

## CLAYPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 6.30pm in the village hall.

**Present:** Councillors: J Freeman (Chairperson), P Furey, D Flinders, Alice Maggs and C Clarke, the parish council clerk. There were three members of the public in attendance.

The meeting had been arranged at short notice and had been advertised on the website, facebook and the noticeboard. Due to coronavirus restrictions an Annual Parish meeting had not been held in 2020, but face to face meetings could now resume.

Cllr Freeman welcomed all to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence. Although this is not a parish council meeting it was chaired by Cllr Freeman.

The Chairperson's report was presented, this being the only formal part of the evening. This is a review of the Councils work during the last year and also looks forward to the year ahead. Questions were welcomed. This report will be placed in the newsletter and on the website and facebook page.

The Chairperson commented that there were two vacancies on the parish council and these will be advertised in the usual manner.

Copies of the unaudited accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 were available to take away and questions were answered. These showed a total final balance to carry forward to 2021/22 of £68651.

There were three major areas of work during the year.

- Community Park- the council will be promoting the use of the community park. The MUGA (multi use games area) should have been formally opened during 2020 but the coronavirus pandemic had prevented this.
- Cemetery and Garden of Remembrance- a contemplative area is being planned and designs are being prepared for consideration. Notices with a variety of useful information will also be displayed at the entrance, the type of display board is yet to be decided.
- Neighbourhood Plan- a survey has taken place and a draft document is being prepared by a working party of residents in the village. The agreed plan will then be voted on and adopted. This will be a statutory policy document which SKDC will have to take into account when considering planning and other matters.

Parishioners questions: Concern was expressed about the number of houses being proposed by developers,- Larkfleet 74, Platform Housing 16 affordable homes and 30 plus off Osterfen Lane. The amount and speed of traffic is also a concern. Community Speed action had restarted in Long Bennington (voluntary group with a speed indicator device) and it was suggested that the speed sign in the village could be changed to a different location.

It was also noted that there would be a large number of construction vehicles on Shire Lane due to the development of Fernwood- 1800 houses in 3 phases. The first phase is for 840 houses and the council will try to ensure that there is good traffic management on Shire Lane so that there is minimum disruption to residents travelling in and out of the village.

It was agreed that the format for the annual meeting in 2022 will be reviewed once pandemic restrictions are completely lifted and life and council business can resume pre-pandemic.

Members of the public were thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Chair's report 2021

This has been a difficult year for everyone because of COVID. Including the Parish Council.

After a successful pioneering Parish meeting held in 2019, nothing was possible in 2020.

The past year has been one of virtual meetings, something we had to get used to – and thanks to those who joined us.

**Changes in councillors** – welcomed two new councillors earlier this year:

Alice Maggs

Darryl Flinders, both of whom have begun to make their mark

They replaced Jaqy Harrington Halstead, and Gillian Bignall, a long serving member of the council.

Recently two councillors have stood down:

John Briggs who has been a councillor for 5/6 years has indicated that he will stand down after the meeting next week. John has always been a stolid supporter of improving Claypole's amenities. I first came to know John when he volunteered to help us develop the Community Park

Claire Simmonds, who was also our chair. Chair has served the council for decade, working tirelessly on behalf of the council and the Claypole community. To me, she was a valuable ally in making the council more efficient and ensuring that we are engaged with the community – our residents and local organisations. She shared my view that the council was of no relevance unless it was a doing council, working to improve our village environment and provide the services we need.

Claire tendered her resignation because of the pressures of her working role. Her contribution will be sadly missed by all of us and we wish her and her family every good wishes.

**We will soon be advertising for two vacancies, and welcome anyone who is willing to work on behalf of the community to come forwards. I would welcome a discussion with anyone who wants to know more of what is involved. I would also draw attention to the council's present make up – just one woman, and an age profile that reflects who has time to contribute but is rather at the senior end of things! Please look out for our notice.**

Covid not only impacted on our meetings but on what we have been able to do.

We started last year in anticipation that the new MUGA, largely funded by FCC Communities, would be opened by August. Covid impacted on labour and materials, and then we had to wait for dry weather to come back before the new surface could be applied. However, we now have an excellent new Multi-use Games area [MUGA] – providing opportunities for five aside football, netball, basket ball practice and tennis. It is available to all 7 days a week, day times and evenings when the new flood lights can be used.

On our sports facilities generally, the PC came to the view early last year that the Community Park should be managed to provide an income to support its maintenance. We have been greatly assisted by Chris Simmonds who has taken on the role of voluntary Community Park manager and controls the Community Park website and booking system.

At present we are working on the basis that while any Claypole resident can turn up and use whatever amenities are available free of charge, if you want to guarantee your timed slot there will be a charge. A 50% reduction for Claypole residents. Fees are also charged for clubs. We have just one adult football club – Claypole FC, and the junior football club – AFC Brazil, playing Wednesdays and weekends. Claypole and Beckingham cricket clubs will return to play next year. But we would welcome more use of the sports field. Note there are no womens teams of any sport at present, and we would love to encourage anyone who wants to start up a new team or new sport.

Our current Community Park priority is to provide showers and changing rooms for hire by sports clubs and MUGA users. Again, Covid has impacted on the availability of grant funding. However we hope to have raised enough money to have a new building in place later in 2022. In the meantime, we are hiring some portable toilets and shower rooms to avoid the spectacle of the footballers getting changed on a frosty touchline from September onwards.

Just a note to anyone with a business. We can now offer advertising opportunities around the sports field. All money raised will go directly to maintain and improve Community Park facilities. Please see Cathy or myself or look for details of how to support the park on the Community Park website

We are also planning improvements at the Parish Council cemetery – that is the cemetery beyond the parish church. Including putting place a notice board so the ownership of the cemetery is known and people can readily see who to contact and what regulations govern the cemetery. We plan improvements to the rough area near to the church wall to create a seating and contemplative area. We have been offered some design help free of charge from a leading garden designer, and we will be seeking grant funding to get the work done.

The final area of work I want to mention is around planning. The more we try to make Claypole a better and nicer place, the more developers think this is the place to build more houses. There are some things we can do little about. Proposals to expand Fernwood by building 1800 homes across the bottom of Claypole Lane will impact hugely on Claypole in many ways – some may be positive, like the provision of amenities, but other less so as it threatens our village identity, impacts hugely on our travel in and out, and increasing the volume of traffic through the village.

We have made significant representations to SKDC in respect of planning approvals sought by Platform Housing and Larkfleet homes that would together increase the size of the village by almost 20% and which seems quite contrary to the DC's Local Plan.

We recognise that to shape the village in the way we, as a community, want – although we all don't share exactly the same vision – means that the Parish Council need to be able to fully engage in planning decisions, indeed to steer development to meet our housing and other needs. We have started the process to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. It is a lengthy process that started with a survey early this year, and which will involve a lot of work by a steering group of residents ably led by Andy Hey. There will be further consultations with the community so we can all have our say before a final plan is produced and put to a vote among residents. We are hoping the plan will be formally adopted later next year. My thanks go to everyone involved in the steering group – Bridget Rosewell, Pauline Laxton, David Coxe, Alice Maggs and Andy Hay.

Finally, I want to thank our clerk, Cathy. And her unofficial assistant Ernie. Cathy is of course employed by the Parish Council on a part time basis, but none of us are under the illusion that Cathy's time is limited to her official hours. Everything you do Cathy is very much appreciated.