

Little Thetford Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman: Cllr C Mitchell

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: Tuesday 26th April 2022 @7pm

Attendees: Cllr Mitchell (Chair), Cllr Peacock, Cllr Collins-Neat, Cllr Hadley

District Councillor Hunt

Judy Young- St Georges Church

Richard Church- Village Hall

Jenny Staines- Newsletter

Jenny Staines- John Townsend Charity

Olibhe Collins- Neat- Feast Committee

Clerk: Amy Jacklin and minute taker.

2 members of the public present.

1. Introduction by the Chairman

Cllr Mitchell welcomes everyone to the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting

2. Apologies for absence received.

Cllr Kilby, Cllr Durham, Cllr Driver

Kate Hilton (Little Acorns), Jonny Wallace (Little Thetford Primary School) and Tony Creek (Community Land Trust) All have provided a statement to be read out by Cllr Hadley

3. Little Thetford Parish Council

The Parish Council have been busy in 2021 with the following successful activities carried out. The new playpark is currently undergoing a full refurbishment which will be completed by June 2022, this will be a fantastic upgrade for all the children in the village. 'New Life on the Old West' project have started digging ponds and planting hedges in the village to create new habitats for wildlife. Lots of trees have been granted to the Parish Council which were planted in the Conservation Area in early 2021, these trees are doing well. ECDC also supplied us ten apple trees to celebrate the Queens Jubilee in June 2022, these have also been planted in an area of the Conservation area for people to enjoy when they fruit. Dog Waste has been a problem in the village for a while now, so the Parish Council have acted by ordering more bins and more signage to help prevent the problem. These will be installed in the next month.

Two new benches for people visiting the cemetery have been ordered and will be installed very soon. One will be located at the end of the old section and one at the end of the new section.

Currently the Parish Council are awaiting quotes for CCTV for the village, this will help prevent anti-social behaviour and fly tipping at certain locations.

One area the Parish Council have saved money this year is having a permanent clerk in situ rather than paying for a locum to support.

4. 'One Little Thetford'

This year's topic is very important with the return of normal business activity after nearly two years of on/off lockdowns. One Little Thetford means the collaboration between the institutions in the village, working together to recover from the lockdown losses. Little Thetford held a fantastic event at Christmas where the whole village came together for a full filled event. The next being a big event to celebrate the Queens Jubilee over the whole weekend. Big thanks to Clair and the feast for all their hard work.

5. Parish Council Accounts

The clerk presented hard copied of the 2020/21 audited accounts as well as the 2021/22 un-audited accounts. There were no questions or comments. The clerk mentioned she would be happy to answer any question at a later date if there were any.

6. Representatives from the following Organisations will be present to give reports and answer questions.

District Cllr Hunt

Was County Cllr for 16 years but did not stand in May 2021, still District Councillor for Little Thetford, Stretham, Wilburton and Witchford. (Alongside Cllr Lisa Stubbs). Believe that local Councils should not be Politically focused but just work for the benefit of residents. (Zipper, Car Parking, Health Care etc etc) Busy year supporting residents and local communities through Covid 19. Helping vulnerable people. Practical help and distributing financial help. Many people should be proud. Bin Service under extreme pressure but are working hard to ensure all bins are emptied at the correct times. Most councils don't have Green Bin service, or they charge. Full Council 21/4/22 Proposed motion and succeeded in opposition to Cambridge Congestion charge. Will hurt essential workers, shoppers, and Hospital patients.

Also, Workplace daily fee, £1.50 per car per day! (My group supported opposition others opposed (ie supporting Charge). New "The Dock" Car Park now about 60% full. We charge about half the price of Station. Despite change from CCC to the Mayor, pushing to retain Ely Zipper which before Covid was nearly breaking even. Pushing for Sutton/Ely Zipper 2. I support A10 Dualling BP/MS at Ely to A14 at Milton. Two million feasibility study funding. Minimal traffic disruption. Safe Lt Thetford junction, cycle, and pedestrian improvements. (Old road retained) My group survey this summer. Please complete (SAE enclosed) allows us to work towards resident's wishes. I support CLT concept of using planning gain increase in land value for public good not landowner substantial profit. I do not support specific applications as must judge on their individual merits until I have heard all the facts. (Explain Chair/Vice Chair roles.) ECDC have announced a new £100,000 fund to assist community lead

