

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting (Annual Assembly)
held in Rocklands Village Hall at 7.00pm on Monday 9 April 2018

Present:	David Howie	Chair
	Nickie Southgate	Vice Chair
	Shirley Colenutt	
	Richard Harrison	
	Cath Jones	
	Ian Scholes	
	David Witt	
	Kim Austin	Clerk
	William Smith	District Councillor
	Ed Connolly	County Councillor

Also present: 13 members of the public

The meeting started at 7:01pm

The Chair Cllr. David Howie welcomed everybody to Rocklands Annual Parish Meeting and introduced Ed Connolly our new County Councillor and Bill Smith. Both were thanked for attending.

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. To approve the minutes of the last parish meeting (Annual Assembly) on Monday 9 April 2018

RESOLVED to approve the minutes that had been circulated prior to the meeting, as a true and accurate record of the meeting. 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 the Chairman's report

The chair Cllr. David Howie delivered his report. David said:

I have found this year at times difficult and stressful. I have tried to continue to reflect the views of the majority of parishioners, to conduct the Parish Meeting in a democratic manner, to ensure all could have their say, but unfortunately this has caused some conflict. If I remain as chairman, I do intend to continue in the same manner.

Our funding position is good; however, we have raised the precept this year to cover a possible election cost, but we will not raise the precept next year unless something unexpected occurs.

We are reviewing the way annual donations are made to other groups in the Parish, such as the churches. In the future, we will ask village groups to apply to the Parish Council, suggesting the amount they require and what they will use the money for. We think this may be a better way to make donations. This may result in more money being donated or maybe less.

Planning as in previous years has been a major concern for us and taken some considerable time. The Breckland Local Plan is at last nearing completion. It is in, what is hoped to be the final consultation stage where the Inspector's changes to the plan are available to be commented on. The Parish Council will be making comment. I am unhappy with some of the proposed changes which leave some parts open to interpretation. However, our status for the time being, as a Rural Settlement with a settlement boundary remains intact.

Signed

Date

Our Neighbourhood Plan remains static until the Breckland Local Plan is agreed and in force. We do not feel able to continue as much could change but we still wish to complete Rockland's Neighbourhood plan in due course.

In dealing with planning applications and subsequent appeals, I wish to thank all the councillors, and in particular, Nickie Southgate my Vice Chair, and the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee Richard Golke for all his sterling work and excellent reports. Without this help my job would have been so much harder.

This year sadly we lost our County Councillor Cliff Jordon, he was a true friend of our Parish and in particular our school. He was always available for help and advice, and sometimes, I don't know how, he found time to attend our meetings. He is greatly missed. He has been replaced by Edward Connolly who is already taken up Cliff's mantle, arranging and attending meetings on our behalf. We wish Ed well and look forward to working with him in the future.

After the May 2019 elections, Bill Smith our District Councillor has indicated he will be standing down. He has been of great support to me and the Parish, attending most meetings, always there to give advice and support. This could be his last Rocklands Parish meeting and I wish him well. We will be dealing with at least one new District Councillor, let's hope we receive the same support Bill has always given us.

I am hopeful that later this year we will be given a start date for the First Time Sewerage Scheme in St. Peters.

Our gem of a school is full and continues to flourish. The Community Shop/Post Office, Village Hall, Playing Field and White Hart Public House are all doing well but continue to need your support.

Neighbourhood Watch continues to work well, attending SNAP meetings and liaising with police. It would be even better if more residents joined. It doesn't cost anything to join and all would be aware of any potential problems. I thank our four co-ordinators for their efforts.

We still have problems with speeding vehicles and motor cycles in Attleborough Road and in The Street. We are attempting to purchase a SAM2 flashing speed device which can be used to help deal with the problem. We have applied for a grant to part fund and we are waiting to hear if we have been successful. We will require volunteers to help operate and maintain the speed signs.

