

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2015 IN THE
LECTURE HALL AT 7.30PM

Present: Kerry Barnes (in the chair), Frank Aldred, Robert Argent, Kim Cresswell, Helen Davison, Ian Westrope.
21 members of the public.
County Councillor David Finch.
District Councillor Chris Cadman.
Clerk: Mrs June Argent.

Apologies: John Fellows

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting
Acceptance of last year's minutes of the Annual Village Meeting was proposed by Robert Argent and seconded by Ian Westrope. There were no objections to these minutes which had been put on the Parish Council website in draft form.

The Chairman said that there had been criticism that the Parish Council had achieved nothing in the past few years, so he went on to itemise some of the Parish Council's achievements.

The Parish Council started the flood alleviation scheme and the flood action group took control. Thanks go to this group for all their hard work.

A new bus shelter, new play equipment on the Camping Close and repairs to the surround of the play area were carried out.

5 trees in the village have preservation orders. An arboriculturist inspected these trees and prudent pruning has been carried out.

The water running down Finchingfield Road over the past few years hopefully is now being sorted out with the help of highways and Ian Westrope. A culvert is to be cleared out. The broken road sign at Claywall has at last been mended by highways.

The cutting of footpaths takes a lot of time and money but with good results. A footpath map is on the new notice board by the village hall and information is on the website.

Nearly 50% of the street lights in the village are the Parish Council's responsibility so we have to pay for their repair and electricity used. We are looking into the cost of replacing the bulbs with low energy bulbs.

The Parish Council pays to have the village litter bins regularly emptied.

We have two salt bins and a pallet of small salt bags at Blois Meadow Business Centre – thank you Helen for organising this.

The rules on planning applications comments are changing and the Parish Council can only object if there is a planning disadvantage to the village.

The closed churchyard wall is leaning slightly so the Parish Council have joined with the Parochial Church Council to attempt to sort out this problem. A surveyor is coming to dig trial pits along the base of the wall in order to assess the problem. The Parish Council pays for the grass cutting of the closed churchyard and cemetery.

The Parish Council maintains the war memorial and organises the Remembrance Day service since there is no British Legion in the village now.

We also arrange village litter picks. On April 18th 25 people came along and 12 bags of rubbish were collected.

Blue signs have been sprayed on areas to try to stop dog owners leaving their dog's mess for others to tread in or pick up.

Approximate costs are as follows:

Camping Close	£10,000
Footpaths and open spaces	£ 6,800
Churchyard and cemetery	£ 5,300
Street lights	£ 2,300
Hall hire	£ 525
Loan charge	£ 5,112
Health (bins)	£ 1,800
Insurance	£ 1,200
Administration	£ 9,800.

New projects include consultations for proposed 20mph in Bower Hall Drive; we would like to re-surface the road outside the school; like a lay-by outside the cemetery and parking outside the school perhaps opposite the school on the grassed area..

County Broadband has begun installing equipment in the north of the village.

Hopefully we can get a pavement along Water Lane via an extension to the village envelope.

We now have a Parish Council website and that is what we do with our limited powers.

Sandra Green, Planning Policy Officer of Braintree District Council.

Ms Green said the Local Development Plan Framework is over a 15 year period and guides development in the district through allocated sites. There are currently two documents for the Local Plan Review. The 2012-14 planning policies were deleted by

central government and replaced with new policies. So work was started on a new Local Plan but rather than scrap the work already carried out, it was carried over into the new Local Plan.

In Steeple Bumpstead a new inset map shows Water Lane and 20 units for 2017/18 but flood risk assessments and transport assessments have to be arranged.

The National Plan Practice Guidance is in favour of sustainable development – and must boost the housing supply. In the 2011 census it was shown that we are living longer, migration, house prices and countryside, therefore more housing is required. No judgements have been made yet as to which sites will be developed but up to 10,000 houses in the Braintree area are needed.

The next step will be a Local Plan site allocation documents consultation in 2016.

Questions taken by Ms Green –

How many parking spaces per dwelling were allowed by District Council?
One parking space for a one bedroom home and two for a two bedroom home.