development groups bridge the initial funding gap in addition to the £5000 start-up grant. ECDC are fully committed to Free Car Parking in City Centre Car Parks. (And visitor moorings). National unique record. 0% Council Tax increase in 2022/23. So, no increase in 9 years and balanced budget for next x2 years. (Trading Company helps) Only small %age of total bill but ECDC doing what we can and note Cambs County are 4.99% increase. I am pleased to confirm Steeple Row, Ely to have major uplift with new paving and lighting. ECDC have £300,000 sports facilities grant available. Details from ECDC on how to apply.

ECDC are committed to march towards zero carbon asap. Re-Cycling at 60% going well and we are working hard on our buildings and vehicle fleet. (Bin Lorries are an issue). ECDC Are pleased to have worked with St Mary's surgery and NHS Princess of Wales Hospital. Financially and practically. Please to approve £45,000,000 Hospital scheme. We hope new Mepal Crematorium will continue to progress well. Water Play Park not an option as so much protected biodiversity. Plan is council run with value for money and dignity.

Questions- It was questioned as to why Peterborough bin lorries were collecting in Cambs. Cllr Hunt advised that often surrounding councils work together.

It was asked why there are still inconsistencies with bin collections in Lt Thetford is- Cllr Hunt advises that the team at Littleport are working to ensure bins are emptied at the correct times.

A resident has concerns about the way the Community Land Trust has been run- The chair advised that Cllr Hunt meet the resident outside of the meeting to answer any questions he may have.

Village Hall- Richard Church

I want to pay tribute to the current and retiring trustees. Dom Negroni, Lisa Stubbs, Matt Sullivan, Wouter Haijman and Satya Gautam have all played a valuable part in the running of the hall and its associated activities. Matt, Dom and Lisa in particular took over five and a half years ago at a time when the viability of the Hall itself was in doubt. Much of the improvements inside the building and the increased community use of the building is due to their efforts. In addition, I want to express the thanks of the current trustees to Diane Hopkins who has been the treasurer to the Trust since our last AGM.

Clearly the continuation of the Coronavirus and the consequent limitations on meetings have adversely impacted the finances of the Village Hall. However, we would be in a much worse situation had trustees not successfully applied for special Covid grants which have enabled us to continue paying the bills. We were able to resume hall activities shortly after our last AGM in June last year.

There have been some recent upgrades to fabric and fittings. We have recently bought a commercial dishwasher so that it becomes quicker to clean up after larger events. After some concerns that the wifi signal in the hall was not very strong we have upgraded to a BT business line and router which we hope will improve our user's experience and assist us with the control of the heating system. We have also commissioned a structural survey of the hall in order to produce a maintenance schedule in the coming years.

In the autumn we were pleased to employ Richard Stewart who acts as the Hall Booking Officer and who has spent many hours with Matt designing and publishing the new Village Hall website.

In the autumn, a pop-up community café was initiated by Graham and supported by a small team of volunteers. It has proved an outstanding success in bringing together young and old and it has continued this year with an average attendance of 15 – 20 people. We believe that the coffee and chat points to the need for a meeting space in the village and will try to develop this in our future plans.

Another enterprise which was trialled in the autumn was a community film showing featuring a programme designed to appeal to old and young alike.

The trustees approved a suggestion that we explore the feasibility of a Community Village Shop which has led to a questionnaire being circulated in the village. The result of this survey will be shared here on April 9th from 11 – 1. The presentation was attended by 27 villagers, all of whom were in favour of further work being done in order to produce a business plan. We have applied to the PC for funds to help.

The new trustees are Olibhe Collins, David Gamble, Robert Henderson, Annie Foulser, Graham & Pam James, Pam Sowa and myself, Jenny Staines. Subsequent to the meeting Pam Sowa resigned, I was made Chair and Jenny Staines Secretary. We were also made aware that Lisa Robbins was prepared to become our new treasurer. We will be faced with a growing agenda as we try to make the Village Hall a welcoming and hospitable place for villagers with yet more activities designed to fulfil the objectives of our Trust objectives.

