this by using funds from previous feasts, the Calendar and the Ceilidh. We have decided to call this area ‘Bert’s Garden’ for all the work Bert did for the village. We plan to open this garden officially at the feast.

Cllr James adds: how lovely it is to hear real people talking about their own organisations rather than a prepared statement being read out.

*Open Forum*

Maureen Henderson- **Asks whether we as a Parish Council would consider a Christmas tree for the village and a community event. Ideas could be a permanent tree could be planted, solar lights could be used to be as green friendly as possible and perhaps an event to turn on the lights?**

Cllr Chamberlain adds: in normal times the school, the pre-school and church have Christmas fairs, usually the village is thriving at Christmas time.

Cllr James- ‘It was really good to listen to everybody, thank you for all you do in the community’.

Closed Meeting-21.41pm

Signed: …………………………………

Date: ………………………………..