

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL AGM

Monday 11TH May in Drinkstone Village Hall Minutes

Present

Cllrs Clarke (Chairman), S. Cousins, C. Harbutt, C. Munford, T. Moss, P. Nolan, SCC/MSDC Cllr P. Otton, H. Riches, D. Ford, S. Foulsham, S. Beswick and sixteen residents.

1 – Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Cllr Evans and the Police

2 – Declarations of Interest

None

3- Chairman's Report 2014/2015

Cllr Adrian Clarke gave his report as follows:

This year has been a difficult one following the resignation of Moira Goldstaub and the resignation of our longstanding Parish Clerk, Sharon Rose. The transition was made a little easier by Sharon offering to stay on for a short while until a replacement could be found. After a while we were in a position to have a choice of Clerk nothing to choose between them except that Kirsteen Friel had attended meetings and expressed a genuine desire to try her hand at being a Parish Clerk.

Kirsteen was however, only able to be clerk for a short while as her work commitments changed and we were left without a Clerk once more. Subsequent re advertising failed to yield any suitable application or re application and so we have been without a full time Clerk for the year. We were lucky enough to have a Clerk, Doug Reed, from Rattlesden offer his services in the form of advice and preparation of minutes which has been a help but sadly he could not be persuaded to take the role full time and will attend only the next Parish Council meeting.

I have, very recently, been contacted by a lady who feels that she would like to take up the position of Parish Clerk. I did advise her of the fact that we were going to have an election and that I would pass on her details to the new council for their consideration.

We did of course, also a vacancy for a Parish Councillor which was advertised extensively for some time which saw two, and only two, applicants and after having secured the services of Doug, the council appointed Barry Evans to fill the position left by Moira Goldstaub.

It has been quiet and stable on the planning front over the past year with the usual extensions and conversions and hopefully the same will apply for the foreseeable future.

Another issue which hung over from the previous year was that of the Parish noticeboard. After a short settling in period, the council decided that a new board was needed and promptly set about selecting a supplier and placing the order. Of course, criticism ensued, but, the board came from a well proven manufacturer of noticeboards and is of a proven design that should stand up to the rigours of its environment for many years to come. Its installation, though delayed for various reasons, came just in time for our Parish election and the masses of associated notices.

The old notice board was to have been examined with a view to possible restoration for use elsewhere in the village by a joinery company which has sadly restructured to a form that is unable to accommodate this type of work at the present time. The owner of that company had suggested that I would be able to undertake the work in my workshop which I was considering, however, recent events have caused me to reconsider and the board will be returned to any nominated member of the council or its original position whilst they consider its future.

Footpaths haven't been the subject of too much criticism this year except for the short stretch behind the church which had become overgrown with brambles and was promptly cleared. Generally, they remain well used and in good condition. Councillor Munford will elaborate in greater detail shortly.

Three councillors decided not to stand for election this year, Paul Nolan, Barry Evans and Tim Moss who have been councillors for varying lengths of time and their contribution is I'm sure appreciated. Paul and Barry will continue to be involved in the Cheese wedge project for as long as they feel able.

4 – Cllr Otton's Report.

Cllr Penny Otton gave her report
See appended report.

5 – Police Report

No report received by date of meeting.

6 – Open Forum

There were no questions.

7 – Finance

Cllr Sue Cousins gave her report for the year 2014 – 2015 as follows:

The Budget for the Financial Year, in this case 2014 – 2015, has to be discussed in earnest at our December Meeting because the amount of Precept we decide on has to be signed off at our January Meeting.

Therefore, at our January Meeting 2014 we set the Precept at £3,297.00 and were to receive a Council Tax Support Grant of £25 from Mid Suffolk. Not the

inflation-busting increase we have been accused of. The Band D rate increased by £2.86 over the whole year, a rise of 24p per month.

Taking out the Allotment figure we started the year with a total of £3,940 in our Santander Current and Deposit Accounts.

All figures I quote will be net of VAT.

The Annual SALC Subscription, which is one of the first Invoices to be paid in any new Financial Year increased to £221, £5 up on last year, this had been budgeted for.

The next service to increase in price was the cost of emptying 5 dog bins and 3 waste bins up from £145 to £185, an increase of £40 in order to make Mid Suffolk's charges in line with Babergh District Council. This had been budgeted for.

