

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE  
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL  
2016 IN THE  
LECTURE HALL AT 7.30PM**

Present: Kerry Barnes (in the chair), Frank Aldred, Ted Bloxham,  
Chris Cadman, Kim Cresswell, John Fellows, Ian Westrope, Alex  
Rolph, Sophia Girvan.

13 members of the public.

County Councillor David Finch.

District Councillor Robert Bolton

Clerk: June Argent.

Apologies: None

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this meeting.

Acceptance of last year's minutes of the Annual Village Meeting was proposed by Frank Aldred and seconded by Ian Westrope. There were no objections to these minutes which were on the Parish Council website in draft form.

The Chairman said the main purpose of this annual meeting was to advise the general public of how the Parish Council spent the village's money. He showed the approximate costs were as follows:

Camping Close	£6,400
Footpaths and Open Spaces	£5,800
Churchyard and cemetery	£4,000
Street lights	£2,400
Hall hire	£ 580
Health/litter/bin emptying	£2,225
Administration	£9,500
Insurance	£1,260
Loan charge	£5,112.

The main issue during the past year was the Gladman proposal.

The Parish Council was approached by Gladman to meet with them but the Parish Council did not want to meet within a closed environment but eventually three members of the Parish Council did meet with Gladman to find out what they had in mind. Following this a public meeting took place in the village hall and this was extremely well supported. Hands

Off Steeple Bumpstead Group was in the process of being formed, independent of the Parish Council. 1240 opinion forms were sent out by the Parish Council to all on the register of electors and 431 (35%) forms were returned. 394 villagers opposed the development and 37 villagers supported it. 91% of the returned forms opposed the development and 9% agreed to it.

The reasons for agreement to the development were – people need somewhere to live, it would bring fresh life to the village and it would help keep the village amenities.

Those who were against said development stated – increased traffic problems, help the village amenities, flooding, far too big for the village, public transport, no spaces for extra parking in the village, poor water supply to the proposed area, access along Finchingfield Road.

All of these comments have been sent to Braintree District Council Planning Department and we may know their opinion in approximately 12 weeks.

The Parish Council's projects during the past year include drainage in Finchingfield Road. Essex County Council Highways carried out an underground survey which proved the drains were blocked and new drains were necessary along Finchingfield Road and Church Street.

The Parish Council also acquired a new handyman since Michael Patrick had resigned.

The maintenance of the Parish Council owned street lights is high and we are looking into alternative ways of reducing our costs but most changes will be expensive initially.

The war memorial needs repairs and the Parish Council has made an appeal for donations towards this work. So far we have been given £160 and are still trying to get a grant for the necessary work.

The churchyard wall is collapsing into Church Street. The Parish Council has formed a working party with the Parochial Church Council. An Act of 1972 stated the PCC could pass responsibility on to the Parish Council who then had three months to pass on responsibility to the District Council. An old hand written letter on file showed the PCC had asked the Parish Council to take over responsibility for the closed churchyard in 1974 but the Parish Council had failed to pass this on to District Council. The estimated cost of the work to the wall is in the region of £70,000 which is beyond our pockets since our total budget is around £40,000 for everything in the village.

The new bridge in Church Street was named 'Old Ford Bridge'.

Superfast broadband services were brought to part of the village.

The area in front of the cemetery is ideal for a layby and the Parish Council has applied for funding. It would be sensible if this work was carried out at the same time as the drainage work there.

The Parish Council had a new website as our old website was hacked by Islamic fundamentalists. Steve Cheek has created the new website with Alex Rolph being the responsible Parish Councillor.

We co-opted a new Parish Councillor, namely Sophia Girvan.

We were saddened by the death of Hazel Chapman who was a past clerk and Chairman of the Parish Council.

The village plan review group is working on this aspect.

We are looking into Section 106 monies which come to District Council from developers for new builds and this money must be for community benefit. The Parish Council cannot use this money itself but have to have authorisation from Braintree.

The ditch at the North Street/Claywall junction was discussed in great detail but it would seem that Mr Clarke has completed the work to Highways satisfaction.

The water leaks at the bottom of North Crescent and outside the British School have been inspected by Highways and are on their list of works albeit low priority.

Funding has been agreed by District Council for new signage in Church Street at long last.

### Charities Reports

The Chairman asked that all presentations should take no longer than 5 minutes each.

Ian Westrope reported for the Moot Hall Charity that the superdraw brought a good sum for the charity plus the hire charges from the Parish Council and Library. The profits from the car boot sale in May are shared between the Moot Hall and Friends of St Mary's Church. The fund raising aim is to provide funds for the upkeep and maintenance of the building and hopefully soon to offer help for education. The loss of Hazel Chapman as Chairman of the Moot Hall Trustees was a great blow and now Nigel Chapman has become a Trustee. The accounts have been audited.

