

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting (Annual Assembly) held on
on Monday 13 May 2024 at 7.00pm
Immediately before the Annual Parish Council Meeting (AGM)

Present: David Howie Chair
Richard Harrison Vice Chair
Amanda-Jayne Buckland
Tim Ford
Anne Jones
Philip Leslie
Bryan Swaddling
Kim Austin Clerk

Also present: 8 members of the public

The meeting started at 7:00pm

The Chair, Cllr. David Howie thanked everybody for coming to Rocklands Annual Parish Meeting.

The government had offered a large, framed photograph of King Charles to all Town and Parish Councils. Rocklands Parish Council had accepted the offer and had received the photograph which Cllr. Howie presented at the meeting. After some discussion it was decided the photograph would be mounted on the wall above the stage in the Village Hall.

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Sarah Suggitt and Cllr. Ed Connolly. Dave Thomas, Shena Scholes and Sue Steel also sent their apologies.

2. To agree Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (Annual Assembly) held on Monday 15 May 2023.

The councillors present approved the minutes that had been circulated prior to the meeting, as a true and accurate record. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair, Cllr. David Howie.

3. To discuss any matters arising from the minutes, not on the agenda

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. To hear Chairman's Annual Report

Cllr. David Howie delivered his report.

I am pleased to report we have a full number of councillors. Thank you to Philip Leslie for recently joining the council. I wish to thank them for all for the support they have given me, and in particular Richard Harrison, Vice Chairman for all his excellent work on flooding, speeding and planning and all the reports he has diligently compiled. This is greatly appreciated.

Flooding is still a major problem, and I fear will only continue to get worse with climate change, but with the formation of a flood group, and with the inclusion of local farmers, hopefully they will find ways to deal with this problem.

We have had mixed success in dealing with planning applications, but I believe, in general, we have done well to control excess inappropriate development.

I do have concerns about Breckland's new Local Plan. We have diligently responded to the consultations and passed this information on to residents. I have to say I was very pleased with the attendance of 125 residents at the meeting to discuss the Local Plan proposals, and to make residents aware of how they could affect the outcome, and our response to the proposals.

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After that meeting, I was delighted that a group has been formed to complete the Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan and I look forward to the outcome. Well done everybody involved in that.

Speeding traffic is still a concern, which we continue to raise with Norfolk Constabulary and NCC highways. At Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) meetings, local police are always helpful and add this issue to their priority lists.

I am pleased to note that District Councillor Sarah Suggitt attends most of our Parish Council Meetings to give support and advice. George Freeman MP is always on hand to give support and has expressed his intention to visit and speak with the Parish Council and residents to better understand the issues that Rocklands is facing. No dates have as yet been arranged.

At previous meetings, I have expressed my concerns about the numbers of residents who attend Parish Council meetings, but after attending other parishes' meetings, I realise that we do well, with much better attendance than most, but it could always improve. Again, I say, we are here to represent you, the residents, so please attend and give us your views and support.

And lastly, I thank Kim Austin, Parish Clerk for her help and advice. She is doing a great job keeping me in place.

5. To receive Annual Reports by County & District Councillors

5.1 Breckland District Councillor's Annual Report 2024 - Cllr. Sarah Suggitt/Cllr. Phil Cowen

The District Councillors' report for All Saints and Wayland Ward, Breckland Council, May 2024 had been circulated before the meeting.

Our Corporate Plan Achievements 2023/2024.

Breckland Council has recognised that there is a climate emergency that needs attention.

❖ To recognise the public sector staff who worked tirelessly during the COVID pandemic, we've funded £25,000 to plant 2,400 trees for a Woodland of Thanks at Oxburgh Hall. The trees will also help with biodiversity and removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

❖ To help reduce CO2 emissions, we have:

- continued work to roll out electric vehicle charging points in our District.
- approved the installation of solar panels at Dereham Leisure Centre, saving 47,000 KG of CO2 per year.
- agreed a New Green Tariff reducing our CO2 emissions for electric to zero.
- secured £530k in decarbonisation grants to reduce carbon emissions in our leisure facilities.
- worked with partners to deliver new environmentally friendly eco-bus shelters in Swaffham.
- Replaced 1673 streetlights with energy efficient LED bulbs.

