Edgefield Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting, held in the Village Hall, on

Monday 21st May 2018, at 7pm

Present: John Seymour (Chairman) Mark Cook

Emma Cletheroe Lin Pateman

Anne Harrup

Kirsty Cotgrove (Clerk) + 17 Parishioners

Alan Davies (Edgefield Community Orchard Project)

1. Chairman’s welcome and apologies for absence

JS welcomed everyone and apologies were accepted for Harrie Morshuis, Suzanne Longe, Steffan Aquarone (County Councillor) & Georgie Perry-Warnes (District Councillor).

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2017

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising

None.

4. Chair’s report

This is the Parish Council chairman’s report to the Edgefield Annual Parish meeting 2018 and covers the twelve months since the last annual parish meeting.

Housing.

The Broadland Housing Association development did not commence on site in late 2017 as expected. It has still not started as BHA has had to change some of the specifications leading to more planning applications. The application was submitted late in 2015 and after many changes was finally approved by the NNDC early in 2017 along with the other sites in the 'package' of five developments here and elsewhere. Of the 22 houses, 12 will be for rent at affordable levels. The delays have also been due to their chosen contractors being busy on other sites. There is a lot of construction in progress at the moment and builders are not as readily available as they may have been in the past. BHA has asked me to clarify a slightly misleading article in the news regarding the sale of more land in Edgefield by the NNDC to BHA for affordable housing. The article implies it has already taken place. BHA advise they have taken an option to buy the additional land but before anything else happens there will be a Housing Needs Survey to establish if there is sufficient need in the community for another development on top of the one already agreed. BHA is planning to hold a public meeting in the village later this year to gauge local opinion on a second development.

Speed Management.

Speeding continues to be a problem in the village. The Sam2 speed activated sign records speed data in addition to the visible warning to drivers. The data shows a majority of drivers do not exceed 33-34 mph as they pass the sign, whichever of the three positions it is located in. This changes at night or early morning when speeds are higher.

The Community Speed Watch teams actively monitor traffic and are able to target specific times by using the data collected from the Sam2 sign.

Village Pond

I hope you all agree how good the village pond looks. There are, of course, differing opinions about how it should look and the working parties under Anne Harrap’s guidance are conscious of the need to keep it in a condition that satisfies the majority. We do what we can to keep the Norfolk reed in check by removing the growing shoots maybe several times a year.

There are still some funds remaining for further dredging should it be necessary. Thanks as always to those who help with the work as well as those who maintain the grassed area so effectively.

Planning

As usual the Council has spent a fair amount of time looking at planning applications. There have been some interesting applications in the last year and fortunately nothing too contentious. Last year I mentioned our involvement with the Frimstone gravel extraction site at Stody. Although not in this parish it can impact us due to its location and the local road network. I am not aware of any infringements of their permitted road usage other than an occasion when their normal route was closed. We have been following the DONG, now named Orsted, proposal to run cables from their proposed offshore windfarm close to or through the village. Someone from the PC has attended every meeting they have arranged at the NNDC offices and elsewhere. The cable route Orsted have decided to pursue will affect the village the least although the booster station is still likely if they are successful with their application. The Vattenfall proposal for another windfarm off the coast further to the east has decided to use DC technology so will not need a booster station. Whether that will make their application more acceptable remains to be seen. The potential six acre 40’ high booster station building still exists for us and even though it will be in the next parish we continue to press for adequate screening and noise reduction measures.

Broadband and mobile phone signal.

Last year I reported that the Street and Chapel Hill are lagging behind the main part of the village in being able to receive fast broadband. We had hope this would be rectified in the last quarter of this year. It seems unlikely this will be on time and next year seems more likely – I hope I am wrong. We have no news on whether the Jubilee Playing Fields and/or the old Surveyors plot on Briston Road will be successful as a possible site for a mobile phone booster aerial.

Stody Estate Permissive Path.

As you will all know the main part of the pathway closed at the end of January as a result of the countryside stewardship scheme coming to an end and the loss of the subsidy Stody Estate was receiving. We worked with Briston, Melton, Stody with Hunworth and Briningham parish councils to see if there was any way we could fund keeping the pathways open. Edgefield was generally supportive but the largest parish, Briston, voted against any support as did Melton. Further discussions with Stody Estate with Stody with Hunworth and Briningham parish councils have resulted in the two dog walking areas being kept open as well as a few of the paths. Edgefield has applied to Norfolk County Council for Turkey Lane/Limekiln Lane to be added to the definitive map of public rights of way as there is evidence its status as a public right of way has never been revoked. We wait to see if this will be successful.

Finally

This winter potholes were worse than ever. We continue to advise the NCC and generally their response has been reasonable. A suggestion to develop a map indicating ownership of land adjacent to ditches, roads and footpaths didn’t happen in the last 12 months but is an idea still to be aimed for. The new regulations on data privacy have created a lot of work for Kirsty and we are very grateful to her. During the year Ian Ross retired from the Cottage Trust and the Fuel Fund Trust. The council nominated Suzanne Longe to the Cottage Trust and Jeremy Goldney to the Fuel Fund Trust. Unfortunately, we no longer have a PCSO since the posts were terminated.

The number of parishioners attending our meetings continues to improve but more would be welcome.

I would like to express my thanks to my fellow Councillors, our new county councillor Steffan Aquarone and our district Councillor, Georgina Perry Warnes.

Lin Pateman joined us to replace Eric Earnshaw who was a councillor for 12 years.

Most of all I thank our clerk Kirsty Cotgrove.