Frank Aldred reported for the Steeple Bumpstead Parochial Charities which donates small amounts of money for those in need. The loss of Hazel Chapman as Chairman of this charity is great and Nigel Chapman has become a Trustee. The members of this charity are Paula Suckling, Jane Ridley, Ian Westrope, Nigel Chapman and Frank Aldred, the new Chairman. £1,065 was paid out to 25 recipients. If you know of anyone living in the village who is in dire need then please contact one of the Trustees.

Steve Woolmer reported on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee. Takings were down on last year and expenditure was up 10% which included £2,500 on new lighting. It was agreed that the front of the village hall could do with a little work including clearing up leaves and sorting out the drainage and guttering.

David Finch, the Leader of Essex County Council, said County Council was trying to balance the budget since because of government grant reductions, they have to save £1,000,000 per week. The only way this can be achieved is by using capital money to invest in property. They were investing in skills training, regenerating town centres, investing in highways maintenance and more patching and road surfacing.

Essex as a county has more than the national average of older people who need looking after.

There is an 85% broadband coverage in Essex.

A devolution deal for Essex has struggled with 12 districts and 1 city to participate.

The Chairman thanked David Finch for this input.

Robert Bolton, our District Councillor, reported that places were important to keep tidy and clean and waste reduction was essential. People needed to be kept safe and healthy with a handyman service for the frail. Mi Community grants have also increased.

District Council is increasing jobs, promoting town centres and better infrastructure. Half a million pounds has been allocated for local businesses to expand.

Braintree District Council's website has been updated and your thoughts on this would be welcome. They also support the Greater Essex Authority regarding devolution.

Kerry Barnes stated that the Clean for the Queen scheme, litter picking, had achieved 25 sacks being collected.

Kerry Barnes asked Robert Bolton if, as our District Councillor, would he support the Gladman proposed development. Mt Bolton refused to answer.

Ian Westrope said that by supporting new business but not small or old businesses whose rates have increased, then the older businesses were supporting the new businesses.

### Reports from Village Organisations

John Keen, editor of the yellow book, thanked all contributors and advertisers. It costs £1.50 per copy to produce each magazine. Since Alice Balchin left and Hazel Chapman died, the book was produced entirely by John. If anyone would care to help John their assistance would be much appreciated. Well done John, you are doing a grand job.

Mary Nicholls, head teacher of the Stanley Drapkin Primary School, said that unlike some recent publications state, the school is not bursting at the seams. Children attending the school come from Steeple Bumpstead, Helions Bumpstead, Birdbrook, Stambourn and Haverhill. The school is doing well in all subjects and they now have a new website. All staff are looking forward to Ofsted returning.

Michelina Partridge reported for the Friends of St Mary's Church. She said this charity had been in the village for many years but has been revamped with 45 members and 7 active committee members. They carry out small events to raise money for the upkeep of the church and wish to raise enough money to build a toilet in the church. They want to support the Parish Council with the work to repair the churchyard wall and are working with them.

Jonathan Suckling reported on the Agricultural Discussion Group. He said this was their 87<sup>th</sup> year. Meetings were very well attended with interesting speakers and walks. Farm security was a big problem at present.

Sheila Walsh, the village librarian, had volunteered to take over the library when Hazel Chapman could no longer run it since it was a village institution. Sheila had helped Hazel in the library in the past. Sue King helped Sheila. Many old books had been cleared leaving more space to house new books. There is now a yellow book contribution in most issues. More borrowing is needed and requested library books will be collected from Saffron Walden Library and brought to the Moot Hall by Sheila. It is thought likely that the library was started up in the 1920s with Herbert Argent as librarian. When the new school was built it had its own library and then mobile library van attended, reducing the number of children using this service. There is a photographic exhibition on the first floor of the Moot Hall.

David Finch and Robert Bolton left the meeting at 8.35pm.

Sharon Housden said there were 9 Brownies who meet in the Lecture Hall, 4 or 5 girls having gone up into the Guides. A few more Brownies would be most welcome. Many badges are worked for including maps and sewn on buttons.

The Guides have also been very busy working towards numerous badges, and attending various activities including Wembley Arena Big Gig. The Samaritans shoe box appeal was also worked on. Amongst the different badges worked on was one called the chocolate badge. The three eldest girls were working towards the Baden Powell Challenge.