❖ To keep our communities pleasant and clean, we've supported over 30 community litter picks and taken over 160 informal actions against fly tippers.

❖ To enable composting, we've grown our garden waste subscribers to over 25,818 residents. This is nearly 40% of our households benefiting from the service, and together composting nearly 10,000 tonnes of garden waste each year.

❖ By providing a flexible, reliable, and cost-effective business waste collection and disposal service for Breckland, we've exceeded our customer growth target by 15%, now having more than 305 customers and £220k gross income.

❖ To increase our tree canopy cover, we've secured, and have started to distribute, DEFRA funding of £26,400 for the planting of community orchards within our District.

❖ To reduce our CO2 emissions and to attract and retain our workforce, we've approved a Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme to allow employees to lease an electric or hybrid car.

❖ To support Breckland businesses, we've launched the Low Carbon Regeneration Programme, providing tailored advice and support for their journey to reducing CO2 emissions and becoming Net Zero.

❖ We've improved the energy performance rating, where possible, on our Commercial Property portfolio.

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We will play an active role in creating the right conditions for new and existing local businesses to thrive.

- ❖ To keep our communities safe, we've repaired or replaced over 70 streetlights.
- ❖ We've successfully generated over £30,000 in surplus land sales, helping us maintain a balanced budget.
- ❖ To make a more pleasant area for residents, we've completed works on the Thetford underpass improvement scheme.
- ❖ We've decided 90% of major planning applications within their timescale, in order to facilitate economic growth in our District.
- ❖ To bring the community of Thetford together, we've successfully delivered the Stage and Screen festival with Thetford Town Council.
- ❖ To revitalise local market towns, we've launched our Love Your Market Town scheme, awarding £5k grants to support ideas and initiatives which will generate footfall and activity into local town centres in Breckland.
- ❖ We've managed our £45 million commercial property portfolio, allowing the right environment for businesses to flourish and to attract inward investment into the District.
- ❖ Recognising the power of partnership working and the hard work in regenerating the Queen Mother's Garden in Dereham, we were awarded the British Association of Landscape Industries Regeneration Scheme Award.
- ❖ With the aim of creating jobs, supporting local businesses and boosting the towns economy, partnership working between the Wayland Partnership and Breckland Council, with funding from Norfolk County Council we are forming plans to develop a Digital and Creative Media Centre in Watton.
- ❖ We've supported local communities to celebrate the King's Coronation.
- ❖ We've continued our collaborative working to support the delivery of power distribution infrastructure at Snetterton and to build upon the success of the new primary substation.
- ❖ To foster economic growth, community development and improved rural infrastructure, we've launched a new Business Support Scheme for small businesses and community organisations. The funds help businesses diversify or grow, bring more customers to the area or to support social economic and local growth through innovation.
- ❖ To enhance accessibility, we've secured £60,000 in national funding for Banham Zoo to develop new, fully accessible Changing Places Toilets.
- ❖ To promote training and employment opportunities in manufacturing, we've launched the 'Make it in Thetford' initiative with Partners.
- ❖ We've completed the restoration of four of Swaffham's historic buildings with funding from the Heritage Action Zone

We will help our residents to live safe and healthy lives by playing an active part in local communities.

- ❖ To provide individuals and families who are homeless with a safe and secure place to stay, we've purchased new temporary accommodation units within our District.
- ❖ Ensuring residents have a say in how the land within Breckland should be used in the future, we've successfully adopted an update to the District's Local Plan.
- ❖ Acknowledging the impactful work in delivering mental health youth projects, we were nominated for a Norfolk Flourish Award, hosted by the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYP SA).
- ❖ We've helped over 3,000 residents who've contacted us for Housing advice and helped over 150 households access temporary accommodation.
- ❖ In recognition for supporting the health and well-being of residents, we won the Health and Social Care Award at the 2023 Local Government Chronical Awards. The award recognised work by the council, NHS, charities and partners to tackle health inequalities in Breckland.

