



GREAT CANFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING Held in the Village Hall Monday 13th May 2019 at 8pm

Present: From the Parish Council, Cllrs Ginny Barlow, Keir Donald, Chris Easter, Stuart Hepburn, Robert Mackley (chair), and the Clerk Allison Ward (secretary).

9 members of the public

County Cllr Susan Barker

District Cllr Neil Reeve

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME, Robert Mackley as chairman of the Parish Council opened the meeting and welcomed residents to the Annual Village Meeting.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Parish Cllr Michael Knight and Parish Cllr Jenny Jewell.
3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Monday 14th May 2018 were approved and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.
4. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – Cllr Robert Mackley

Another extremely busy year for the Parish Council draws to a close. At last year's AGM I spoke of the north of the Parish being under attack from planning applications, this continues and I would like to update you. Of the three sites deemed suitable for small development in the "call for sites", one for 5 houses has been approved by the inspector following refusal by Uttlesford and a written appeal, a second for 5 houses has been turned down by the planning department and is currently going through the written appeal process and the third site an application for four houses has just been received for consideration. This is in addition to a number of single site applications along Canfield Drive.

The Gladman site application for 135 houses was refused unanimously by the planning committee and as you know is the subject of a public inquiry at the end of this month. This decision is pivotal for the north of our parish as well as our neighbouring parishes and the concept of no development south of the Flitch Way. We are fighting this appeal vigorously at great cost and have taken Rule 6 status jointly with Takeley Parish Council to allow us to provide our own expert witnesses on highways, heritage and landscape and to cross examine the Gladman witnesses. We are very grateful to Takeley Parish Council and Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council who have both made generous donations towards the costs.

An application for 80 houses opposite the Gladman site is currently going through the planning process we will of course be objecting and in due course it will come to the Planning Committee for consideration.

The only other planning issue of note, is to report that the enforcement file for Hayden's, Green Street has finally been closed to the Parish Councils satisfaction.

Signed
Robert Mackley
Chairman Parish Council

The District Councils Local Plan has gone in to the inspector, although not perfect the Parish Council supported it as in it Great Canfield is a type B village with limited services and facilities and such villages are not considered suitable for development. If the Local Plan is approved, it will limit the speculative housing applications we are currently facing.

The redevelopment of the Nursery site at Bullocks Lane, which the parish Council was closely involved with, is nearly complete, although the designs might not be to everyone's liking I for one think it's a massive improvement on what was originally there; to remind you there is a covenant in place restricting the housing to seven on the site.

The blight of littering continues, we have sadly had two very successful litter picks in terms of volume in the past year well attended by villagers who take great pride in their village, I would like to thank those who attended and those who continue the fight daily. Not wishing to speak too soon but we have had far less major fly tipping so far in 2019 than in the previous year, let's hope this continues. It is worth noting the instances of fly tipping in Great Canfield were used as examples of the cost of clearing up rural crime by our MP Kemi Badenock during the commons debate on 6th June 2018 on Rural Crime and Public Services, and we thank Kemi for her support.

Potholes and road surface continue to be a problem, the Parish Council have been lobbying for Green Street to be resurfaced and I am pleased to report it is scheduled to be resurfaced this summer, your councillors always keep an eye for any problems and we continuously report these to Highways not always with much success.

After several incidents of lorries and vans getting stuck in the green lanes of Bullocks and Boxley the council have purchased four warning signs stating the lanes are not suitable for vehicle access and these will be put up when the ground allows.

We made our annual donation to the village firework display, a donation to the Great Canfield newsletter and paid for another year of WiFi at the village hall.

2018 marked the 100th year anniversary of the end of WW1 and the Parish Council organised an event where the village joined the national lighting of the village Beacons, this was preceded by a fine speech from Henry Green and the last post played by Charlotte Mackley. We received a £200 grant from District Cllr Keith Artus fund for a commemorative clock to go up in the Village Hall and this should arrive shortly.

The Great Canfield community trust are close to agreeing a 25-year lease for the Village /church hall, it has been provisionally agreed by the Parish Council to become Custodian Trustees, with the management committee running the hall subject to approval of the lease offered. Once complete this will be a tremendous achievement by the Community Trust in securing the hall for village use for many years to come.

This year we have raised our precept by almost 50% and we will do the same again next year, this follows almost 10 years when precept has only increased by a total of £200, something we were proud of but is now proving to be short sighted as we face growing costs fighting unwanted development. This almost 50% rise is a very small part of a household council tax, with the average band D rate increasing by only £10.70 for the year.

