



Chairman: Cllr C Mitchell  
Clerk- Mrs Amy Jacklin- 07828 402 093  
c/o Little Thetford Village Hall,  
The Wyches, Little Thetford CB6 3HG  
[parish.clerk@littlethetford.org.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@littlethetford.org.uk)

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023@7pm

**Attendees:** Cllr Mitchell (Chair), Cllr Driver, Cllr Collins-Neat, Cllr Hadley, Cllr Durham  
District Councillor Hunt  
Tony Shaw- Friends of St Georges Church/Chairman of the Little Thetford Community Land Trust  
Richard Church- Village Hall  
Graham James- Village Hall  
Jenny Staines- Newsletter/John Townsend Charity

**Clerk:** Amy Jacklin and minute taker.  
5 members of the public present.

**1. Introduction by the Chairman 7.03pm**

Cllr Mitchell welcomes everyone to the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

**2. Apologies for absence received.**

Cllr Peacock

Kate Hilton (Little Acorns), Jonny Wallace (Little Thetford Primary School), Lisa Hadley (Feast), Gordon McGinley (St Georges Church) and Jane Dunseath (Brigade) All have provided a statement to be read out by councillors.

**3. Little Thetford Parish Council**

The Parish Council have been busy in 2022. The new oak noticeboards are now in place on the green and inside the cemetery. The village sign has been removed and taken back to the original artists for a full refurbishment. The children's play park has been completed and the new grass is now growing nicely. There are ongoing issues with dog fouling in the village, the council have increased signage and bins in 2022. We are working with the local dog warden to educate residents and urge residents who see dog fouling to report it. The past couple of years the parish council have been working closely with the 'New Life on the Old West' who have been planting hedges, digging ponds, and sowing wildflowers. These are fantastic habitats for wildlife, the ponds are now looking established, and the foliage is growing nicely. More work will start to happen around the pond in the conservation area to help improve safety of area and make it more accessible for wildlife.

Currently Little Thetford parish council have one seat available for a councillor to join, if anyone knows anyone that may be interested.

**4. 'Working Together'**

The Parish Council are proud to work with many organisations within the village to make improvements and hold events. We would like to thank the village hall for all the hard work they have put in to achieve grants to modernise the hall. The hall is such an important village asset. Thankyou to John Townsend for all their hard work in helping the people in the village that need support financially or otherwise. The Parish Council are working with the Sports and Social Club to improve the multi-use games area. Within the next year we hope to have the area re-surfaced so more people can enjoy this facility.

**5. Parish Council Accounts**

The clerk presented hard copied of the 2021/22 audited accounts (one small recommendation noted by Littlejohn) as well as the 2022/23 un-audited accounts. There were no questions or comments. The clerk mentioned she would be happy to answer any question later if there were any.

**6. Representatives from the following Organisations:**

***Village Hall- Richard Church***

We were very pleased to make the hall available for the jubilee celebrations last year. The yard sale was another co-operative venture with the village hall hosting Annie's famous bacon butties along with a range of stalls. Tried to experiment with a couple of creature events, last year a film night was arranged, and the Greatest Showman was enjoyed by many. We have been working with the 'National Theatre Live' to bring regular

performance to the village. Highlights from last year were an oil campaign for the village, which the village hall won 500l of heating oil thanks to 900 votes. The shop/café has gone quiet as we are working on governance now, hopefully to bring a new community benefit for Little Thetford. The warm hub sessions have come to an end and the village hall celebrated successes with a get together which included a singer. The village hall has been awarded £88,000 in various grants thanks to Graham and Pam James to complete a full electrification upgrade on the Village Hall.

#### ***Village Hall- Graham James***

In the next couple of weeks, we will be having a site meeting with UK Powers Networks, the electricians, and solar people. Subject the Highways we will likely be in the position to start works in June/July and work to be completed by September/October. The Village Hall have achieved and been accredited for Hallmark One and are now working towards Hallmark Two. We have achieved more than double the hirings this year to last year. We are working closely with the NHS to put on diabetes prevention workshops. The Village Hall receives no funding apart from grants, donations and hirings so we are very lucky to be able to partner with the NHS for this regular income.

Looking forward we are working with NTV live and have a few events booked, also we are considering holding events in the school holidays for the children which would include crafts ect. Other events in June and July include Fenland Folklore, Sashimi stitch and magic shows.