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- ❖ Acknowledging our exceptional care and dog warden services, we received the RSPCA Platinum PawPrints award; the only Council in Norfolk to receive this accolade.
 - ❖ To maintain our area's cleanliness and having continued our commitment to reduce environmental crime and increased the maximum penalties, we are now ranked in the top 100 Councils for tackling fly tipping.
 - ❖ To support survivors of domestic abuse in the local community we've committed to continue to support and fund the Daisy Programme until 2026.
 - ❖ To promote mental well-being within the local community we've continued to grow our Mindful District Programme by adding a third village and a new training partner and trained over 300 mental health champions.
 - ❖ Aimed at fostering well-being among young people in the district, we've begun to deliver a new youth mental health programme through the Breckland Mindful District Partnership.
 - ❖ Providing access to fresh and affordable food options for our community, we've expanded the Breckland Mobile Food Store to three additional locations.
 - ❖ To provide financial assistance to those grappling with the aftermath of the devastating effects of Storm Babet, we've allocated grants and council tax and business rate relief.
 - ❖ To enhance leisure facilities, we've been granted planning permission to bring improved recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Attleborough.
 - ❖ To continue to deliver services which support people who have experienced domestic abuse, declining mental health or financial hardship, we've invested £1.1M of council funding over the next 3 years.
 - ❖ To help local groups commemorate the upcoming 80th anniversary of D-Day, we've made a total of £25,000 available to celebrate and mark the historic event.
 - ❖ In addition to our annual contribution to Citizens Advice, we've strengthened our partnership by funding two Debt Advisors, further supporting their vital debt assistance services.
- We put our residents and businesses at the heart of everything we do.**
- ❖ To better manage the Council's business and ensure transparency for our residents, we've delivered a new suite of performance indicators and new performance framework.
 - ❖ To help customers track their enquiry and utilise officer time effectively, we've launched a new case management system
 - ❖ To ensure everyone can vote in an election, we undertook a successful 2023 annual canvas.
 - ❖ We've launched an Amazon Alexa skill to help residents access information about local services more easily.
 - ❖ To provide another way for customers to contact us and have their questions answered 24/7, we've developed and launched a telephone chatbot, an extension to our web-based resident service.
 - ❖ Recognising our innovative ways to recruit and onboard our new employees, the council was a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Annual Workforce Awards.
 - ❖ To help seek new funding opportunities, we've created a new Corporate Strategy Team.
 - ❖ We've delivered training for our new intake of councillors on their duties and our new code of conduct.
 - ❖ To enable our workforce to deliver exceptional services to our residents and businesses, we've delivered over 80 projects designed to enhance learning and development, culture & leadership and health and well-being.
 - ❖ We've helped ensure occupancy of 97% of our commercial property portfolio.
 - ❖ To develop skills of our own workforce and creating opportunities for local talent, we've supported over 20 apprenticeships across the Council.
 - ❖ We've successfully delivered the 2023 local elections and onboarding of new Members.
 - ❖ In recognition of how we develop our workforce and support their health and well-being we were finalists in two awards for the PPMA (Public Services People Managers Association) People Management awards.

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❖ To ensure our top priority projects are delivered on time and on budget, we've created a new Corporate Projects Service.

5.2 County Councillor's Annual Report 2022 - Cllr. Ed Connolly

Cllr. Connolly did not provide an annual report but had diligently provided excellent reports throughout the year which we thank him for. The latest weekly update is included here.



Norfolk County Council

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates - Updated 16 May 2024

Service updates: The most up to date information on council services can be found at [Norfolk County Council services disruptions](#).

Norfolk County Council updates

Digital Switchover - help keep people who are reliant on Assistive Technology connected.

Our teams work with some of the most vulnerable people in Norfolk, some of whom rely on Assistive Technology such as telecare services, personal alarms, fall monitors or lifelines. That gives our officers an opportunity to make sure vulnerable residents stay connected as our telephone lines change. Over the next year and a half, the UK's telephone network is being upgraded. By the start of 2027 the old analogue copper telephone landline network will be switched to digital, meaning that all phone calls will go through the internet, and everyone will require broadband to make landline phone calls. This means that people who use technology that is reliant on analogue telephone connections may need to upgrade their devices. If you meet or visit people who rely on Assistive Technology, this may be an opportunity to make sure they are aware of and ready for the change. Please share the news and advise those who may be working closely with vulnerable residents that they can find additional information [here](#).