Two of our younger residents Kirsty Daynes and Laura Spratt and friends have raised over £80,000 to purchase equipment for the playing field play area. This is a magnificent effort, I am so pleased they took this project on, so a big thank you to them.

Flooding is still a major problem, but Edward Connolly our new County Councillor has taken this problem on with some vigour and maybe something will eventually be done.

There has been some unfortunate disagreement on how the Parish Council owned green in Chapel Street is to be managed by the group appointed by the Parish Council to manage as a Wild Flower Meadow. Hopefully there will be no more incidents and any issues can be resolved peacefully in the future.

At the elections some of our councillors have indicated they wish to now stand down, some after long service, over many years, I wish them all well and thank them for their long and loyal service, and welcome new councillors to the Parish Council.

I would also like to thank Nickie Southgate, Vice Chair who has always been there for help and advice. And again, thank Kim Austin our Parish Clerk, for all her hard work and advice, and for putting up with me.

And last but not least, a big thank you to all the parishioners who have attended the meetings showing your interest and support for where you live. It helps make the job of Parish Councillors worthwhile. Thank you.

5. To receive reports by County & District Councillors

5.1 County Councillor's Report 2019 - Ed Connolly

Mr Chairman, councillors, residents of Rocklands, thank you for inviting me to speak and making me feel so welcome.

Signed

Date

The financial climate in which local government operates continues to be challenging, with significant and ongoing reductions to core funding being experienced at the same time as substantial service cost pressures. However, there are positive improvements that I can report from county hall.

This year the council launched the new Early Childhood and Family Service. This will have greater reach to those more isolated children and families in need of help and advice, through increased local support, easier to access information and crucial outreach work while continuing to deliver services previously offered.

The council will be moving, not removing, some services into libraries, nurseries and community centres, alongside 15 new service bases. Crucially, this more efficient use of infrastructure means money can be invested on delivering the services that we know are needed to a greater number of children and young people, across Norfolk.

The council will also be investing £120m in special educational needs and disabilities provision in the County.

People affected by loneliness and social isolation in Norfolk can now turn to a comprehensive range of new services for help and support.

The new services include a county wide network of "Life Connectors" who work directly with people to provide coaching, practical advice and support to help people make and maintain relationships and strong links within their community.

The new services also include outreach, promoting volunteering opportunities and benefits, and addressing rural issues such as transport and use of technology in order to support people to become and stay well connected in their local area.

This year the council announced a £29m capital investment scheme to deliver 3,000 extra homes for older people in Norfolk over the next ten years.

Since the extra roads funding was announced of £12.7m, the focus in highways has been on pothole repairs and resurfacing. Money will also go towards bridge maintenance, and repairs of signs and drains. The council knows that potholes are a big issue for road users, and I hope you have seen an improvement in tackling this problem. Speeding remains a problem and I would like to thank all those individuals who have spent so much time and energy on collating information. The parish council has applied for funding for the installation of a Sam 2 speed indicator device. I will be happy to donate a sum towards this from my members allowance and will put this to the parish council.

I have been in discussion with the senior flood risk officer at County Hall and have asked for a meeting to take place here in Rocklands, with the agencies involved to tackle the flooding issues, particularly in the street. We had a productive meeting with our highways engineer on site in the village back in March and I would like to keep the momentum going.

For those who wish to find out more about the services provided by the county council, there is a wealth of information to be had from the council's website and I recommend it as a first port of call for any information you might require.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the parish council and parish clerk for all their hard work throughout the year and to all those residents who volunteer their time and enthusiasm towards making Rocklands such a great place to live.

5.2 District Councillor's Report 2019 - Bill Smith

Bill was standing down as District Councillor. There were four candidates in the May elections. 2 Labour, Joseph Dickerson and Irene Macdonald and 2 conservative, Phil Cowen and Sarah Suggitt. Bill confirmed that he would be joining Great Ellingham Parish Council as a councillor, to help their Chairman Tim Betts with the many large parish projects on the horizon.