John Townsend Charity- Jenny Staines

Last year quite a few things happened with the John Townsend Charity.

We were able to restart our face-to-face meetings in May with a late AGM.

There have been some changes to the Trustees - When the Parish Chair changed Cllr Mitchell became our ex officio Trustee which created a vacancy. Steve Merrell resigned from the position of clerk at the end of 2021 and he was appointed to that vacancy by the Parish Council. Brenda Dickenson was also re-appointed as a Trustee when her term of office finished last autumn. We were pleased to welcome Jo Howard as our clerk to her first meeting last week. During the year we were pleased to be able to assist with two grant application totalling £500. Most of the work of the Charity last year was down to the closing of Kisby's Crossing by Network Rail and we are grateful to our clerk, Steve Merrell at that time, for dealing with all the correspondence it created. Those of you who know the area will know that this caused a problem of access to a local farmer to one of his fields. The John Townsend was able to put in place a Grant of Easement which allows him access across land owned by the Charity. Network Rail had made a financial settlement to the farmer who donated a part of this to the Trust which has been invested for future use. The legal costs were also met by the farmer. There will continue to be an annual payment to the charity for the use of this Easement. We have a very old accounts ledger which was begun in 1845 and, you can imagine is a lovely old style book, it is still in use and last year received some restoration work to its cover and is now set for another long spell of use. As you are aware the Charities Objectives are for the benefit of the parishioners of Lt. Thetford under the heading of Poor & Needy and Sickness – it is an old-fashioned term but if you know of any parishioner who you think could benefit from the charity do please advise them to contact the Clerk or myself for an application form. We are a small charity for a small village, but we do have funds to help local residents if needed. I must emphasise here that all grant applications

are dealt with in strict confidence. We are hoping to circulate an updated information leaflet with the next issue of the newsletter at the end of next month. The clerk now has a copy of our unexamined end of year accounts.

Newsletter- Jenny Staines

During the last 12 months the Newsletter has come back into its own as local organisations have begun to resume activities and meetings. Every 2 months a team of 12 people deliver 320 Newsletters to homes in the Parish, and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them for doing that come rain or shine. During the 2 years of lockdown, we didn't charge any advertisers or organisations as some editions didn't happen, others were just one sheet of paper and therefore less expensive to produce. However, we no longer have any funds to supplement the costs so this year the charges to organisations and advertisers will resume. The Newsletter is run on a not-for-profit basis. At this point I must thank Tony Shaw for looking after the money. This month the Newsletter celebrates 48 years of publication – until Covid hit it hadn't missed one of its bimonthly editions over all those years, and then it only missed 2. A lot of people give time to writing and sending in the items, someone else spends time putting it together, copying it, folding it and bundling it up for the delivery team. Throughout its 48 years the ethos of the Newsletter has not changed – it is for making villagers aware of forthcoming events. The question is, has it had its time? I have been involved with it for well over 43 years and you may think that it is time it had someone else to help it move forward. I wouldn't disagree with you! Do you still want it to pop through your door every 2 months? We have a meeting here on Thursday evening at 7pm to try to answer those questions and decide how to take it forward – do come along if you can and certainly if you think it still has a place in Little Thetford life.

St Georges Church- Judy Young

St. George's Church is an interesting old building dating back to the 14th century and is in the middle of the village. There is a short history of the building in the church for anyone to read.

Like many other organisations, we have been affected by the covid-19 pandemic and taken various precautionary measures during 2021 to keep our congregation, visitors, and other users of the building as safe as we reasonably could.

As a result of the easing of national restrictions and changing guidelines we re-opened the church daily during daylight hours, which means you don't have to go searching for a key before you can get in.

We have also re-started many of our social activities, such as Pop in and Dragon Club. Pop In is a café on a Tuesday morning 9 – 11am and Dragon Club is for over 60s and so named because we are St George's Church. There are always posters up around the village about these gatherings. Brigade has also restarted, music group and of course our church services on Sundays which managed to continue through most of last year. We have a close association with the primary school, providing 2 people to the governing body and having some input in the assemblies.

