

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Assembly of Chalgrave held on Tuesday April 28th, 2015 at the Memorial Hall, Tebworth at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr. Phil Parry (Chairman); Cllr. Ken Green; Cllr. Debbie Hampson; Cllr. Roger Mence; Cllr. Daniel Osborn; Cllr. Mike Wells; Cllr Paul Whitton ; Clerk Lesley Smith.

Also present: Mr Andrew Selous; Ward Cllr. Mark Versallion.

Representatives from:

Community Heartbeat: Mr Martin Fagan
Sports Club; Mr. Roger Burden
All Saints Church, Chalgrave; Mr Steve Calder
Chalgrave Senior Citizens' Committee; Mr Roger Fenwick
Chalgrave News; Mr Roger Parker
The Queen's Head; Mr Colin Edwynn
Chalgrave WI; Mrs Debbie Parry

Public present: 38

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

PCSO Hannah Retallack; Mr. Roger Masters.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH ASSEMBLY-APRIL 22nd, 2014

Signed as correct by the Chairman.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed residents and introduced the council members and explained their roles within the council. He also introduced guests Martin Fagan, Andrew Selous, Cllr Mark Versallion and Steve Calder. Cllr Parry then gave a brief summary of the Parish Council's activities over the past year. the full report is at the end of these minutes.

Cllr Parry ended his report by thanking Cllr Mence for all his hard work over the past 10 years he has served the council. Cllr Mence will still be involved with the Defibrillator Scheme.

4. REPORT FROM MR ANDREW SELOUS

Mr Selous commented that it was good to see so many people at the Assembly. He is not an MP at the moment as Parliament has been dissolved. However he still remains Minister for Prisons, Probation and Rehabilitation. He is standing as a parliamentary candidate in the forthcoming elections.

a) Schools

- Funding for Bedfordshire schoolchildren has increased to £152 per pupil
- Several schools have received good Ofsted ratings e.g. Vandyke Upper School and Brooklands Middle School, both in Leighton Buzzard

b) Colleges

- Central Bedfordshire College in Dunstable is being rebuilt
- Colleges in Bedfordshire are receiving investment

c) Jobs. There is good job creation in Bedfordshire

d) Health

- Mr Selous commented that it was great for Chalgrave Parish to have the defibrillator. It is important as every second counts in saving a life.
- Mr Selous is pressing for GP surgeries to carry out minor operations
- He stressed the importance of obtaining more facilities
- Luton and Dunstable hospital is due for a £150 million expansion

e) Police

Mr Selous is very unhappy with the current modelling for policing in Bedfordshire. He wants to put police stations back in places like Leighton Buzzard and Houghton Regis. He approves of the proposed 15.8% increase for the police precept so that the force can have 100 extra officers which he wants locally based.

f) Housing

Mr Selous confirmed that houses will be built north of Houghton Regis up to the new A5-M1 link road. Developers have contributed £45 million towards the cost of the road

g) Transport

Mr Selous has taken up the issue of the reduction in the bus service for residents of Tebworth and Wingfield with Central Bedfordshire Council. He will try to get the timetables changed

h) Broadband

Whipsnade and Hockliffe have not been upgraded to superfast broadband yet and this is not due until 2017. He will keep pressing to obtain it sooner.

i) Solar Farm, Chalgrave Manor

Mr Selous asked if the Parish Council had a financial deal with the developer of the solar farm. Cllr Parry replied that it was possible although some money might go to Central Bedfordshire Council

j) MP's Surgeries

If re-elected Mr Selous will be holding surgeries at The Queen's Head or The Plough

5. DEFIBRILLATOR-Mr Martin Fagan

Mr Fagan explained that there is 5 minutes to do something to save someone's life if they suffer a cardiac arrest. He went on to explain what cardiac arrest was. Chest compressions and the defibrillator help to keep them alive. He thanked Central Bedfordshire Council and the Luton and Bedfordshire Fire Service and Rescue for initiating and sponsoring the Defibrillator Scheme. Mr Fagan then gave a brief demonstration of how the defibrillator works. Now that the Chalgrave defibrillator is registered he will be arranging a date for an awareness session for those Chalgrave residents who are interested.

6. REPORT FROM WARD COUNCILLOR MARK VERSALLION

Cllr Versallion is the uncontested candidate for Heath and Reach Ward. He represents seven parishes within that ward including Chalgrave. He has attended 100% of CBC meetings.

a) Council Tax

CBC is committed to 0% increase in council tax and has absorbed a lot of the costs it has had to save.

b) Education.

