

Minutes of 2016 Great Wilbraham Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Thursday 21st April in the Wilbrahams' Memorial Hall at 7.30pm

Present: John Beadsmoore, Chairman, Sally Ramus, Joy Bray, Patricia Davis and Stephen Bartlett
District Councillor Robert Turner & County Councillor John Williams
Members of the public: Approximately 80 parishioners were in attendance.
The clerk, Natalie Mulvey was in attendance

1. Apologies for absence – Roddy Tippen and Edna Ingrey

2. Parish Council: Annual report – John Beadsmoore

The Chairman, John Beadsmoore welcomed everyone to the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting and congratulated the Wilbraham Memorial Hall Trustees for delivering such an attractive building. The Chairman thanked all the Parish Councillors for their many hours of work to support the village. He reminded the audience that the meeting was not a regular Parish Council meeting and as such had no decision making authority but was an opportunity to hear the opinions of the residents. He reported on progress and activities that the Parish Council had been involved in over the year.

- **Wilbrahams' Memorial Hall** – The Memorial Hall is free of debt. However, there are debts with the Parish Councils of Great and Little Wilbraham. For our part we gave £100,000 plus another £5,000 needed to facilitate a £40,000 grant from WREN. Effectively the village was responsible for £140,000 of the Hall funding.
During the renovation project the Parish Council had encountered problems in holding the meetings in the village. Unfortunately, the Primary School did not support the Parish Council by allowing them the use of their hall, therefore, meetings were held in Little Wilbraham Church. The Chairman thanked Steph Rodbard for her support in allowing small meetings to be held in the Social Club as soon as it was physically possible.
- **Speedwatch** – The Chairman thanked Geoff Fry for his efforts with the Speedwatch initiative, he was disappointed to report that this had now stopped due to a lack of volunteers despite, by a show of hands, most people at the meeting thought that we do have a speeding through the village problem.
- **Highways Authority** – The Highways Authority had been approached to see what improvements could be made to Church Street. They visited at the end of March and the Parish Council are waiting to hear their proposals.
- **The Village Phone Box** - This has been renovated and the Parish Council are working towards it becoming an exchange library.
- **Parish Cemetery** – The driveway has been cleaned and the grass is being maintained. There is now a disabled and pram access around the locked gate and the Orchard is blossoming.
- **Website** – The www.wilbrahams.co.uk website is well populated with Great Wilbraham Parish Council news. The Warbler and website are working hard to complement each other. The working-party are keen to get younger residents involved.
- **Installation of the church toilet** – The Parish Council gave written support for the improvements needed. The Church is currently closed while a toilet, kitchen and improved bell ringing facilities are installed.
- **Street Lighting** – Installation of the new street lights was not straight forward. The Parish Council purchased an additional light on Angle End, between the Post Office and The Memorial Hall because the lighting here was considered to be less than satisfactory.
- **Rubbish** – Despite the Parish Council arranging for additional bins to be installed, rubbish remains

a problem. In particular, there is an issue with dog excrement on the recreation ground. The primary purpose of the recreation ground is for sport activities and the Chairman urged dog owners to clean up after their pets although there is a suggestion that some of the problem is visitors.

- **Mental Health First Aid Training** – The Chairman thanked Councillor Bray for running the Mental Health First Aid Training which had been well received by residents.
- **Planning applications** – This year the Parish Council has considered twenty-one planning applications eight of which were for extensions.

The Chairman reported that there would be a Queen's 90th Birthday celebration on Sunday 12th June at the Memorial Hall and encouraged people to come along and support the event.

3. Parish Council: Finance report – Natalie Mulvey

The Clerk presented a finance summary report. She advised that the figures were a little distorted this year due to the receipt of the public works loan which had been paid immediately over to the Wilbrahams' Memorial Hall Trustees. In addition, the money held in reserve for the renovation project has now been transferred. The repayments to the public works loan had started and these will cost the Parish Council £4730 per year for the next 25 years.