-£287 was saved on the Clerk's Salary. Sharon, our Clerk for 10 years, retired in July. The post was filled from September but alas, for only 2 months. Councillor's took and typed the Minutes for 2 months and from January the Rattlesden Clerk has attended to take and type up the Minutes; unfortunately Thursday will be his final Meeting.

Except for the Minutes, and he even took and produced these one month, our Chairman has undertaken all responsibilities since Sharon left.

£41 has been saved on Stationery, stamps and ink due mainly to the continual use of e mails and expenses not being claimed for.

VAT increased from £71 to £313 made up entirely by the purchase of the Parish Council Notice Board to replace one which was very badly weather damaged and would not stand another winter. It was bought in commemoration of the 1st World War, standing alongside the Village Hall, itself a memorial to the 1st World War. The Notice Board is the Parish Council's official site for displaying notices and making announcements e.g. Agenda's, Minutes, Finances and anything to do with your Parish and District Councils.

This was by far the largest payment of the year less £300 from Councillor Penny Otton's Locality Budget, the cost was £891.

£200 had been budgeted for Courses and Publications. £98 was spent on a Training Course and a copy of 'Local Council Administration' which contains all Rules and Regulations for Local Government was purchased at a cost of £76. A total of £174, saving £26.

Insurance was renewed in September, this time with a 5 year Policy which can be amended at any time. The annual cost will be £361, £420 was budgeted.

Last year the Village voted to keep the 'Cheese Wedge'. With the help of dedicated volunteers the site has been cleared of debris, the only charge incurred was £25.

Playing Field Maintenance was budgeted at £250, only £70 was spent.

Cutting the Grass on the Playing Field from 1st April to 31st September cost £500 against the budget of £535.

During February and March members of the V H Committee, the Parish Council and residents of Drinkstone discussed ways of raising funds to buy a Defibrillator Case. It did not take long to raise £407 from donations which appear in the Parish Council Accounts 2014 – 2015. Councillor Otton very kindly gave £300 in this Financial Year 2015 – 2016 it was ordered, as minuted in April. Unfortunately the one sent had a faulty keypad and we are waiting for a replacement to be sent.

A cheque for £530 plus VAT will be signed at the Parish Council Meeting this week but will not be sent until the replacement has been received, fitted and in proper working order. Our thanks to Tony Schmitt and Robert Irving for seeing to this.

Parts have been purchased for fitting the case to the Village Hall wall and also connecting electricity, when these have been paid there will be just about £100 left as a contingency fund and 'ring fenced' in the Parish Council Current Account. Any costs e.g. insurance of the Case and Defibrillator appliance, will be halved with the Village Hall Committee from this fund and topped up to £100.

The carried forward figure in the Santander Current and Deposit Accounts total £4,755.

Allotment Account

The Lloyds Bank balance opened at £555.00

Rents amounted to £190, a rise of £23 due to a £1 a year rise to £6, and Wayleaves paid £55.

Last May £129 was spent on stop cocks and valves for the Gedding Road Allotment to provide more taps meaning less spillage, less wastage.

Anglian Water Bills fell from £155 to £116 saving £39, the majority of this was saved in the 3 months to end August. Both Allotments are on the Solow tariff which had no standing charge.

Unfortunately this tariff is being phased out.

The balance carried forward to 2015/2016 is £605

8 – Recreation Ground

The Chairman gave a report as follows:

The annual play inspection report was carried out last year and the result was good with the play equipment being rated overall as a low risk to children's

safety. The next inspection is due to be carried out before the summer school holiday.

Weekly inspections continue to be carried out by volunteers and councillors and I'm sure that the Parish are grateful for their time and effort.

The brambles along the boundary with the Cherry Tree Rise development were cut back last year and it was hoped that this would remove the habitat for the rabbits that cause damage to the playing field from time to time. However, I have noticed recently during my early morning inspections that they have returned and no doubt will need to be dealt with in due course.

Dog fouling continues to be a problem as indeed it does at a national level. There has been a study into the introduction of byelaws and restrictions pertaining to dogs on the playing field. The implementation of any measures will undoubtedly prove to be unpopular. Enforcement of any measures could prove to be difficult and could lead to significant cost. This is, perhaps, something for the new Council to consider as they embark on their term of office.