#### ***John Townsend Charity- Jenny Staines***

A relatively quiet year for John Townsend Charity- the trustees are the same as last year and will be until October 2023 when they will be seeking a replacement chair. The clerk is now settled into her role. The income from the charity is from land rents which are reviewed regularly. The charities objectives as detailed in the scheme that governs this charity are for the benefit of the parishioners of Little Thetford under the heading of poor and needy and sickness-this is an old-fashioned term but if you know of anyone that would benefit please get in touch. All applications are dealt with in the strictest of confidence. During the year we have dealt with four applications, we have also updated our publicity to help keep the village informed about the charity. At present the charity are custodians of a *Looky* which is a lit magnifier to help people with impaired vision, it is available on loan for anyone that could benefit. Please contact the clerk, Jo Howard. The accounts for year ending 2023 have been agreed by trustees but not yet been examined.

#### ***Newsletter- Jenny Staines***

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. Thanks, are also due to those who send news in and to the school for allowing it to be copied there. The Newsletter is run on a not-for-profit basis. At this point I must thank Tony Shaw for looking after the money. Next month the Newsletter celebrates 50 years of publication – until Covid hit it hadn't missed one on its bimonthly editions over all those years. Throughout its time the ethos of the Newsletter has not changed – it is for making villagers aware of forthcoming events. I have been involved with it for well over 40 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? There will be a meeting later in the year to look at how we celebrate 50 years of publication and decide how to take it forward or to decide whether 297 editions is enough and that will be the last. Watch this space for the meeting date...

#### ***Little Thetford Community Land Trust- Tony Shaw***

It is pleasing to report that Little Thetford CLT is still fully functional and that the membership through their elected trustees, are in control of events and able to direct future activities. It's a matter of history now that the previous trustees resigned in mass in September 2021 following public disapproval of the housing development, they proposed for land in Holt Fen for approximately 70 houses. Many villagers felt that the previous trustees misrepresented the results of the survey that they carried out. Yes, they were correct in saying that 70% of the respondents supported the call for local homes for local people. However, they failed to communicate the large number of negative responses from a wide ranging demographic of residents who were concerned with the environmental, traffic and other negative impacts that such a large development could bring to the village. Following the resignation of the original board, the members elected a new group of trustees at their meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup>. November 2021. Amongst other things, the current trustees have investigated the documentation made available by the previous regime. They came to the conclusion that although contentious decisions had been taken, resulting in the rather fractious meeting of September 16<sup>th</sup>. 2021, little was to be gained by going over old ground. Instead, the trustees decided that it was in the best interest of the village to draw a line under these actions and move forward with a fresh perspective. As a first step we held an open village meeting in March of last year where we sought the views of those in attendance and followed this with a second village survey. Although Little Thetford CLT is affiliated to the National CLT and operates within their model rules, it has remained resolutely independent without any external influences. The current trustees have acted as a community lead, community focused, transparent board and will continue to do. The trustees believe that it is so important that the residents of Little Thetford maintain control of our community and the environment in which we live. Our village is land locked between the A10 and the railway line and we are only too aware of the environmental pressures a large housing development would have on our community. It is fair to say that we value the open spaces we have and do not wish to lose them. We are concerned that the actions of some and contested developments in neighbouring villages has risked tarnishing the CLT brand in this area. This doesn't need to be the case and Little Thetford CLT must be a benefit to our village, managed properly and with the community on board. CLTs have been established nationally to cater for the needs of local communities. Projects can take many shapes and forms. Affordable housing is at the top of many peoples lists, however community buildings, allotments, energy projects and even dog exercise areas are all schemes which have been developed by CLTs nationwide. We have picked up some ideas from the results of our survey and intend to follow them up this year to see if they could be made viable for our village. The trustees are enthusiastic about looking after the environment of this village which we are proud to call our home. We are a small group and would welcome other members onto the board. anyone with financial or management skills would be made most welcome. At the moment we have just over 60 members, but there is always room for more.

### ***Friends of St Georges Church- Tony Shaw***

We held our AGM in May last year, the first since 2019. It was well attended and thanks to Judy Young and Doug Harper for continuing their roles of Secretary and Treasurer respectively. At the AGM it was agreed to hold an open evening in hope of gaining new members. This meeting took place in August and new faces did attend with fundraising ideas. This is very important due to the 100 club being the only source of income in 2022. In September another meeting was held, and it was agreed to update the 100 club, increasing the ticket price significantly increased income. In May we agreed a request of £697.80 for electrical work inside the church. On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 we have £9166.31 in the bank and very much looking forward to holding more fund raising events in 2023. One event is Hereward's Last Stand Re-enactment to be held in October if we get funding and permission to use the land owned by the Parish Council at Holt Fen.

