

SAXTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Saxtead held at Saxtead School of Dance, Saxtead on Wednesday 14 April 2010 at 19:30 under the Chairmanship of Councillor George Cullingford

Present: George Cullingford (Chair), Kevin Davis, Graham Ward, Robert Watts, Kate Hoare, David Perry (Clerk), Cllr C Hart and 10 Members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr C Walker, Lisa Handley, Barry Mallion

Approval of Minutes for Last Year's Parish Meeting

The minutes for last year's Annual parish Meeting on 15 April 2009 were approved and signed as correct with one correction (*the deletion of "as Chairman" from the second line on the paragraph on Townlands Trust on page one of the minutes*).

Matters Arising from Last Year's Parish Meeting

Townlands Trust - A report would be made later.

Dog Fouling on Footpaths - A dog bin had been installed on the Green by the A1120 for a single charge that included on-going emptying. SCDC had not yet invoiced for the installation.

Village Event - No ideas were put forward, but Nick and Ruth came forward and a very successful event was held.

Ice Cream Van - The Ice Cream van will stay on the Green and attempts were still being made to sort out some hard standing on Marlborough Road with Pembroke College, SCDC and the Parish Council.

Report by the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the organisers and helpers at the successful Village Event, particularly Sally Ellitt for the premises and Teas, Carolyn, Val and Suzanne for the children's events, Graham for the tug of war, Nick and Ruth for the Bar-B-Que and the singers for the entertainment.

There had been only a small number of planning applications during the year, including an extension to School Corner Cottage, alterations to Church Farm and a change of use of woodland to be included within residential cartilage.

The Chairman also thanked his fellow councillors for their help and support, the former parish clerk, who had resigned in June and the new clerk, David Perry, who took over in August.

Report from the Governors of Earl Soham CP School

There was no report from Earl Soham School.

Report from the Councillor C Hart, Suffolk County Council

Cllr Hart reported on the difficulties and challenges facing local government at the current time.

He began by stated that the conflict between the increasing cost of demand and demand for services, particularly from an aging population, and the funding restrictions for local government that are inevitable, regardless of whoever is in power nationally. These pressures have been present for some years and the County Council has reduced costs by over £60 million over the past 4 years and this year has been able to set the lowest ever increase in council tax. However, radical action will be needed in the future: this includes working with other parts of the public sector in Suffolk and may mean reducing the size of the organisation and the range of activities currently undertaken.

The uncertainty created by local government reorganisation that has been hanging over Suffolk for the last 3 years has now been removed, as the Secretary of State chose not to make any decision on unitary government, but instead suggested that Suffolk hold a constitutional convention in order to arrive at an agreed solution. Unfortunately there is no agreement or clarification explaining precisely how a constitutional convention should work. It seems likely that the savings from converting to unitary government were illusory and that, whoever is in power nationally after 6 May, will have more pressing matters to deal with.

Cllr Hart concluded by observing was a locality budget, which had not been used by Saxtead.

Report by Colin Walker - Suffolk Coastal District Councillor

No report was provided.

Report from PCSO M Thompson

PCSO Thompson was unable to attend the meeting, but had provided a written report, which noted the 5 crimes reported in Saxtead during the year.

- Two cases of criminal damage to the public toilets on Saxtead Green.
- One theft of a trailer.
- Two cases of burglary.

Report from Neighbourhood Watch

Graham Ward provided a report to the meeting and copies of his report were handed out

He reported that crimes and attempted crimes in Saxtead and the surrounding area during the year included:

- Thefts of heating oil and diesel fuel, theft of a trailer during May last year and theft of jewellery from a shop in Framlingham.
- Distraction burglaries from the homes of elderly people by a male purporting to be an electrician checking on switches in the house.
- Scams involving cold calls offering to buy or sell shares, emails stating that the recipient is eligible for a tax rebate and requesting bank details and internet offers of dogs for sale.
- A bogus male caller claiming to be a police officer investigating counterfeit bank notes and taking cash away to check for counterfeits - the caller did not return the cash.

There had been a traffic accident in January in Bedfield and speeding in the village and off-roading on the Green was causing concern. There had also been a missing person report in January involving a girl from Long Melford and a prisoner serving 12 years for GBH had absconded from Hollesley Bay in September.