In case some of you weren't aware the Parish were given a small piece of land which has become known as, "The Cheese Wedge" and a debate evolved surrounding its future use. There was a village wide survey and of the 64% of response, the majority said they would like to see it retained by the Parish. A number of people also voluntarily committed to clearing the land in preparation for a decision on a future use. This work is ongoing and will be elaborated on by Paul Nolan in his report.

Cllr Nolan reported that the play equipment will need attention in the near future; this will need to be budgeted for. Cllr Nolan considers that there are less rabbit workings possibly partly due to the clearing of undergrowth on the Cherry Tree / Playing field boundary. Concern has been shown by residents that dog fouling had been found on play equipment which seems to be a malicious act as opposed to random dog fouling although random fouling still seems to be a problem. Work continues on the clearing of the Cheese Wedge. Cllr Nolan was very disappointed by the response to the call for volunteers for the 4th clearance day. Adverts had gone out on Jungle drums and the Parish magazine for Saturday 9th May; three councillors attended but only four resident volunteers. Cllr Nolan said that as he is standing down from the Council he will still volunteer but a new Councillor will have to be elected to take control.

9- Allotments

Cllr Clarke gave his report:

There has been a small turnover of tenants this season which has resulted in the current waiting list being cleared and all plots are occupied.

The allotment rents remain at a very low level in return for voluntary maintenance of the sites, which, on the whole, is supported by most tenants.

Both sites continue to be among the best maintained and tidiest in the area.

We have been advertising for an allotment trustee for some time and recently Mrs Joyce Cocksedge has volunteered for this position. As soon as is practicable, her details will be registered with the Charity Commission.

10 – Footpaths

Cllr Munford reported that all footpaths in the Parish are very well used in particular the footpath between the church and Woolpit. The footpath down Wash Lane was re-routed and a new elaborate bridge erected. The footpaths are usually cut during May and October, a cut is now due and Cllr Mumford hopes this will happen soon. Cllr Mumford praised the land owners who keep their paths in good order.

11 – Drinkstone War Memorial Institute.

Sue Foulsham gave her report as follows

During the action packed first year 'in business' most of the planned major tasks were fully completed, and consequently this year has basically been one of consolidation. Despite this, the agendas of our monthly meetings are always full with a whole range of important issues to consider. These regularly include wide ranging topics such as: maintenance of the building; Health & Safety/Food Hygiene issues; finance and insurance; bookings; events & fund-raising and longer-term planning for future development.

However some further projects have been carried out this year:

Two working parties were mobilised under the direction of Robert, our caretaker, one to plant a new hedge in the rear garden and another to plant hundreds of spring bulbs in and around the front lawn. We thank Giles and Daphne for donating proceeds from the sale of their honey for this project. Species trees were also planted in the front garden, and together these have provided us with a stunning spring display during the last few weeks.

It has always been very important to us that the original Coronation Memorial gates erected at the old hall in 1953, which had been taken down and safely stored while the building work was being carried out, should be saved and re-instated on their home site. In the Autumn their refurbishment was complete and we were able to bring them back home to be re-erected on the lawn in front of the New Hall and we give our thanks to both Dennis Bradley and Tony Bland for their involvement in this project.

Very recently another group of volunteers gave up their time to re-decorate the walls of the main hall as they were beginning to show scuff marks from the chairs and tables.

We were also very pleased to be able to play our part in the village-based fund-raising for the Defibrillator cabinet in partnership with the Parish Council. It is very re-assuring for the whole community to know that we have a Defibrillator

on site for future use and we thank Lyn Hannant for employing all her powers of persuasion in order to secure a free machine for the village from the East Anglian Ambulance Service. On behalf of the Village I would also like to thank Tony Schmitt and Robert Irving for spending quite a bit of their time last week to fit the cabinet to the wall of the Hall. Unfortunately the model has a faulty keypad and we are currently awaiting the delivery of a replacement - so we will owe double thanks to Tony and Robert!!