### ***St Georges Church- Gordon McGinley (Read by Cllr Hadley)***

Here we are reporting another year where it's been a privilege to have been able to be at this ancient church dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the cracks and sometimes rather chilly gatherings we continue to meet and celebrate. It's amazing to be able to gather where a place of prayer has been valid for around 600 years in this building. Of course, the marvellous font is still there ready for baptisms after being rescued from the river here many years ago. The old bell still rings out, donated by from the church at Ely Place in Holborn London. The building is a beautiful space for quiet contemplation both inside and out and is always open during daylight hours. We are also developing the outside space through a thoughtful Creation Care scheme. It's a place of peace, a visible presence in the village that we also share with bats and swifts, indeed this has been the norm for hundreds of years and is very special. But also, we appreciate both the historical building *and* the freedom we have to gather to worship here; always remembering that that is just *not* possible in many parts of the world. Alongside the regular monthly pattern of Sunday worship which is led by several local clergy and lay ministers, many groups meet here regularly. The Dragon Club with fascinating speakers, Pop in coffee time, Band practice for all sorts of musicians and singers, Brigade, for school age children, school assemblies, a music marathon, Friends of St Georges meetings and occasional special evening events such as talks, meals, celebrations, prayer times. All these you can find here, and a very warm welcome. So, at St Georges we report thankfully another year where we often gather in that lovely space, but always being aware that *we, the people* are the church, not the building. Each of us comes, just as we are to explore worship and to be encouraged to find out more as we journey along that mysterious path, we call faith. A faith where God invites each of us to know him for ourselves. Our contact details can be found at [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) and our postcode is CB6 3HA

### ***Feast Committee- Lisa Hadley (Read out by Cllr Durham)***

The Feast committee did not hold their annual Feast in 2022, instead they worked with the PC to organise the Queens Jubilee Village Celebrations over the 4-day weekend. Despite the weather, this was a success and whilst this was a free event for all activities, the BBQ did make a profit which was split between the Feast, the School, the Little Thetford Eagles football, the Village Hall and the Church. The Feast also worked with the Parish Council to again organise the Lt Thetford Christmas Light Switch on Event. Again, this proved to be very popular and was a free event for the village. The stage and lighting supplied by a third party added to the success. The cost of this event after the Parish Council donation was circa £1,500. The 2023 Village Calendar sales have not been as successful as previous years and it is felt that more people are moving to electronic calendars on their phones. We are taking a break for 2024 as a result. Total income after paying for the calendars is circa £200 so at least not a loss. Two Bert's Bingos were held in the year with the Social Club donating the proceeds to the Feast. This generated a healthy £718. The Feast this year donated to the Village Hall and was able to pay for the table tennis set up costs which proved to be popular throughout the summer. And as with previous years, the Feast covered the cost of replanting Bert's Garden through the year and its maintenance. This coming year the Feast are looking at adding a Trim Trail to the village. Whilst this is very much in the early stages of planning, it was a suggestion from the local community, and we are keen to see if it is achievable. We are delighted that the Parish Council have agreed to support the Feast Committee with this. We will also this year be doing a combined Feast/Kings Coronation celebration on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May. This will be a fund raiser for the Feast with the other organisations in the village given the opportunity to come and raise funds for themselves. We will have lots of activities on offer for all ages which will of course involve the traditional games including Tug of War, Bouncy Castles, BBQ, Bar, Refreshments, Competitions, Raffle, and the external stall holders offering up all manner of delights. We hope to have further events in the year – A Yard Sale at the end of August, Bert's Bingo and the Christmas Light Switch On. As always, we are keeping ourselves 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 rising costs, staffing and committee difficulties and low cohort numbers however, despite these challenges, our fantastic staff team have continued to provide the very best early years care to our cohort and their families. We were delighted to see our 2021-22 rising fives go off to 'big school' and to welcome in our new 2022-23 cohort and a new group of rising fives. Our cohort this year started off quite low, but we have had some new families join us and we are hopeful that our numbers will continue to rise. Our biggest challenge has been recruiting a committee. Unfortunately, at our AGM in October we found ourselves without a full committee, with only three of the previous year's committee staying on. Thankfully, after a plea to our parents for more members, we ended up with three additional committee members. We are extremely grateful to those parents who stepped up and have given up their time to help keep the preschool running. However, with such a small committee we haven't been able to do our normal level of fundraising activities. We are sadly about to say goodbye to one of our staff members who is going to be a TA at a local school. Although we are currently advertising a new staff member, recruitment has been increasingly difficult over the last few years, though this is a challenge faced across the whole early years sector and not one isolated to our setting. Last year we were lucky enough to get a new floor fitted throughout the preschool and get some new

furniture. To continue this revamp our committee took time out over the summer holidays to repaint the main room, so it was clean and fresh for the start of term. We have also had lots of staff training taking place to enhance the provision we can provide - our manager Gemma has been completing her Forest School training and our Deputy, Rachel, is currently undertaking a Level 3 SENCO course. We have really enjoyed rebuilding our strong relationship with the local community and the primary school post-covid. The children have been particularly enjoying visiting the recently revamped school library to look at the books and share a story with Mrs Walker, the reception teacher. As we go into the summer term, we are very excited to be thinking about the Coronation, Forest School in the sunshine, school transitions, sports day, and end of year parties. We continue to need the support of the community, whether that's with fundraising activities, joining our committee, or helping out with a bit of DIY or gardening. We would also really 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 is so important. 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 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 Collins-Neat)***