5. To note reports from village organisations

The following reports were noted:

1. Edgefield Tuesday Club (Catherine Witts) – The Tuesday Club has continued to meet on the first Tuesday of each month (except August) to hear a variety of speakers, including Liz Scott from Blickling Hall, Simon Kinder on ‘The Gresham Spies’ and Joan Latta on living with cerebral Palsy. Each meeting is attended by between 18 and 30 members. In December Anne Walker resigned as Chairwoman after many years stalwart service, and Shelagh Barber and Ghislaine Kinsley also resigned, so we now operate with a much-reduced committee; Vera Stolworthy continuing as Treasurer and Catherine Witts taking over as Chairwoman, aided by Dawn Hulbert. This year Dawn has done a great job sourcing ‘local talent’ for our speakers, including Rey Major (photos of the Galapagos & the Arctic), Jackie Lambert (decorating eggs), Jim Frost & Jackie Cole (police reminiscences). Our refreshments are provided by our members, taking turns to serve us lovely cakes. Each meeting is advertised at the Village Hall and you are welcome to attend one or two a year without joining us.
2. Village Hall (JimFrost) – The Village Hall continues to go from strength the strength. Bookings continue to increase, which can only be good for the continued success of the Hall. Whilst it increases our revenue stream, it does of course mean that the running costs of the Hall increase, with larger fuel and cleaning bills. The new sound equipment which was installed last year is beginning to bear fruit, with more and more visiting speakers using it for their talks and demonstrations. We had our usual four events over the last twelve months and our next bash is Edgefest 3, to be held on Saturday 30th June. The function will include food, a licensed bar and a return of the ever popular Honky Tonks from Briston all for £10 per head. My only disappointment is that we are rarely if ever supported by members of the Parish Council. It would be lovely if some or all of you could put in an appearance at Edgefest!
3. Home Watch (Jim Frost) - Although our quarterly meetings have ceased to exist, I still attend the quarterly SNAP meetings at Holt on behalf of Edgefield. Thankfully, crime in this area is almost non-existent, but I ensure that I am kept fully up to date on local matters through the receipt of the local crime bulletins.
4. Friends of Edgefield (Richard Brooks) – The Friends of Edgefield have had no requests for grants from anybody in the Parish this year. The funds remain on deposit in a bank and are earning precious little interest. Anybody who might need help on a Parish matter should contact me or one of our small committee.
5. Cottage Trust (John Seymour)– We had another vacancy this year when Dina Wright moved into Holt. The trustees are very pleased to report that Chloe Hagon has moved into Cottage 2. Funds are in good order and we carry out repairs as and when necessary. The drains continue to be problematic and a proposed scheme is being discussed. Current Trustees are Dawn Hulbert, Angela Turner, Irene Allsop, Suzanne Longe and myself. Two trustees are nominated by the Parish Council. The remainder are co-opted. This year Ian Ross retired as a Trustee and was replaced by Suzanne Longe as a nominated trustee.
6. Jubilee Playing Field (John Seymour) - Although a separate charity the parish councillors are the trustees and matters relating to the field are discussed at the monthly parish meeting. This year we had a fly tipping incident and the probable culprit was identified by paperwork in the rubbish. The incident is being handled by the NNDC. General rubbish continues to be an issue at the Playing Field and we are grateful to the parishioners who remove and dispose of it for us all. Mike Sillis continues to cut the margins of the field during the growing season as well as a diagonal cut from the car park area to Lime Kiln Lane. The remainder is cropped for hay by Mike Sillis who does not charge us for the grass cutting or for hedge cutting. We are very grateful to him. We are also most fortunate to have a regular donation from a local resident. A proposal from the Edgefield Community Orchard team for an orchard on part of the playing field will be made this evening.

6. JS welcomed Alan Davies to the meeting. Alan introduced the group, and the background the project, with inspiration taken from a project in Buckinghamshire ([**www.adstockistan.com**](http://www.adstockistan.com)**)**. The Jubilee Playing Field site was shown on a map, with a little of the history explained, mainly its sports groups and the Trust information. The main issue surrounding the project is the objective in the trust document that states the land is in trust to be used as a playing field for physical exercise, in particular for under 25s, to improve conditions of life. The uses of the site over the last 20 years were outlined. The changes in population and age demographics were covered.

The proposed use as a community orchard was shown, with a possible layout to allow for an orchard and a full-sized football pitch. The benefits of a community orchard were detailed, along with how it would work; e.g. people would ‘adopt’ a tree for £20, then could help to tend the orchard. Other sources of possible funding were discussed, along with how it would be progressed with a steering group and working parties.

Alan asked for people to register their interest at [**edgefieldcommunityorchard@gmail.com**](mailto:edgefieldcommunityorchard@gmail.com)**,** and if there is enough interest, the trustees will need to decide whether to approach the Charity Commission for permission to change the objectives of the Trust.

A number of questions were asked, including: Will an apple press be purchased in the long term? (yes), could the site layout be changed around to allow for a better quality sports field (yes). Concern was raised about the potential of vandalism at the site, as this was an issue when there was a football pitch there. The full history of ownership and the trust was given, clarifying that the original trust was made in 1936, and amended by the Government in 1998.

There was a discussion surrounding potential future costs for grass cutting and hedge cutting should the orchard take on part of the field. Currently, grass cutting and hedge cutting is done free of charge by Mike Sillis, who takes a crop of hay from the site. Should the site size reduce, it may no longer be cost effective for him to do this. A Parishioner asked if the project would come at a cost to the Parish? It is hoped that there will be no cost to the Parish as a whole. The potential of difficulty in finding volunteers to maintain the orchard was discussed, along with other possible sites. The danger of damage to the trees by deer, squirrels and rabbits was discussed, with it being accepted that it would be very expensive to fence deer away from it.

It was agreed that the group will attempt to contact members of the Parish to gauge reactions.

JS thanked Alan Davies for coming.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8pm.