The church porch acts as a collection point for food donations that are subsequently taken to the Ely Foodbank, and we have also started a collection box for used print cartridges and one for used postage stamps.

During 2022 we will be introducing changes in the churchyard to make it more Eco friendly, promoting the growth of natural wildflowers and other vegetation, to help insects and other wildlife. Again, there is a display at the back of the church all about this.

A great place to find out more about what's on at our church is to go to our "A Church Near You" website, which is found at www.achurchnearyou.com and the church's postcode which is CB6 3HA. Our contact details can also be found there.

Feast Committee- Olibhe Collins-Neat

The Feast committee held yet another successful Summer Feast in August 2021 raising over £3,500. The Village Yard Sale just one week later, raising a further £500. An incredible amount for such a small village and it was so lovely to see the community coming together again, after the restrictions of Covid. The 2022 Village Calendar sales proved successful again, however sales were slightly down compared to previous years. Due to lack of fundraising events in the village to help sell the calendars and with increased printing costs, £350 was raised. With the 2 recent 'Bert's Bingos' held in November 2021 and March 2022 and the funds raised from these, just over £1000 combined, donated to the Feast from the Sports and Social Club, the Feast account is looking healthy with just over £4500 available funds to be spent. Our intentions for the funds are an outdoor table tennis table, which should be available for all to enjoy very soon. Additional ideas are – a basketball hoop, lighting for Bert's Garden, with further planting, additional seating within a covered area. These are all ideas which have been sourced from the village community and we are always open to further ideas. In addition to this we have supported Little Thetford Acorns with the purchase of a bulk purchase of sand for their sandpit. The Feast were heavily involved and financially supported the very first Little Thetford Christmas Light Up Night in December 2021. To see the community and village organisations all coming together to help organise the event and enjoy the evening, was lovely to see and certainly one to repeat. This year due to the Queens Jubilee Celebrations there will not be a Summer Feast. It was felt to have two village events so close together, it would dilute both events, so therefore the Feast are helping the Parish Council to organise the Jubilee Celebrations over the weekend of 2nd to 5th June. We will have lots of activities on offer for all ages, over the 4-day period. Craft Events, Children's Party, Lighting of the Beacon and finally a large-scale afternoon tea party on the Sunday afternoon. This will of course involve the traditional games including Tug of War, Bouncy Castles, BBQ, Bar, Refreshments, Competitions, Raffle and a DJ to entertain us all throughout the afternoon. Most of which will be free for the community, rather than a fundraising event. Financially supported by the Feast and Parish Council. Commemorative Little Thetford Jubilee mugs are also being offered to the community to mark this historic milestone. We hope to have further events in the year – Yard Sale at the end of August, Ceilidh in the Autumn and supporting the 2022 Christmas Light up Night, the Feast team are keeping busy! We are sure you will all agree; the Feast brings the village community and organisations together and is a great opportunity for everyone to help raise funds for our wonderful village. We would like to thank everyone who supports us, including the Parish Council for their continued support.

Little Thetford Acorns Pre-School- Kate Hilton (Delivered by Cllr Hadley)

This last year has been another challenging one due to the pandemic, but it has also been a very positive one. The number of children attending our preschool has remained high, with many new families joining us throughout the year. However, for the first time in several years