Another significant purchase made this year was the purchase of the new street light at Angle End at a cost of £1198.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's finances were in good shape with funds of £47,000 in the bank. She reported that this had helped the Parish Council to keep the precept for 2016/2017 at the same level of £22,000.

The finance summary would be added to the website.

3. South Cambridgeshire District Council – Robert Turner

Councillor Turner gave a summary of the past year's activities at South Cambridgeshire District Council. SCDC had sought views on the proposed modifications to the South Cambs-City of Cambridge housing plan (Local Plan) as requested by the Inspector through public consultation undertaken between December 2015 and January 2016. On 31st March 2016 the Council submitted the consultation responses and proposed modifications to the Inspectors for consideration.

A £5 increase had been agreed in the SCDC budget set for a band D property.

Robert reminded everyone of the Community Chest Grants scheme available to voluntary and community sector groups and Parish Councils. They are small grants of up to £1,500 for one off costs relating to a project or activity.

4. Cambridgeshire County Council – John Williams

Councillor Williams presented a report on the activities of Cambridgeshire County Council. Over the past twelve months the County Council have had to spend £30million less due to cuts in Government grants to the Council. The County Council is continuing with its capital programme of resurfacing roads and footpaths, but due to financial constraints this will not be done as fast as desired. In addition, roads will be limited to being resurfaced not replaced. The road maintenance budget has been shrinking and the pothole repair funding has been reduced again. This will mean that Parish Councils are expected to take on more responsibility and pay for non-statutory items which until now have been dealt with and funded by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Williams was pleased to report that the No. 18 and No. 196 bus services had been funded for a further year.

6. Reports from community groups including Village Charities and the Warbler

John Beadsmoore thanked community groups for attending and providing reports which can be found on

the www.wilbrahams.co.uk website.

- **Great Wilbraham Benstead and Great Wilbraham Anne Ward Charity Report** - Tony Goryn presented the village charities book for signature by John Beadsmoore.
- **Memorial Hall Trustees** – Allan Painter reported that the refurbishment of the ground floor of the changing room block to create the Social Club was started in May 2015 and was completed for occupation during August. Construction of the hall itself was completed and the whole building was handed back to the trustees on 4th March 2016.
The project had been a wonderful communal effort by the villages of Great & Little Wilbraham. Efforts are now being put into ensuring there is maximum use of the facilities. Some of the old groups have returned and the Trustees look forward to some new groups being formed. He reported that the new Hall should cost far less to maintain.
- **The Warbler** - Martin Gienke read a report on the Warbler. During 2015 four editions of about sixty pages each with a total of 2085 copies were printed. The Warbler entered a National competition for village magazines which had over six hundred entries and the Warbler was in the top 15% in the country. The financial summary for the year revealed a cost of around £2000 and income of around £1700 from advertising leaving, a net cost of £350 to the two Parish Councils which results in the net cost of 12p per copy. There is an informal target of no more than 15% advertising.
- **Common Rights Holders** - Stephen Bartlett presented a report on behalf of the Common Rights Holders and started by thanking Jo and Peter Ladbrooke for their huge efforts in managing the Common over the past 13 years. During the summer a Bat survey was carried out on the Common. According to the report there were four species of bat detected. The group joined the Wildlife Trust volunteering group for their annual visit to the Common on 16th December when the scrub near the main entrance was tackled. Jo and Peter Ladbrooke have handed over the Chairmanship of the group to Stephen Bartlett and believe the excellent work of looking after the Great Wilbraham Common will continue.

Reports from the following can be found on the website:

- Village Charities
- Wilbrahams' Warbler
- Gardening Club
- Wilbraham Youth Group
- Common Right Holders
- Great Wilbraham Primary School

John Beadsmoore reminded everyone of the Vegetable, Flower & Produce Show which will be held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday 23rd July.

7. Broadband Status report – Stephen Bartlett

Stephen Bartlett reported that after some hard work there is now a fibre optic cable connection to the green box in the village. The green box at Frog End has 287 lines and these lines will be released in batches of sixty. The first sixty have been released and have all been taken. Martin Gienke had established that there were some speed problems and reported the issue being encountered by presenting a log of complaints to the Parish Council. The problem had been caused by poor infrastructure and in particular a faulty cable. Stephen reported that this problem has now been fixed.

