DRAFT

**ALDBOROUGH and THURGARTON**

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE MONDAY 24th MAY 2022**

**Present:** Cllr. R. Gadsby (Vice-Chair of Parish Council and Chair of Annual Parish Meeting)

**In attendance:** Parish Councillors: Cllr. T. Gibbons, Cllr. N. Mims

Parish Clerk: Mrs. S. Hayden

Representatives of: Village Care, Aldborough Players, Community Centre Committee, Aldborough Allotment Association; Greener Aldborough & Thurgarton, Village Fayre Committee; Stepping Stones; Christian Fellowship Art Group, Bridge Club

30 members of the public

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of 20TH May 2019 (Approval)**

The Parish Clerk read the minutes in précis. Proposed approval of the minutes. Resolved. They were then signed by the Chair.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

None

**3. REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN covering the activities of the Parish Council**

The Chair read out the report, which is annexed to these Minutes.

A member of the public requested that the minutes note the absence of four members of the Parish Council

**4. Reports from Village Organisations**

**4.1** **Village Care**

During the pandemic the role of Village Care changed, with a lot of collecting and delivering of prescriptions and delivering of the Village Magazine. The Village lunches had been restarted with fish and chips from Roughton, Aldborough School lunches and a home cooked meal alternating, so all are welcome to attend. The lunches were held on the first, second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, with 5th Tuesdays when they occurred. The price was £6 to £7 depending on courses. The transport scheme is up and running for lifts to, for example, doctors appointments. The table tennis table on the Green had been provided for the village with a legacy. The Village Walks had commenced and met on Wednesdays at 11am. Extend classes are held on Friday mornings. Village Care had worked with the Parish Council for Ukrainian refugees. One family were staying in the village. The food bank container is sited outside the Village Shop.

**4.2 Aldborough Players**

Only one production had been missed in the past year and the summer production had just finished. A murder mystery was proposed for the Autumn.

**4.3 Report by the Community Centre Committee**

A new Committee had been formed following the retirement of members of the old Committee. They had spent a year catching up on administration and had started a period of renovation, with a help from an NNDC Sustainable Communities Grant. There were new blackout blinds and a new noticeboard. Replastering and renovation of the bar was planned. A film night had been started, as well as other activities. The AGM would be on 7th June at 7pm.

**4.4 Allotment Association**

The AGM had been held the previous weekend, with the Treasurer, Chair and Secretary being re-elected. In 2004 there had been seventeen plots and these had gradually been divided up to increase the number, with one wildlife plot and no-one on the waiting list.

**4.5 Greener Aldborough & Thurgarton**

The group was launched in 2021 as an informal group for people and wildlife, replacing the former Gardening Club and Wildlife Club. The group holds walks and takes responsibility for the pond, surgery gardening and a wildlife allotment plot. Unfortunately, a planned film “Grow your Own” had been cancelled, but a talk by Kate Duggan of the Norfolk Coastal Partnership on dark skies had been held, as well as a tree walk, all well attended. There were more volunteers needed for the work on Scarrow Beck. There were more events planned. Over the past few months they had been involved in the plans for the pond and wished to make it clear they had not conducted a campaign against the Parish Council and had provided only factual information. A published risk assessment had raised fears about mowing a 4’ – 5’ area around the pond which was not acceptable. The lack of trust towards volunteers had tested goodwill. Both the pond and meadow area had been funded with grant money and had been established for wildlife and had become a haven. There was currently a biodiversity crisis and the UK was most depleted. Although we live in the countryside, it is being diminished. The group had sought NWT advice and attended meetings with ecologists. Agreement had not been reached between the Group and the Parish Council and they had just been informed a document would be prepared by a local landscape architect, liaising with both sides, so hopefully we can move forward and the pond could be saved from the mower. She thanked the village for their support.

**4.6** **Stepping Stones**

At the meeting in 2019 the fact that Stepping Stones was struggling with funding was shared and a sponsored walk was arranged in support, with the village getting behind Stepping Stones, including the Gardening Club. Following that, there were two great years of occupation, but who could forsee the pandemic? At that time there were 40 children, but due to birth rates dropping there will be 18 leaving in July, so just 12 will be left. That equates to 62% occupancy, but 70/73% is needed to secure the current funding. Stepping Stones will have to drop to 2/3 days per week, so there is talk of redundancies, although they would like to continue as at present through this blip. To resolve the problem, they have asked the School to take over and have looked at a private entity, although both would have the same problems. Savings are being used to try and get through the next couple of years. Thanks were given to two members of the public for organising the sponsored ride and also taking the children to the allotments for education

**4.7 Village Fayre**

The Fayre organiser thanked a member of the public for offering to help with the paperwork for the event, which was now all done, with the road closure applied for. There would be 40 stalls including tractors and combustion engines. Volunteers were needed to help setting up on 25th and early on 26th, especially for measuring and making out for stalls, etc. Any suggestions for activities were welcomed. This year there would be a new charity called “Wild Track” who would have two tents with small animals to handle. The Fayre would start at 12 noon on 26th June.