the majority of our cohort for the academic year 2021-22 have been from outside the village. Recruitment during the pandemic has been tricky but we are delighted to have welcomed some new staff to our small team this year, including our first ever apprentice. We have also been lucky enough to get a new floor fitted throughout the preschool which looks amazing and this, along with some new to us furniture which we were able to purchase at a bargain price, has really given the preschool a much-needed revamp. We have slowly been able to welcome parents back into the preschool through stay and play sessions which has been lovely and well attended. Our holiday club ran during the first week of the Easter holidays and we were pleased, once again, to open this up to children from Key Stage 1 at the school. We also ran a very successful family gardening morning during the second half of the Easter holidays. As we go into the summer term, we are very excited to be thinking about school transitions, sports day and end of year parties. Covid has continued to make fundraising difficult, but our wonderful fundraising team have risen to the challenge and come up with some very creative ways to raise much needed funds for the preschool. Both our parents, the local community and the Parish Council have continued to be very supportive of our efforts. The village came out in force to support our Halloween walk, we had a week of different fundraising activities in the run up to Christmas and we are extremely grateful to the Village Hall for letting us run an Easter pop up cafe with cakes, crafts, and an Easter egg hunt. After two years spent in isolation, the preschool is keen to get out into the community once again. We had a little taster of this at Christmas with the village 'Light up Night' and it would be lovely to see the children getting involved in more community activities and events. We would also like to welcome the local community into the preschool to share their talents, skills and hobbies with the children or even spend an hour reading stories with them. Offering the children these experiences, after the last two years, is very important. It goes without saying that, after a very tough two years, we continue to need the support of the community, whether that's with fundraising activities, joining our committee, or helping with a bit of DIY, gardening, or a spot of decorating! Our next major project is to give our office space an overall and create/build a staff room space in an unused section of our garden, so the staff have somewhere quiet and peaceful to eat their lunch and complete paperwork. This is a big project, and we'd love some community support to achieve our goal. Any help, however small, makes a massive difference to a small organisation like ours. It goes without saying that, as always, we are extremely grateful for the support we have received from the Parish Council this last year and cannot thank you enough for your all your help, it really means a lot to us, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the Parish Council in the coming year.

Little Thetford Primary School- Jonny Wallace (Delivered by Cllr Hadley)

For the second year running, I write about the challenges that the school and community have had to face over the past 12 months but also reflect on the way in which people have pulled together to make the best of a difficult situation for everyone.

During Covid times, the school has been honoured to work with the parish council in delivering meals for the village and has been fantastically supported by the parish council through the provision of additional ICT equipment for children learning from home as well as additional cleaning equipment enabling us to provide the best education possible and make the school environment as safe as possible despite the challenging circumstances. Thank you!

As we have been able to slowly return to some normality the school has been delighted to have played an active role in the village light switch on event which was a lovely event to bring the village together and as a school, we very much look forward to upcoming events in the village such as the Jubilee celebrations which I'm sure the children will love to be part of. The school has a sponsored event on the 23rd May, sports day on the 1st July and Picnic evening on the 9th July coming up and the wider community are very welcome to be part of these events.

Looking ahead, as the school considers the possibility of academisation to safeguard its long-term future, I believe it is invaluable that the school retains its identity and place at the heart of the community, and I very much look forward to working with the parish council in ensuring this remains the case moving forward.

I very much hope to be able to work more closely with the parish council to bring the school as close to the village community as possible. Little Thetford is a wonderful village and I truly believe the school being at the heart of it is beneficial for both the children and the village community.

Little Thetford Community Land Trust- Tony Creek (Delivered by Cllr Hadley)

It has been quite 7 months since the new group of trustees took the reins of the Little Thetford Community Land Trust. I think it is fair to say that all the trustees are reluctant volunteers who stepped in to ensure the CLT was not left in Limbo. Our first task was to establish what had and had not happened with the previous incumbents and to ensure that we had a clear picture going forwards. This is still work in progress, and there was a lot of documentation to go through. It was important to set a clear baseline. We continue to take a measured approach to both draw a line under what happened in 2021 and to have a clear Mandate going forwards. We believe that we cannot move forwards without a clear mandate from the members and the wider community. The membership has grown, but still represents circa 10% of the village's population. We are acutely aware that any actions we perform will influence all the community, and this is why our focus in the latter half of the reporting period has been to engage and seek guidance on how to move forwards. Last month we held an open meeting, open to all residents of the village. This was attended by about 36 villagers and one of our local ECDC councillors, Bill Hunt. It was a positive meeting and the CLT trustees were able to explain their ethos and to reassure the attendees that the community will give us the direction of travel and will set our agenda. The next step is to issue a survey and to garner the opinions of the community. This has been delayed slightly due to COVID illness within the trustees. We know that it is customary in these reports to present what we plan to do in the coming year, but as we have said we may be in the boat, but the community has its hand on the tiller. After the survey is completed, and the results analysed, we should be in a better position to report or direction of travel.

Close meeting: 8.27pm