CBC has achieved much regarding schools and education. There has been improvement in the Ofsted ratings and also in the GCSE results. CBC has invested in schools by refurbishing and building new schools.

c) Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

CBC spent £100,000 to prevent Travellers moving on to land they owned on Miletree Road, Heath and Reach. It was a controversial case but successful and other local authorities can use it as a case study.

d) Buses

Cllr Versallion is disappointed about the cutbacks. He explained that the Tebworth and Wingfield service was funded by central government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund but that has now ceased. CBC is now trying to find economical ways of providing public transport.

e) A5-M1 Link Road

Cllr Versallion stated that fewer vehicles will travel through Tebworth and Wingfield once the road is built.

f) New Homes

Cllr Versallion confirmed that no houses will be built north of the A5-M1 link road. However every few years central government has to find places for people to live so he is sceptical about the robustness of the Green Belt. CBC is not in complete control of development in our constituency consequently he believes there should be a change in the law.

A resident pointed out that no new timetable for the local buses had been put out. Cllr Versallion had a copy with him if residents wanted to see it. Cllr Wells expressed disappointment that the Parish Council was not informed of the changes to the bus service. Cllr Versallion replied that there was a lack of communication between CBC and the PC and CBC should focus now on finding a way of funding the service.

7. POLICE REPORT

The total number of crimes within Chalgrave is down by 8% this financial year compared to last year. However burglary is up by 53.6%. Cllr Parry reminded residents to lock outbuildings and not to leave car keys near to a back or front door. He also commented the rural crime had increased.

8. SPORTS CLUB REPORT by MR ROGER BURDEN

Mr Burden explained that the club tries to provide facilities for Chalgrave Parish. The club is trying to promote other sports and organise some golf. More cricket players are needed.

a) The Cricket League. The League season begins on Sunday, May 3rd. There is a small league cricket ground on Hill Close and it is looking good at the moment.

b) Sports Pavilion. Due to generous donations the Sports Club can buy its own club house which is due to be erected in September 2015. The old club house will be demolished.

c) Race Night takes place on May 9th, 2015 at the Memorial Hall. There will be a bar and Fish and Chip supper.

d) 10/10 Cricket Match. This will take place on June 28th, 2015 and four teams will take part. It is an all-day event with a barbeque, safe children's area and bar.

e) New Chairman. Roger has stood down and Phil Parry has taken over as Chairman.

9. REPORT from THE PLOUGH by CLLR WELLS

a) New Landlord and Landlady. Chris and Caroline Ross have been in the pub for eight weeks. Both new and old customers are visiting. They are very keen to become involved in the community and have volunteered space on the premises for collecting old computers for the Tech-Recycle scheme.

b) Events. The pub hosted a Psychic Evening recently.

- A Quiz Night is held every fortnight on a Sunday

- A Ukulele band plays at lunch time every 3rd Wednesday of the month
- Monday nights are Crib Night
- Thursday nights cards and dominoes are played
- The pub will host a Classic Car and Beer Festival on Sunday, July 19th, 2015

c) Menu. Changes to the menu are being made using local produce if possible.

10. CHURCH REPORT by MR STEVE CALDER

- a) **History of All Saints** is a Grade I listed church. Its consecration is recorded as taking place in 1219. The register dates from the year 1539. The interior also features a faded wall paintings featuring various saints.

There are effigies of knights, the most important knight being Nigel Loring who was the first Knight of the Garter. The church was built for the Lords of Chalgrave Manor and was for their sole use rather than as a parish church. It would have been influenced by the Priory at Dunstable with priests coming from there to take services and offer spiritual direction to the Lords of the manor. Some estate workers may have used the church, but unlikely. Villagers in Tebworth and Wingfield would have used a Chapel of Ease which is now lost. The Methodists built a chapel in Tebworth in the 1800s and that is why most of the villagers were chapel rather than Anglican. After the reformation the church would have been left in a bad state of repair and as the manor declined so did the church.

The church's patron was the Dean and staff of Trinity College Cambridge who also owned lots of land round about (hence College farm in Wingfield and Trinity Farm on the A5 at Tilsworth). It was the tithes from the land which paid for the church's priest, which the patron chose, and the upkeep of services and building. Mr Calder is not sure when Trinity College ceased to be patron and the diocese took over but he presumes it would be around 100 years ago. In Victorian times the church was used in the summer months only and left unused in the winter. This led to serious decay. About 30 years ago the roof was repaired and a group of local people spent a lot of their own money making things useable again. The diocese wanted to close the church and hand it over to the Church's Trust, but the congregation fought hard to keep it and promised to support it financially. In return the diocese provided an unpaid priest to take Sunday services, and that is how it was until the Benefice was formed in 1998 and Toddington and Chalgrave came together to share a paid full time priest.