We have just had the local district council elections, I welcome our new councillors District Cllr Neil Reeve and District Cllr Geof Driscoll, both Residents4Uttlesford representatives and look forward to working closely with them over the next four years. Sadly, in this process we have lost Councillor Keith Artus who's help and expertise has been invaluable to this Council over the last four years and I thank him. Neil and Geof the bar has been set high. I should also note that in the process we also said goodbye to District Councillor Lesley Wells, although I don't think I ever met or ever had any communication from her.

In our own Parish Council elections in May, Declan Tiernan has had to step down due to work commitments, I would like to thank him for his contribution over the last four years and we welcome back Keir Donald to take his place who has plenty of previous Parish Council experience.

Lastly I would like to thank my fellow councillors, who give their time voluntary and our wonderful clerk, for their commitment over the last year. We are a very small council with little funds who have taken on a massive commitment in taking out Rule 6 status in the Gladman appeal. This wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the passion, expertise and hard work of Councillor Jenny Jewell, Cllr Ginny Barlow and Allison Ward our clerk. Departing Councillor Keith Artus said recently that we were the best run and most professional small Parish Council he had ever worked with, I happen to agree with him and am very proud of all we have achieved and very proud to be the Chair of Great Canfield Parish Council.

Signed
Robert Mackley
Chairman Parish Council

5. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL STATEMENT – District Cllr Neil Reeve

County Cllr Susan Barker began by commenting in support of the Parish Councils approach to the Gladman appeal and added that she had long been a supporter of no development south of the Fritch Way. Cllr Barker commented that we do now want a ‘free for all’ approach to development, but that it was important development was in accordance with the District Council plans. Cllr Barker confirmed that Green Street is due to be resurfaced this year and asked that residents make her aware of any issues relating to the County Council. Finally, Cllr Barker congratulated the R4U District Cllrs on their recent election success, adding ‘what we all want is what is best for Uttlesford and we will have to work together to achieve this.’

County Councillor Susan leaves

District Cllr Neil Reeve introduced himself as one of the two new ward Cllrs. Cllr Reeve confirmed that neither himself or District Cllr Geof Driscoll live in the parishes they represent, however as local Uttlesford residents both feel an ownership of local issues. Cllr Reeve added it is too early for any policy statements and as a new team we are currently going through the process of getting to grips with the responsibilities on our shoulders. Our intention is that either Geof or myself will come to your Parish Council meetings and be in a position to take any comments or concerns forward to the District. We have made a commitment to make ourselves available and will be holding surgeries in the Dukes Head at Hatfield Broad Oak, Mondays between 2.30pm and 4.00pm.

Cllr Mackley asked that the District Cllrs feedback to the parish any points considered at District level that they feel are relevant to Great Canfield. Cllr Mackley went on to ask whether the Local Plan submitted to the Inspector can be changed at this stage. District Cllr Reeve confirmed the Local Plan process is one of the areas the new council is seeking expert advice on, although this is of course not straightforward. District Cllr Reeve concluded by commenting that he was aware District Cllr Keith Artus was valued and supported by this village and is very conscious of the responsibility the R4U Cllrs have now taken on.

6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2018/19 – The Clerk

The accounts for 2018/19 closed with a total loss in the year of £637, however this includes £1.5k spent on consultants in responding to the initial Gladman planning application including representation at the Planning Committee, plus £0.8k of grants. Both of these items have been allocated to the Easement budget and not the general fund

The current budget for the Gladman inquiry is in the region of +£20k (£12k barrister, £6.5k highways consultant and £1.5k landscape consultant). Of which £12k has been contributed from Takeley Parish Council, £3k from Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council, with the balance from Great Canfield Parish Council funds.

The closing cash balance at March 2019 was £53,982 of which £8,116 is in the general fund.

7. PARISHONERS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A resident introduced the topic of environmental sustainability and asked for support to look at what more we could do as a community to protect and improve the local environment. Suggestions included recycling, litter, verge planting, compost, as well as some kind of resource information pack. The conversation turned to the use of the village facebook site to share information, Cllr Mackley confirmed the facebook page was available for all residents and community groups to use, the only request being that it isn’t used for commercial purposes. The Parish Council were fully supportive of the ideas and confirmed their interest in supporting residents with plans and/or grants as well as considering what the Parish Council could specifically do under its own responsibilities; the Parish Council agreed to add to the agenda for their next meeting. Cllr Mackley went on to remind the meeting that grants are available for all village groups and applications to the Parish Council would be welcome. District Cllr Reeve was asked for R4U’s view on environmental sustainability and responded by confirming R4U has implemented a series of green initiatives in Saffron Walden as part of its comprehensive Environmental policies, these include a Town Council electric van and plans for all council vehicles to be electric, there is pressure on shops to go plastic free. These are just some examples to demonstrate that R4U does have a green agenda.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 12th May 2020 at 8pm.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Signed
Robert Mackley
Chairman Parish Council