Calls for more foster carers during Foster Care Fortnight

Five children in Norfolk come into care every week and Norfolk County Council is calling for more people to come forward to give them a loving home. There are more than 1,200 children in care in Norfolk and, although numbers have stabilised in recent years, the council needs more carers to provide stability and safety for the children it looks after.

The council is using Foster Care Fortnight to urge more people to consider fostering and encourage more businesses to become Fostering Friendly Employers. Fostering Friendly Employers support their staff by giving them flexibility to take their foster child to medical appointments, attend parents' evenings and sports day, or to work from home if the child is sick.

Norfolk County Council has recently become accredited as a Fostering Friendly Employer and has 30 employees who are also foster carers with Norfolk Fostering Service. Foster carers are self-employed. Many continue working at their usual place of employment at the same time as being a foster carer. For more details about the Fostering Friendly scheme, please visit [here](#).

Have your say and help Norfolk make more space for nature

Norfolk County Council, along with 47 other local authorities, is working on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) as part of a national effort to protect biodiversity in England. We launched a survey on 13 May to find out which aspects of nature are most important to people in Norfolk which will help to ensure the strategy represents local views. The survey, is open for the next seven weeks, will ask residents which aspects of nature are important to them, where their favourite places to visit in the county are, and how easy it is to get there. It will also ask which habitats and species should be included in the strategy. Residents can take part in the survey online until 30 June. For more information, go [here](#).

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Norfolk County Council appointed to lead Music Hubs for Norfolk and Suffolk

Norfolk County Council has been appointed by Arts Council England to lead both the Norfolk and Suffolk Music Hub from September 2024, as part of an ambitious national programme to provide high-quality music education for all children and young people. NCC's Music Service has led the Norfolk Music Hub, a partnership of organisations and schools which engage with children and young people in music making, since 2012. As the new Hub Lead Organisation for both counties, NCC will receive just over £2m from the DfE to coordinate music education, plus £661,967 to invest in new musical instruments, equipment and technology tailored to the needs of children and young people in Norfolk, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

New grants to help Norfolk residents open for applications

Voluntary organisations who support people struggling with the cost of living in Norfolk can now apply for two new grants from Norfolk's Household Support Fund. £2.15m of funding from a combination of national government and NCC sources is being made available. Of this, £1.35m is available as part of a one-off grant funding pot that will enable community groups and social enterprises to meet the emergency needs of residents, particularly those at the highest risk of living in poverty and those who have higher than average costs due to specific needs such as care costs. Applications for this Community Based Hardship Support Fund must be made by 31 May, with grants of £10,000-50,000 available. Applications can be made [here](#). In addition, £800,000 is being made available to organisations that are already supporting people in Norfolk to help meet any emerging needs these individuals may have, such as help with the cost of food and energy. An applicant organisation can receive up to £20,000 to distribute to individuals in grants of up to £100 to help meet these costs. Applications can be made up to 30 September [here](#). Anyone in Norfolk struggling with living costs can also request support or advice via norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving or by calling 0344 800 8020.

Four Norfolk teenagers sworn in as new Youth Parliament Members

Four Norfolk teenagers have been officially inaugurated as the county's new Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) at a special ceremony held by Norfolk County Council. The Norfolk Youth Parliament helps young people to have a voice on the future of Norfolk and make a positive difference in their local community. Working with regional MPs and local Norfolk Councillors, the young leaders will represent their peers and advocate for important issues such as education, mental health, and climate change. Youth parliament elections are organised by Norfolk County Council and the young people will be supported by the council's participation team during their time in office.

Government updates

Support for rough sleepers while tackling antisocial behaviour

Through amendments to the Criminal Justice Bill, new measures will ensure rough sleepers are directed to the support available to help get them off the streets - for example, to a place to sleep or to addiction treatment. New guidance will make clear that police and local authorities must prioritise directing people who are sleep rough to support services before they consider using criminal sanctions. If, despite being directed to support services and given a warning, people continue to cause antisocial behaviour, such as damage or harassment, they will be required to stop and asked to move on with a rough sleeping notice. Alongside these new measures, the Vagrancy Act will be scrapped, which wrongly criminalises people for sleeping rough. More information can be found [here](#).