- b) **Income.** The church survives only on the income it generates. The Parish share is paid out of Congregational giving. The church costs £27,000 a year to run including fully paying our Parish share. That is equivalent to £74 a day. The congregational giving is equivalent to £32 per day, less than half of what is needed to fully function. The church is reliant on grants, donations, fundraising, weddings and funerals to raise the extra £42 a day. Currently they contribute £22 a day leaving the church with a £20 a day shortfall.

Mr Calder ended by asking people to join and to encourage others to give support to the church to keep it functioning for future generations.

11. CHALGRAVE MEMORIAL HALL REPORT by CLLR GREEN

Cllr Green thanked the PC for its continued support and to everyone who uses the hall. He said the running costs were high but generally speaking the cost to parishioners was very cheap.

- a) **Bookings.** There are regular users e.g. the WI and PC as well as weddings and funerals etc.
- b) **Maintenance.** The hall need some improvements. Time has been spent on the garden and the front of the hall.

- c) **Defibrillator.** The hall hosts the defibrillator. It is located on the left hand side of the front window.
- d) **Vandalism.** There have been some incidents recently. Cllr Green asked residents to report suspicious behaviour.
- e) **The Chalgrave Games** will take place on Saturday June 27th, 2015. The theme is Medieval.

12. SENIORS CITIZENS' COMMITTEE REPORT by MR ROGER FENWICK

The Senior Citizen's Committee is small but there are many people who are involved in helping. Currently it gives Christmas presents and birthday cards to Senior Citizens. A Christmas lunch is organised annually at Parkfields School, Toddington. The Committee tries to hold a special event periodically. Mr Fenwick ended by informing residents that Toddington and Area Helping Hands is available if, for example, transport is needed.

13. CHALGRAVE NEWS REPORT by MR ROGER PARKER

The Chalgrave News has had another good year. It is circulated free of charge on a quarterly basis to about 225 homes within Chalgrave. Its aim is to take a light-hearted look at village life with coverage of local events and politics.

- a) **Contributors.** The News is grateful to its regular contributors who provide the News with interesting articles. Recently the News received an article written by the daughter of a Chalgrave parishioner who lost his life in World War 2. The news is also keen to discover more about the other eleven men from Chalgrave who died during the two World Wars.
- b) **Contributions to the News.** Mr Parker asked residents for more contributions such as births, marriages, deaths and arrival of new residents. A brief email is all that is necessary, ideally with a photograph. The News Team will then write a short piece.
- c) **Advertising.** The News is largely supported by advertising. Roger asked that if residents use the services of the companies who are advertising to let them know that they found them in the News.
- d) **Fundraising.** Printing costs have increased by 18% over the past year. However the recent Quiz Night covered the increase and was enjoyed by everyone who took part. It also allowed the News to keep its advertising rates the same for another year. However donations and sponsorship of a regular feature would be much appreciated.

14. REPORT from THE QUEEN'S HEAD by MR COLIN EDWYNN

Mr Edwynn wished to publically thank everyone who helps to keep the pub going many of whom were present this evening.

15. BOOK CLUB REPORT read by CLLR PARRY

Cllr Parry read the report by Mrs Noeleen Thompson.

The Book Club is in its 13th year and meets every four to six weeks taking it in turns to host the meeting and provide coffee and biscuits. A fair amount of time is spent reviewing the book just read but a wide range of other subjects are also discussed and it is an opportunity for a relaxing chat. The club is attended enthusiastically. Even though a couple of members have moved away they still travel some distance to meet up.

The pre-Christmas lunch was in November and was at The Birch, Woburn again. In December Douglas Watkinson gave the club a talk about his experiences as an author and playwright. He has written for 'Midsommer Murders' and has three books currently in print, his latest being 'Haggard Hawk'.

The club comprises eleven members who have read some interesting books over the year, some good, some not so good. The latest has been the best seller 'Gone Girl' which evoked a mixed reaction from the members.

16. WI REPORT by MRS DEBBIE PARRY

Chalgrave WI has been running for four years and has 35 members. Meetings are every 2nd Tuesday of the month, usually at the Memorial Hall. There have been a variety of activities including clay pigeon shooting, fashion and beauty, making Christmas wreaths and decorations and learning survival techniques. A paranoid schizophrenic gave a talk to members which was both moving and funny. Trips included Milton Keynes Theatre to see Grease and trying on dresses for Ascot which involved lots of Prosecco drinking.

New members are always welcome. Chalgrave WI is now on Facebook and Twitter.

17. MATTERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

None.

18. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT PARISH ASSEMBLY

To be arranged for April 2015.

Formal meeting closed at 20.50

The public were then offered refreshments and given the opportunity to talk to cllrs and guests.

Signed by Chairman..... Dated.....