8. Affordable Homes including presentation by Bidwells on selected sites.

John Beadsmoore opened discussion by explaining the background of affordable housing. Parcels of green belt land can be approved as rural exceptions sites provided that they are for 'affordable houses'. The Parish Council was approached by Bidwells to discuss five sites. These sites were presented at the 2014 APM. As there was not sufficient evidence to indicate a need for affordable housing the Parish Council

commissioned a survey on affordable housing paid for by Cambridge Housing Association (The Squire's Field developers) and carried out by Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England). The conclusion of the report was that to fulfil all current and immediate housing needs in Great Wilbraham, fifteen new affordable homes would have to be built. This scale of the scheme would typically justify a development of about ten dwellings.

Mark Deas from ACRE presented the results of the survey at the 2015 APM. Bidwells were invited but their representative had sent her apologies due to ill health.

Following this the Parish Council were approached by the Diocese of Ely and asked whether there would be any interest in affordable housing in the paddock off Frog End and Toft Lane. The Parish Council had an informal discussion with the builder and architects resulting in a proposal for enough affordable houses on this plot to meet the needs of the village. This seemed a positive proposal and the Council voted unanimously for the builders and architects to take it to a consultation phase with SCDC prior to presentation to the village before presenting a formal planning application. The Parish Council were later informed that the Diocese had withdrawn its offer with no explanation.

Bidwells approached the Parish Council with a proposal for two sites and at an exploratory meeting in January 2016 their proposals were rejected. They were invited to present their revised proposals to residents at this APM. The Chairman advised that a simple diagram for the Mill Road site, which needed further explanation, had been provided to the Parish Council two days before the APM. The intention had been for Bidwells to give this explanation to both the Parish Council and residents at this meeting.

Late on the day before the APM the Chairman received a petition signed by one hundred and twenty residents, a large part of the village, that challenged the concept of any housing development likely to be selected/proposed by Bidwell. In addition, it raised questions over the proposal for any rural exception sites. Therefore, to enable the Parish Council to establish how residents wished to proceed and to avoid an unproductive heated confrontation, the Chairman explained that he had withdrawn the Bidwells invitation.

The Chairman reminded the audience of the Parish Council's role in planning applications. The Parish Council does not decide on planning applications. It is their job to inform SCDC of the opinions of the village on any application.

Copies of the petition/letter were given to members of the Parish Council who had not seen it prior to the meeting.

The Chairman asked for members of the audience to raise their hands if they had signed the petition, around fourteen people did. He thanked the members of the public who had put the energy and work into instigating and organising the document.

The Chairman asked a member of the audience who was perceived to be the driving force behind the petition to present it so that those at the meeting could hear and understand exactly what was meant by the document and to allow the Parish Council to further understand whether it truly represented the view of the village. The resident declined. A resident stated that it was not a petition but a letter asking the Parish Council, Robert Turner, SCDC District Councillor and the landowners to consult with and take full account of the views of the residents in the development of Green Belt sites.

The Chairman led an open discussion on the detail of the petition/letter and refuted the suggestion that the Parish Council had been less than open in its exchanges with Bidwells. He suggested that the petition/letter confused fundamental points about whether any housing in the village could be justified due to infrastructure challenges, mixed with particular questions about the Mill Road site. In response to the understandable fears of over development, such as is happening in Fulbourn, Cllr Turner explained that a small development in Great Wilbraham could not escalate into a large scale development of 50 – 100 houses due to the SCDC Local Plan and National Policy. Councillor Williams also confirmed that small villages such as ours had different building status to that of Fulbourn.

Since it seemed clear to the Chairman that the meeting was becoming unnecessarily acrimonious and was

unable to come to any satisfactory conclusion he closed the meeting.

11. Any other business – None

Meeting closed 9.47pm