Our Events/Fund Raising Committee have worked extremely hard to establish a varied programme which can be enjoyed by all and we thank them all for their enthusiasm and hard work. Whilst some events have necessarily been planned as fund-raisers, our major aim has been to encourage members of the local community to come through the doors and make themselves 'at home' in their Hall. The Race Night and Pub Night were both extremely successful and both activities will join our well established events such as the Fete, the Sale Trail, the Mulled Wine morning with the Xmas Raffle, and the Quiz, on the Village Hall events calendar. 'Pub nights' were at the top of the list of events requested by villagers, so by popular demand another one will be held in the very near future.

One of the most popular weekly activities has been the weekly 'Tuesday Club' drop in, which offers 'a cuppa' and plenty of good conversation and attracts a large group of 'regulars'. For those of us who are constantly battling with our weight, there is also the opportunity to 'weigh-in' under the watchful eye of Sheila - so we can also claim to be running our very own Slimming Club! Suggestions for new events will always be welcomed.

As far as bookings are concerned we have seen two new regular activities during the year, the WI and Circle Dancing. We are receiving bookings and inquiries from outside the village despite not actively advertising & we now have at least one activity every weekday during school terms.

During the year we have had 353 'income generating' bookings. Of those, 28 were 'one-off' bookings, (i.e. not regular occurrences), 10 were children's parties, 6 were other parties, 4 were workshops of various kinds, and one election, and several were events put on by the PCC but held in the village hall.

We have received 2 bookings for Wedding receptions to take place this summer, and the diary is looking quite full over the next few months. The number of positive comments we have received after parties and other bookings indicate that Drinkstone people are taking a great deal of pride in their village hall and that they feel fortunate to have this facility on their doorstep. The numerous very positive comments in our visitor's book are also testimony to the fact that the Hall has become very well known in the wider local area and the word continues to spread that it is an extremely attractive venue to hold an event.

The number of bookings being received has meant that the responsibilities of Bookings Manager have increased considerably during the year and we must give Liz our very special thanks for carrying out this role in the same calm and efficient way that she carries out her duties as Secretary and Trustee.

Although the income generated by the steadily rising number of bookings is very encouraging, we cannot rest on our laurels. We are all very much aware that a building of this size is likely to need regular investment in future years in order to maintain the facilities to the current high standard. Consequently our fund raising continues in order that we can build a contingency fund to cover any maintenance and/or major development which may be necessary in the future. The financial report has been prepared and is currently being audited - it will be delivered by Merete at our own AGM to be held on Monday June 8th.

We are extremely fortunate that the Management Committee is 'staffed' by a group of very enthusiastic and multi-skilled people who are always willing to 'go the extra mile' to further the cause of the Village Hall. They have all continued to work tirelessly throughout the year in order to ensure the continued success of our Village Hall project for the good of the community. On behalf of everyone who has enjoyed using the Hall in any way, I would like to thank them all sincerely for their continued commitment and enthusiasm for the cause. I must add my own very special thanks to them all for their unfailing support and friendship - they are indeed a very special team and the best group of people I have ever worked with.

12 -Village Clubs and Classes

Sheila Beswick gave her report as follows:

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We are very grateful to the Education Charity for 50% funding for our History Group hall hire.

This year has seen a very encouraging growth in numbers attending the Local History Group and many of these have joined as annual members.

The year began with two meetings on WW1. The first was a Poetry Evening when over 20 people read poems and letters from the front. It was very moving with some wonderful poetry sensitively read by members and friends.

This was followed by a visit from Taff Gillingham an excellent speaker and authority on WW1

The Dec. meeting saw Chris Halcoop back with film of Drinkstone Mills and an episode of Dad`s Army at the mills.

The New Year has continued to see some excellent speakers and we look forward to an outing to the Mildenhall Museum in June.

The small team of dedicated archivists continues to collect and collate the donated items and these can now be viewed on request .