After two years of uncertainty, I write this year reflecting on a year where the school (and world) have returned to a sense of normality. School events have returned to what we remember pre-covid and it's been great for the school to be actively involved in the wider community in several ways. The school was delighted to take an active role in the light switch on again in December which was a fantastic event once again. I'm so pleased that the children can be part of the entertainment and also support the decorating of the trees as part of this lovely village event. In school we have lots to look forward to in the coming term and warmly invite the village community to be part of these upcoming events: Charity Day - Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, Sports Day – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June at 1.30pm and a Picnic Evening - Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July at 6.00pm. In addition to this we have a hugely exciting new circus event on the school field on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June. With two performances taking place on the school field at 4pm and 6pm, please do bring your friends and family along to this very exciting event. Looking ahead into the community, as a school we are very excited about the prospect of a community shop opening and very much hope the children can continue to plan an active role in this exciting and valuable development for the village. The school is due to join the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT) in September 2023. This isn't a decision that has been taken lightly by the governors, but we believe there are various benefits from becoming an academy and it is something that we feel will safeguard the future of the school for many years to come. It will though be essential that the school retains its identity and place at the heart of the community and the school will continue engaging and working with the community into the future. You may well be aware that I am leaving Little Thetford in July after 8 very happy and successful years at the school. I will reflect fondly of my time at the school and how I have worked alongside many different groups and people in the community offering lots of opportunities and excitement for the children at the school and the wider community. A huge heartfelt thanks to the parish council and other community groups and people who have supported the school during my time as headteacher. Little Thetford is a wonderful village which goes from strength to strength every year and tis very lucky to have so many people who care deeply about the village and its community.

***Little Thetford Brigade- Jane Dunseath (Delivered by Cllr Collins-Neat)***

The band has developed into Tuesday Night is Music Night! The Ukulele Band meets & enjoy practicing from 3.45pm for an hour. 6 or more & wanting to be part of the church's music, playing at services when possible. Other events on the calendar too (Cream Teas & Coronation Parade coming soon!) Thankyou to Rosie Downy for leading & teaching us & coming along with the music. The next half an hour two girls come along, with their mum to play recorders - though it opens to anyone. Very often Margaret Leeke comes in to practise on the organ using earphones in this time. By 5.15hrs its time for Band - open to all who wish to play or sing. Angela usually plays on the piano, Margaret on violin, Christine on clarinet or recorder, me on recorder & brass. Helen to sing & John to play or sing. Steve is hoping to join in on saxophone soon! We practise hymns & songs for the following Sunday & requests. Always open for whoever has time to come along. Michael usually gets along just in time at the Family Service. The Music Marathon in September was back by popular demand & went well. So much local talent. With such a busy Summer - we hope & plan to fix a date in September for this year. (This early in the school year limits the chance of the school joining in - but their summer term is busy enough anyway.) Special note - during the Winter we have coped with minimal heating to keep costs down - perhaps with the warmer weather more can be encouraged to come along. Wednesday morning coffee morning has been going steady - time enjoying laughter, chat - all sorts. Trying different foods - vegetarian haggis, real haggis, banana blossom, Bergamot Peel, halva, muffins with real French butter. Exchanging ideas. Discussion on the advantages of air fryers, knitting sheepdogs, making Easter bunnies, puppets in preparation for the Advent project, care of chickens, dogs, cats, elderly relatives & much more. A regular number of people come along - all ages & families pop in & visitors & the postman! Stan Martin has become the clock monitor & kindly replaced the radio-controlled clock (the previous one acquired by Bernadette failed beyond repair). As the weather improves the event will be outside whenever possible. Pop in started as a time preparing for the afternoon school collective assembly & Messy Church / Green house. It has developed into a valuable download time for people & always a way of welcoming people to St. George's. (Unfortunately, in the winter it can't be called a warm hub - just a warm welcome!) The dishwasher is a help with clearing things away - more help always welcome of course. It is with great delight that some of the clearing away time is setting up for school collective worship again.

The chair closes the meeting after no questions were asked.

**Close meeting: 8.27pm**

DRAFT