**4.8 Christian Fellowship Ladies Group**

The Group meet in the Chapel once a month between 2.30pm and 4pm. It was an ecumenical group and all were welcome whatever their faith or lack of faith. The next meeting was 28th June at 2.30pm.

**4.9 Art Group**

The Art Group meet on Wednesdays from 10am to 1pm in the Community Centre – all welcome.

**4.10 Bridge Club**

The Bridge Club meet on Tuesdays from 7 to 9pm in the Community Centre. Everyone welcome from novice to experienced – informal meetings

**4.11 Queen’s Platinum Jubilee**

The Chair outlined the arrangements for the Jubilee events – beacon lighting and picnic on the Green. Discussed.

**5. Public Questions, Representations and Discussions**

5.1 Would a tree be purchased to commemorate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee? Confirmed and that it would be discussed at a Parish Council meeting later in the year.

5.2 What was the future of the Village Magazine? The Chair explained that the current issue would be the last issue in its current form as the workload was too great to continue. Although calls had gone out for assistance in two issues, there had been no offers of help. Schools had been contacted to see if it could be used an educational project, but no offers had been received. Any offers of help would be welcomed and supported in a handover. In default there was a page in the Community & Church News for Aldborough & Thurgarton.

5.3 A member of the public explained he had been a parish councillor and was involved in the village

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Firstly, he was concerned about the withdrawal of the current BT ‘phone system as we know it, which would be removed in two years’ time. It is not known how it would affect Aldborough and he would ask the Parish Council to contact BT for someone to visit and give a talk. He understood the power would somehow come from the telephone exchange, so what happens if we lose power? He understood that there was talk of battery power for the vulnerable.

Secondly, he had an interest in the pond, in that it is part of surface water drainage for the village and at the current time the inlet and outlet appeared to be blocked with vegetation, which could cause flooding. He has written to NNDC who are responsible for the drainage maintenance in this specific area, as agreed under a past planning consent. There has been flooding in the lay-by and it had been suggested that the manway cover be replaced with a grille to enable the water to run away more easily.

Thirdly, he recalled there was a charity in Thurgarton called the John Bacon Trust and he wondered what had become of it. Another member of the public spoke to say she had been a joint trustee and had given the cheque book back to the last but one parish council secretary. At the time she used to ask at the doctors’ surgery for names of the most needy to benefit. She thought new trustee was needed. She would speak to the current trustee. It was suggested the paperwork may be in a cupboard in the Community Centre.

Fourthly, he felt the current nutrient neutrality requirements would affect the planning application for the pig farm. He had read through the 23 page letter sent by Natural England and felt it included agricultural development. He had written to Natural England and indicated that, but the application was the responsibility of NNDC. It was confirmed that NNDC are considering the application in that light. He felt that a site visit should also be arranged.

Fifthly, in connection with the current illegal parking on the Green, he had been researching the Town & County Planning Act. He explained that, in general, if an application were made to the Secretary of State for any part of the Green to be used for parking, there would have to be land offered in exchange. However, a local authority (either parish or district) could apply for 250 sq. yards for other use without an exchange of land. An application still had to be made to the Secretary of State, which would cost about £3,500 which could be easily raised. He commented that the parking bays were originally for visitors, but were now used by residents. The bays were originally part of the planning permission for the Community Centre.

Discussion followed on Green parking, BT phone change, pig farm application

5.4 A year ago materials were to be purchased by the Parish Council for filling in potholes. Further some residents had asked if they could repair their accessway, but had not received a satisfactory answer. The Chair confirmed she would raise this again but it had been difficult to find a storage space.

5.5 Pond: A question was raised about the date of a meeting between the Parish Council and retired landscape architect assisting in drawing up a management plan. Confirmed 9th June. A member of the public felt she was not happy with a reply the Clerk had made to an email from an ecologist who had sent a report to the Parish Council. She felt communication by the Parish Council had been poor. Another member of the public read out an email the Parish Council Chairman had sent to her, which she felt was not respectful. The Chair spoke about the pond history and assured the meeting that the Parish Council would listen to what was being said in connection with the pond. The relationship with the Parish Council was discussed.

Thanks were given to the Chair and there being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.