Graham Ward concluded by urging people to report crimes and suspicious activity to the police or to the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator.

Copies of the report were provided to those present.

Report from Townlands Trust

Charles Elliot said the Trust dated back to the 14th century; it had been set up to maintain the Saxtead Church buildings with any surplus going to assist the poor of the parish. In the 19th century the Charity Commission limited the proportion of funds that could be used for the Church to one third, with the rest going to welfare, which was now handled by the Welfare Trust. The objective of the Trust is to spend the income rather than build up a reserve.

During the year ending 31 March 2010, the Townlands Trust income from interest and dividends amounted to £2,019.59, of which £1,208.40 was allocated to the Welfare Trust. The Trust distributed a total of £954.49 in relief payments to the elderly, Christmas gifts, books for students and a Children's party.

The question of giving more than one donation to a single student in a single year had been raised in respect of a student who did two different courses in a single year, but the Trust decided to retain the single donation per student per year rather than set a precedent.

A financial statement for the Trust was provided to those present.

Discussion of Village Litter Pick

It was pointed out by one of the public that SCDC did not appear to be emptying the litter bins, which contributed to the litter problem.

George Cullingford suggested holding a village litter pick. SCDC had agreed to deliver litter picks and bags to a central point.

After some discussion about the practicality of individuals collecting litter independently, it was agreed that litter removal was best and most safely organised as a group activity, particularly on the main road, where traffic could prove dangerous and would need slowing down.

It was agreed to hold an organised litter pick starting at 2:00 pm on Sunday 9th May from the public house. Publicity would include:

- A flyer added to the parish magazine for May, which would be organised by Sarah Rimmer.
- A notice by the entrance to the polling station.
- An email sent out to people on Graham Ward's Neighbourhood Watch email address list.

George Cullingford would organise the bags.

Report by Clerk regarding Parish Council Finances for 2009/2010

The Clerk reported the finances of the Parish Council as at the end of the year, stating that Saxtead Parish ended the financial year with:

- £ 1,830.77 in the Community account, which reduces to £ 1,148.10 after allowing for:
 - £ 35.00 for one cheque that has not yet been presented.
 - £ 647.67 owed to creditors (including room hire, dog bin installation and the last seven month's clerk's salary and expenses).
- £ 294.15 in the Business Saver Account.

This means that the Parish starts the new financial year with reserves of £ 1,442.25. This represents 76% of the annual precept, which is the main income for the parish, and is within the recommended reserve levels of between 50 and 100% of annual income.

The Saxtead amenities fund has a balance of £ 843.63.

The Parish Council reviewed the budget for 2010-11 at the meeting on 8 Dec 2009 and agreed to leave the precept unchanged at £1,900 for the year. This will only have a minor impact on rates for the year, but at least avoids adding to financial pressure at this time.

The Parish accounts are being prepared for audit with a view to their being signed off at the Annual Parish Council Meeting at the beginning of May and then submitted for audit.

Questions from Parishioners

- Funding for Play Area

Responding to a question from Kate Hoare about the availability of a budget for a play area for Saxtead, Cllr Hart said that there were funds for play spaces and funds might also be available from the developers' levy. A member of the public mentioned that there had previously been a play area in Saxtead, but it had been dismantled because the running costs, particularly insurance, had become prohibitive.

- Speeding & Road Safety

Speeding was a problem, particularly at night when some drivers on the Marlborough Road treated crossing the A1120 onto the B1119 as a chicane. The A1120 was also a problem for pedestrians due to high traffic speed and the absence of a footpath. There followed some discussion on whether, speed signs, stop signs or other modifications to the junction could slow traffic and improve safety. It was considered that most such safety improvements had already been discussed with the Highways Department with little prospect of implementation, even before the restrictions on funding.

- Telephone Box

Jean Vincent said that she had moved to Saxtead about 5 months ago and had problems getting to the nearby post box because of the position of the telephone box blocking the path. She had to use it as a support, but because of its condition and broken glass this was dangerous. She asked if it or the post box could be moved. The Chairman responded that the Parish Council had decided not to adopt the telephone box, because of its location and poor condition and he expected that it was going to be removed.