Bill talked about:

Signed

Date

BRECKLAND LOTTERY

Breckland Lottery continues to grow and provide a way for communities to support important local good causes. We now have over 60 good causes signed up, selling over 1,200 tickets per week and are projected to raise £40,000 for good causes in the first year.

ATTLEBOROUGH DEVELOPMENT

Outline planning permission given for up to 4,000 homes plus infrastructure. Attleborough link road may affect Quidenham and Great Ellingham.

LOCAL PLAN

The Local Plan is out for consultation on main modifications... a major step on the journey towards to adoption of a local plan for Breckland. Much of the plan has been lined through. Breckland Council will be voicing their objections to the amendments which could be detrimental to parishes such as Rocklands, particularly HOU04. Having to have a 'rolling' 5 year land supply puts both District and County Councils on a treadmill.

NEW INVESTMENT STRATEGY

- A new Investment Strategy has been drafted and investment prospectus created to focus activity on opportunities to achieve growth, i.e. NNDR, jobs, innovation, etc. The 'Invest in Breckland' prospectus will be officially launched during the summer with an initial emphasis of targeting businesses to relocate to Snetterton Heath and other major employment areas. Focus on growth.
- Breckland has been made a 'business' council with a total portfolio value is £45.2 million. This includes all the commercial properties (including Riverside, Warburtons & Barnham Broom) and the Thetford & Dereham Business Centres. Barnham Broom may be sold.
- Income included in the budget for 19-20 is £3.53 million

Generating income but not quick enough, so still have to increase council tax. A balanced budget, for at least the next 4 years. Better position than the County Council who may severe problem within the next few years.

NATIONAL AWARDS SHORTLIST

- Best Local Authority Arts Initiative in the Heart For The Arts 2019 awards - Silver Social project. An arts programme to engage rural, socially isolated people to engage in the arts and make new friends
- Innovation Award at the Local Government Chronicle Award 2019 - finalist for commercialisation of **Breckland Training Services** a unique service offer across the country. Provider of services to the private sector, NHS etc. To include accountancy in the future.
Didn't get first prize but Bill is very proud of the initiative and the achievements.

There were a few questions for Bill. At the Breckland Planning Committee meeting where the large developments in Great Ellingham were discussed, 3 of 4 were approved with no contribution to NHS services. Flagship housing refused to give to NHS or education as they had already donated the land needed to provide a roundabout outside the school with drop off facilities.

How will the extra NHS services that will be needed as a result of all the development in the area be provided ? The developers had given money towards village hall and extra classrooms but no provision for NHS services.

The rest of Bill's report, Breckland Council achievements 2018-2019 is shown below.

Signed

Date

COMMUNITY RESERVE

£1.4 million committed to help support our residents, via:

- Development of Breckland Innovation Den to support entrepreneurs
- Leisure feasibility studies for Swaffham and Attleborough
- Developing support services for young people struggling in employment and housing
- Supporting a start-up scheme for businesses and entrepreneurs on the high street businesses

Enable councillors to invest £1.4m in 2019/20 into projects which directly support communities across the district.

This follows £1.7m in 2018/19 for similar initiatives.

MARKET TOWN INITIATIVE

- The market towns initiative makes funding available for projects that focus on: "Supporting market towns in the district to be attractive to new businesses and visitors to the area whilst meeting the needs of rural communities and businesses".
- £250k allocated in 2018/19
- Benefits villages as villages use towns as hubs, so strong towns mean more employment and leisure opportunities locally.

Funded projects include:

- Improvements to Swaffham Buttercross, Botten Island and murals in Thetford
- Purchase of the Glutton to improve street cleanliness
- On the Green activities in Thetford Riverside
- New Market stalls in Watton and Swaffham
- Helped establish a new ParkRun in Watton and Swaffham
- ShopAppy and 12 Elves of Christmas Campaign - promote local traders and enable people to choose to shop local / see what's available on our high streets
- BreckWorld App - driving visits to our attractions and towns via films and treasure hunt in an app

Two of our biggest MTI initiatives are our Shopappy scheme and Breckworld app.