Proposals to make it easier for child sex abuse victims to bring civil claims

Plans to make it easier and less traumatic for victims to bring historic claims through the civil courts have been announced by government this week. This consultation follows a commitment to explore options for reform in this area, in response to the recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in 2022. Currently child sexual abuse claims must be brought within three years of the claimant turning 18 unless the court grants an extension. For this to happen the victim must prove a fair trial can

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proceed, despite a time lapse. Government proposals would reverse this burden of proof - meaning cases would proceed automatically unless the defendant proves it is not possible for there to be a fair hearing. View and respond to the consultation [here](#).

6. To receive annual reports from village organisations

6.1 Village Shop and Post Office (Dave Seaton). No report.

It was noted that Rob Pool is the new shop manager.

6.2 Village Hall (James Alger). James delivered his report.

Although the Hall attracts a good number of weekly hirers as well as one-off events, parties etc. we are losing money due to rising costs. We have therefore taken the decision to raise hire costs from 1st June 2024 to try and offset this. Upgrades to the toilets and kitchen are planned which we hope will not only help current hirers but attract new ones, these will be financed by grant monies. We have a dedicated and hard-working committee but could do with some additional members to lighten the load. We will try to recruit some more volunteers at the D-Day and Village Hall Anniversary event in June.

6.3 Little Rocky's Toddler Group (Sharon Brown). Sharon delivered her report.

Our numbers continue to grow: we had 30 children on Friday even after a few cancellations. We are beginning to have more father figures attending the group and they even join in the singing. We are implementing more structure to the mornings to support those children who will be starting school in September. We have established good links with Great Ellingham and Rocklands School and attend the Community Cafe sessions that looks at how to support pre-school children's move to school. 6 of our children will be going into Reception at Rocklands in September. We have started to plant up the flower beds: one has all herbs to make it a sensory area for the children.

We have our next fundraising event on 20 July, a strawberry tea and to raise funds to buy outdoor instruments to complement the sensory garden. Will be open during the summer holidays.

6.4 Rocklands Primary School (Julie Dekker). The Clerk delivered the report.

- We have 10 Year 6 children leaving for high school in July, with children going to either Attleborough Academy or Wymondham College.
- We have 11 children starting in Reception in September.
- Our school roll stands at 72, with only spaces for more children in a few year groups. During the academic year, 4 children have joined from other schools.
- The children and staff of the 2 schools within the federation continue to work closely with each other for the benefit of all. Resources are shared across the 2 schools and many staff work in both schools.
- Ofsted visited the school for 2 days in the first full week of the new academic year and we were judged as being 'Good' in all areas of the inspection. We do not anticipate Ofsted returning for another 3+ years.
- It has been recognised that maths is a particular strength across the school. In the autumn, we received a letter from the Secretary of State for Education congratulating the staff and children at Rocklands School for being within the top 200 schools in the county for the Year 4 multiplication check.
- This year the children have taken part in a variety of enrichment activities: Forest School, swimming at Thetford pool, World Cup of Books, Reading Cafés, Book at Bedtime, Crucial Crew, cycling proficiency, performing a musical version of a Shakespeare play, to name just a few.
- Classes are encouraged to visit places of interest around the village and wider County. Children have visited: The Castle Museum, BeWilderwood, Hilltop Adventure Centre (2-day Year 6 federation residential, Sealife Centre (overnight stay with federation Year 4 group), Knettishall Heath, Highline Adventure (federation event at Great Ellingham), village churches, original school room and playing field and the Theatre Royal, Norwich

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- Many of the special events planned during the year take place across the federation, enabling the children to develop a wider group of friends and for cost saving measures to be put in place.
- All staff and children appreciate the financial support offered to them by our parent group; FoRS. Over the year, FoRS have provided the classes with coaches for visits, extra money to buy classroom resources, a friendship bench, an outdoor toy store and refreshments at events.