ACCOUNTS 1st April 2014 to 31st March15

INCOME

Subscriptions	726.50
Notelets	25.00
Donations	35.00
Website	50.00
TOTAL	<u>836.50</u>

EXPENSES

Refreshments	35.10
Books/photos etc.	33.05
Hall Hire	32.00
Equipment	43.15
Membership	25.00
Website	113.98
Speakers	388.53
TOTAL	<u>670.81</u>

BALANCE 165.59

Carried Forward 618.29

TOTAL 783 .98

Held as BANK 732.75

FLOAT 16.23

TOTAL 748.98

THE HUT THEATRE

Midsummer Madness took place in June and all the artists were local villagers. We have an amazing number of talented people in the village all willing to perform for us and give us a great evening of entertainment for which we are very grateful. There have been just two events over the past year both in aid of All Saints Church funds.

The Valentine Concert in February was at the request of those who had enjoyed the previous event and this time we had fifteen local artists performing a great variety of entertainment. A great night was had by all and the church benefited from both events.

ACCOUNTS 2014/15

INCOME

Midsummer Madness	£375.00
-------------------	---------

Valentine Concert	£417.00
-------------------	---------

TOTAL	<u>£792.00</u>
-------	----------------

EXPENSES

Midsummer Madness	£15.00
-------------------	--------

Valentine Concert	£15.00
-------------------	--------

TOTAL	<u>£30.00</u>
-------	---------------

Donations to All Saints Church

Midsummer Madness	£360.00
-------------------	---------

Valentine Concert	£402.00
-------------------	---------

TOTAL	<u>£762.00</u>
-------	----------------

Carried forward	£2,637.66
-----------------	-----------

Balance	Nil
---------	-----

TOTAL	<u>£2,637.66</u>
-------	------------------

FUNDS HELD AS

Hut Theatre	Bank	2,520.22
-------------	------	----------

Float		57.44
-------	--	-------

Bar Float		60.00
-----------	--	-------

TOTAL		<u>£ 2,637. 66</u>
-------	--	--------------------

13 – Charities

The Rev Cambourne Charity. Henry Riches report.

Mr Riches reported that Cllr Harbutt had been appointed trustee after the death of Malcolm Robinson.

Receipts and payments account for the year ended 31st March 2015.

Balance brought forward at April 2014	
National Savings Investment Account	£1693.91
Interest Added	£ 11.78
Total	£1705.69

Payments one grant £275.00

Balance carried forward at 31 st March 2015	
National Savings Investment Account	£1430.69

Wrenn's Charity; David Ford;

Accounts for the year ended 31-3-15

We have received one year's rent in advance [October2014 to October 2015] of £1758, electricity way leave for 32014/15 £27 and Bank interest 25p Total income is £17855 added to the balance brought forward of £2854 totals £4631 Gifts for senior citizens at Christmas were £225.

We again supported the Christmas lunch for the senior citizens which was held in the Village Hall on the 9th January. 67 attended with the Wrenn's Charity contributing £1004.

Agents' fees including VAT for dealing with the rented land were £120.

Total payments were £1352 leaving a balance in hand of £3278, a surplus of £433 year on year.

The accounts have not yet been examined by Lionel Denny a retired Barclays Bank Manager who lives in Woolpit as he is currently on holiday.

The Trustees are pleased to continue to support the Christmas/ New Year lunch and will in due course be discussing arrangements for this year with Sheila Beswick.

David Ford and Ray Wilmshurst
Trustees

The Drinkstone Educational Charity; David Ford

Summary of awards for year ended 31/12/2014.

Account for the year ended 31/12/2014 have been checked by Richard Chaplin, Chartered Accountant and formally examined by Robin Jackson, Chartered Accountant at Churchgate Accountants Ltd, and this following Richards retirement from Grant Thornton.

Income for the year was £2150 consisting of distributions from the surplus on the Royal Wedding event specifically to support the activities of young people in the village is detailed in note 6 of the accounts and shows £129 remaining as at December 2014.

Grants totalling £1455 were made as referred to in the summary and include £90 from the restricted fund towards youth club visit to Bradfield Woods.

Administration expenses were £176 which included Suffolk Acre Insurance policy premium £141.

Excess of income over expenditure was £519 which added to the balance brought forward from 2013 of £1504 gives a balance of £2023 as at December 2014. This includes the restricted fund of £129. The balance is held at Barclays Bank PLC plus £21 in Chariguard units.

The value of the endowment fund at the year end was £75059 against the original investment of £47371

David Ford Treasurer and Trustee.

14- Any other urgent business.

No other business

The chairman closed the meeting at 8.55