Dave Kuyper has been chairman of the Bowls Club for 7 years. This club has 50 members – outdoor and carpet bowls – in 2 leagues. They won the league cup last year and 4 members are playing for Essex. Social nights are on a Tuesday – full membership costs £40. Per annum. Money has been spent recently on ditch mats, scarifier etc. 2 big quiz nights are held each year plus other fund raising events. Bob Bronson sponsors shirts, the Fox & Hounds sponsored ditch mats etc, Keven Henry donated money and Waddup Windows replaced windows for free. Dave Kuyper also has wound the church clock for 38 years.

Ted Bloxham reported on the buses. Essex County Council has renewed its services. There have been changes to the bus services run by Stevensons, routes 59 and 60, timetables are at the bus stops. Service 23 to Braintree on a Wednesday is funded by County Council and operated by Arrow Taxis. To use this service one must contact DaRT (Demand Responsive Transport) by telephoning Arrow Taxis Essex Ltd on 01621 874411 telling them where you wish to go, where you would like to be collected from, what time you need to go (giving at least 2 hours notice

before travelling). DaRT 3 operates between 0600 and 2000, Monday to Saturday.

Liz Heyer reported on behalf of Carole Jones for First Responders. More people have joined, there being 13 responders now some fully trained who go out with less experienced members. In 2015, 7000 hours of cover were provided to Steeple Bumpstead and surrounding villages. There were 64 different incidents of which 38 were in Steeple Bumpstead. Members teach basic first aid and have helped Guides with their first aid badge. There is a defibrillator on the outside of the village hall.

Liz Heyer also reported on the Patients Participation Group which began in 2013. There are 14 members and 8/9 are from Steeple Bumpstead. This group is independent of the surgery but help wherever possible. The surgery has 2 regular doctors, one having been here for 1 year and the other for 2 years. Also Mel Cunningham, the Advanced Nurse Practitioner, can do most of the doctors' work. There are two more nursing staff and the receptionists do change occasionally. Regular contributions are entered into the yellow book now. There is on line access for patients and feedback is necessary.

Andy Kenning reported for the Environment and Wildlife Group. Hedge-laying on Humphrey's Meadow had been most successful and hopefully the Haverhill Road hedge will also be laid sometime next year. The group is open to anyone and sessions are held monthly. Thanks to the Scouts for providing tools. Bee orchids and cowslips have been cordoned off so as to stop these areas from being cut until the flowers have died back. Also we must look after our hedgehogs since their numbers are diminishing.

Kerry Barnes read out a report from pre-school since no-one was able to attend this meeting. The summer term began with 37 children attending between 1 and 5 sessions a week, making up to a total of 101 sessions a week. Pre-school is open 5 mornings a week with lunch club operating for 4 mornings. On Tuesdays Pre-school go off for a woodland adventure morning on Bellropes and the main hall is used by Mums and Toddlers. There are 6 members of staff plus an administrator. This is known as a 'pop-up' pre-school since it has to be set up and dismantled every day resulting in staff working longer hours than government funding allows for. As a result the committee dedicates much time to fundraising in order to bridge the gap between school fees and running costs.

Ian Mackenzie, chairman of the Hands Off Steeple Bumpstead group, stated they had started in January 2016, had a committee, constitution, bank account etc. They are fighting the aggressive planning application from Gladman for 95 houses outside the village envelope off Finchingfield Road. This group is not against housing development in the village but this proposed development does not meet with required criteria. 347 letters have been sent to the Planning Department of Braintree District Council, 344 of these are objecting to the development. The group is composing a Terms of Reference document. Hopefully District Council will make a decision on this application on 8 June. District Council may want to send this application to Planning Committee and Gladman may go straight to appeal. The costs of other appeals is around £30,000-£40,000 so the group are fundraising. It will be a long campaign.

George Rainey asked how many houses have to be built in Steeple Bumpstead.

The Chairman said we are not given a target for the village but the district has to erect 850 houses each year which they have not been doing. The Parish Council put forward Water Lane for 20-25 houses outside the village envelope and also the site of the old garage in North Street would bring another 5-6 houses within the village envelope.

Ted Bloxham said Braintree District Council could have had a Local Development Plan in existence but the Government changed the goalposts.

It was agreed that across Essex, brownfield sites should be developed not greenfield sites.

#### Open Discussion]

Rosamund Rainey asked about Superfast Broadband which seemed to be working in some parts of the village and not others.

The Chairman explained that in order for broadband to be considered superfast it had to run at 20mbps or above, this has been promised to certain houses in North Street only initially but should be available to much of the remainder of the village within a year or so. Anyone not able to receive this new service can apply for a grant towards satellite BB.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

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