6.5 Rocklands Youth Club (Dave Jones). The Clerk delivered the report.

Rocklanders Youth Club continues to meet in Rocklands Village Hall between 6.30 and 8.30 pm every Friday during term time. It serves young people between 8-18 years of age, with current membership predominantly 8-13 years of age. As well as table tennis, snooker, table football, air hockey and a wide variety of electronic games and activities available using the large screen on the stage, a range of craft activities are offered each week. There are also smaller games for those who might wish to work in pairs and bean bags for those who might simply like to "Chill and Chat".

Whenever possible members like to go onto the field outside where good use is always made of the astro-turf area, which has floodlighting. Sessions usually end with a lively session of dodgeball or indoor hockey. Visitors always remark on the relaxed and friendly atmosphere which characterises club and makes supervision such a pleasant experience. As well as a small core team of Registered Leaders, the additional rostered support of two Voluntary Assistant Leaders each week is greatly valued. Additional leaders would be greatly welcomed to spread the load. Members are encouraged to take as much responsibility for their own behaviour and for suggesting and organising activities as possible, with a minimum of adult intervention. Our members respond superbly! For example, they have recently organised and presented two superb talent shows, co-ordinated by two 13-year-olds. The last show, to which parents were invited, contributed to the Club's donation to 'Children in Need'. Although most young people tend to move away at 18, some members have transitioned to becoming leaders at that age. We are also pleased to have supported several young people undertaking the D of E Award scheme.

Tuck Shop is always popular and helps us to keep the weekly subscription charge to a minimum. This had stood at £1.50 a head since club opened in 2005 but was recently raised to £2 per person and helps us meet ever-increasing regular costs such as hall hire, insurance, DBS checks and training. Equipment and materials can be pricey and we acknowledge with gratitude some generous gifts of equipment which have come our way.

6.6 Rocklands Playing Fields (Sarah Good). The Clerk delivered the report. The cost of running the playing fields is increasing year on year. Although we charge a ground rent to all of our football and cricket clubs and the school, which generates almost £3500, we still cannot cover the running costs and this is a constant concern as we are eating into our reserves.

We advertise every month in The Rocklander that our committee is low on members and we'd welcome some help from any villagers who are willing to join us please.

6.7 St. Peter's Church (John Brown). Sharon Brown gave an update on St. Peters.

The number of attendees is decreasing. The threadbare carpet in the church is a trip hazard, so for Health and Safety reasons it has to be replaced. £114.74 in donations has been received from 2 members of the congregation. Church reserves are being eaten into. Local farmers support the church by cutting the grass. A member of the clergy called Leonard James was murdered by his wife and it is thought that his grave is at St. Peter's Church. A man called William James who lives in North Carolina, America is looking into his family history and believes Leonard was a relative. Leonard's grave, dating back to 1608, has not yet been found. Cllr. Buckland said that Stuart Jones, Norwich church may be able to help. William may come to England to visit the grave if/when found.

6.8 All Saints Church (Cath Jones). The Clerk read out the report received from Cath Jones.

A year in a nutshell - A third year has passed without a churchwarden and sadly, again, nobody has come forward for the coming year either, so we shall have to continue sharing responsibilities between PCC members again.

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Our fundraising activities have been pleasant social occasions for the whole village and further afield. Barbara's Day at Number 39 was a great success.....thanks to Dekkers for their hospitality and to all who helped make it run smoothly. This year, due to building work, we cannot use the same venue, but there will be a cash-only plant and book sale near the school on the mornings of 22-24th May, organised by Barbara. The annual Harvest Supper went very well and the Cheese and Wine in March with music from the Roskettes was another good event co-hosted with RSP and raised funds for both churches. Sadly, due to lack of ticket sales, it was decided to cancel the Advent Lunch in 2023. It is becoming increasingly difficult to 'man' such events with a dwindling workforce.

The Diocese has decreed that the Shellrock benefice, including the four churches of the Rocklands and the Ellinghams will amalgamate with the Hingham group, creating a large widely spread group of 12 parishes. In spite of two separate bouts of advertising, there have been no applicants at all for the position of vicar so we are left wondering what will happen now! Many thanks, again, to the small ministry team for working together to keep us functioning.