Shopappy - launched in mid-April. 90 shops now signed up across our 5 towns. Filmed with shops as part of marketing campaign on Facebook, youtube etc.

12 elves of Christmas trail saw elves hidden in shop windows to attract visitors to shops/towns

Breckworld - 70+ locations across Breckland, treasure hunt, Stephen Fry support

Around 2,000 downloads since launch in February

How do I make a bid for Market Towns Initiative funding?

Check your project aligns with the funding priorities for MTI, then submit an expression of interest form. The MTI Co-ordinator will then contact you with feedback about your project and discuss the necessary info required for submitting a final proposal. All details on Breckland website.

INNOVATION DEN

After receiving applications earlier this year, the Breckland Innovation Den invited 10 potentially promising businesses and new start-ups to pitch for a share of £100,000 business development funding. The applicants had to demonstrate how the funding would help them to deliver products or services within the district, drive employment, and explain how the grant would help them make their business sustainable for future growth.

Signed

Date

BRECKLAND LANDLORD FORUM LAUNCHED

Engaging with local landlords to support them and further improve local housing options

CO-LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS

Following the successful co-location of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) into our offices at Elizabeth House in Dereham we have moved DWP into our Breckland House office in Thetford. This has created greater efficiency for our residents who use both services.

REGENERATION TEAM

We have established a new Regeneration team in the Place directorate with a focus on business engagement and support, skills development and regeneration of the District. They were fundamental in supporting Banham Poultry through their recent challenges. Two new Skills Engagement Officers

TRIPSTART

Tripstart, a new project to help people overcome barriers to get back into employment launched on January 25th. The scheme is being funded by Breckland Council, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). It is being delivered across the district by Dereham-based Kickstart and is expected to support and engage with 138 individuals.

FOOTWAY LIGHTING

The replacement of Breckland owned footway lighting continues at pace with most of the lights listed as needing replacement on the lighting survey now being replaced and commissioned by local lighting firm Westcotec of Dereham, progress has been good, and the contract is on time and within budget.

THETFORD SUE PHASE 1

Work has begun at Kingsfleet in Thetford, which will see the delivery of the first 300 homes on the site

BRECKLAND BRIDGE

Planning permission was granted for a 16 unit scheme at Litcham in late 2018. 21 further units at Colkirk are going to Planning Committee in April; both will be delivered by Breckland Bridge. Good progress is also being made at Chapel Road, Attleborough where Norfolk County Council have confirmed that the necessary statutory approval is in place for the release of land from education use, thus Breckland Bridge will be pursuing the delivery of 10 new houses here this year.

GRANT FUNDED SCHEMES

We cleared the final stage of due diligence in advance of the formal £7.95m grant offer being issued by Homes England - the Thetford Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid to support delivery of 5,000 new homes and associated development. Key detailed work is now underway on the detailed delivery plan, working closely with Pigeon.

The Council has successfully reserved 11MVA of power from UKPN for delivery of the Thetford Northern SUE with scope to utilise some of this to enable development of the TEP site and continue to work very closely with the land promoter Pigeon for both sites.

£110k of Business Rates Pool funding recently secured - £75k for TEP Infrastructure feasibility work and £35k for demands and needs study around skills and innovation. Including Snetterton power, over £900k of BRP funding has been secured in the past 12 months and more bids are in the pipeline.

Signed

Date

SNETTERTON (EMPLOYMENT SITE) POWER PROJECT

UKPN appointed and scheduled to complete the detailed design by the end of March, a key milestone.
£3.4m scheme totally funded from grant (LEP and BRP)

6. To receive comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

The meeting closed at 7:34pm.

Signed

Date