We have kept the pattern of services in Rocklands as last year. The 'special' services held on the fifth Sundays have been well-received and have brought fresh faces to them. A musical session at RSP led by Tessa and Adrian after a regular service on 5th Sunday in July was a delight for all who attended and our service in Rocklands Village Hall in October celebrating the Spirit of Rocklands was also a great success. Plans are afoot for 5th Sunday specials coming up in 2024 !

Our usual 'specials' - Christingle, Candlemas, Pets/Harvest have also been wonderful and have attracted lots of children and adults who would not normally have attended a service. Thanks to all who have made these happen - the hard work in organising has been worth it !

We have addressed some of the major issues raised by the 2021 Quinquennial report. However, there are still many outstanding jobs that will require considerable outlay as they are beyond 'self-help'.

Many thanks to the small team who have battled to keep the grass cut all year- an on-going fight, especially with all the rain and higher than average temperatures. We are grateful to Stephen Howlett for arranging for the hedges and wildflower area to be cut and also to Amanda Buckland and Sharna Walker who have offered their services as volunteers and have done stints cutting and strimming.

Our biggest concern for the future is sustainability. How long can we keep going by muddling through? With the best will in the world, none of us is getting any younger and we are not getting new people in who are willing to take hold of the tiller. Without fresh blood, the future of All Saints church in say twenty, or even ten years' time is somewhat bleak and there are more questions than answers.

But in the meantime, we continue to keep smiling and any visitor will always be assured of a warm welcome at All Saints !

6.9 White Hart Public House (Dave Thomas). The Clerk delivered the report.

Our village pub has laid host to many wonderful and poignant events throughout the past 12 months. We have not faltered from our aim to provide local food, ales and events which are inclusive and in support of our community. We have gone onto raise many hundreds of pounds for well deserving Charities in our area, something which we of course will continue to do.

We are unable to detract from the economic down-turn which continues to have a dramatic effect upon ours and any other business in the hospitality sector. This is compounded by the incessant inclement weather. We have taken the opportunity to diversify our estate in looking to utilise our open spaces to fill a void. This position is currently still in the development stage and we intend to progress such with all intent and purpose, to a position of launch very soon.

6.10 Chapel Green Meadow (Sue Steel). The Clerk read out the report received from Sue Steel on behalf of the Chapel Green Meadow Management Team.

As the July 2023 edition of the Rocklander showed, the year was marked by a spectacular array of more than 50 Common Spotted Orchids, and also the re-appearance of bee orchids. Jim Paine gave a talk on gardening and climate change at an event at West Wickham Village Hall in August 2023, which was very well received by groups from across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. In connection with this Mary Trinder

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and Sue Steel manned a display about the Chapel Green Meadow and its management, which was a valuable opportunity to speak to people from large and small groups who are also interested in maintaining these local resources.

Members used their own equipment to cut the meadow in autumn 2023 but were hampered by an extended period of wet weather. Mick and Gella Ladner have now generously donated a motorised scythe to a friend in the village, as they are moving and will not need it. This will be made available to the Chapel Green Meadow Management Team for cutting in 2024 and beyond. This will allow flexibility in the timing of the cut, which will be especially appreciated in view of recent changes in weather patterns. It will also relieve the Parish Council of the expense of engaging a contractor to do the cutting. Our thanks to Mick and Gella for their support of the Meadow over the years, and best wishes for the move to their new home.

The recent problems with parking and putting building materials on the grass have resolved, and a short piece in The Rocklander has hopefully widened awareness of the need to protect this wild space.

Carolyn Emblen, previous Chairperson of the group, left the village in 2023, and with the imminent move of Mick and Gella Ladner, new volunteers would be welcomed by the group. The main activity period is August/September for the annual cut and hay drying, depending on the weather and the progress of the growth and seeding of the plants. We meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss the wider world of meadow care, and to plan any maintenance that is needed. Otherwise, we simply enjoy watching the seasons unfold in the meadow. Please contact me on sue@steelfamily.co.uk

The Rocklander The Clerk mentioned that the Rocklander is now being produced by Karen Roseberry alone and she would be very happy to receive some help with the magazine. It is a big task for one. It would be a shame if Rocklands residents no longer received a monthly magazine. Anyone able to help should contact Karen or the Parish Clerk.

To receive comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

The meeting closed at 7:36m.

Signed

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