Can parishioners make new comments on planning applications since the old comments have finished?

Yes.

Large developments near villages are not good but it is generally accepted that new houses are needed but NIMBY. Braintree District Council would seek the Parish Council's views.

Will the new developments include affordable housing?

Yes.

The Chairman thanked Sandra Green for her time on such a thorny issue.

The Chairman also thanked members of the Parish Council; four members did not stand for re-election. So thanks to Robert Argent for 35 years' service, Helen Davison for her work on the yellow book and emergency plan, Bob Moore who carried out work before we realised it was necessary and Robin Hughes for setting up the website. Also thanks went to the Clerk.

The Chairman welcomed the new Parish Councillors who will be Chris Cadman, Alex Rolph and Ted Bloxham. We will have to co-opt one new councillor to make our quota of nine.

Charities Reports

1 Kerry Barnes read out Hazel Chapman's report – Chairman of the Steeple Bumpstead Parochial Charities:

The Steeple Bumpstead Parochial Charity is to aid persons in need and who have lived in the parish for three years or longer. However, if someone has lived in the village for a shorter period of time and there are extenuating circumstances, these will be duly considered.

This year the Charity paid out £805 in pre-Christmas grants and unusually no cold weather grants were paid out due to the mild winter.

If you know of anyone who requires help, either by way of assistance with travel expenses to and from hospital, or otherwise, do please speak to one of the Trustees, who are: Frank Aldred, Dr Jane Ridley, Paula Suckling, Ian Westrope or myself, Hazel Chapman. Telephone numbers in the yellow book.

All applications are treated in the strictest confidence.

2 David Phillips, Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee said the accounts are sent to the Charity Commissioners in October 2014 so these figures relate to October 2013.

Total income received	<u>£27,761.70</u>
Out-goings	<u>£26,341.13</u>
Net Profit	<u>£ 1,420.57</u>

3 The Moot Hall Charity reported that damp had penetrated the Moot Hall due mainly to the flooding down Finchingfield Road and settling around the Hall. The Moot Hall lottery, the car boot sale and library and Parish Council's rent made up most of the hall's income. There is a picture display of the village upstairs in the hall. The profits from the car boot sale are shared with St Mary's Church who hope to raise enough money to add toilet facilities to this building.

County Councillor David Finch reported that the past year had been reasonable and there was a 0% increase in county council's council tax as for the past 5 years. £130,000,000 will be going to highways and as for flooding issues; £23,000,000 will be spent on surface water flood alleviation schemes. Schools are doing better across the country and GSE results are improving considerably. The council has been rated good in children's services and although there was a reduction in the number of children in care, the costs are extremely high. There is a new park and ride in Colchester. Broadband with BT now has an 87% coverage but the largest populated areas get the broadband first. Since the referendum in Scotland last September, Essex is now up to devolution. There are 1.4 million people in Essex.

The Chairman thanked David Finch for his input and asked if Essex County Council got devolution, would that mean, as leader of the council, would David become Prime Minister?

District Councillor Chris Cadman reported that this was his last report as our District Councillor as he was not standing for re-election.

He stated that there was no increase in council tax once more and District Council's priorities are protecting the environment, supporting vulnerable people, promoting safe and healthy living, promoting and improving town centres and continuing to provide value for money and to deliver excellent customer service. Locally we have seen the completion of the flood alleviation scheme for which the flood group are to be congratulated. Recently, at Broad Green, with the support of county council, a government grant and a contribution from the property owners, we have seen the completion of individual flood protection schemes.

I thank all those within the community for the support they have given me during the last 4 years.

Chairman Kerry Barnes thanked County Councillor David Finch and District Councillor Chris Cadman for their efforts on behalf of our local community.

David Finch and Chris Cadman left the meeting at 8.50pm.

The following village organisations reported on their activities during the past year.

Pre-school - this started the year with 27 children attending between 1 and 5 sessions a week, making up a total of 80 sessions a week. This has increased during the course of the year and there are currently 41 children attending a total of 117 sessions a week. Pre-school is open 5 mornings a week with a lunch club operating on 4 mornings. At the start of the year, Pre-school had an Outstanding Ofsted grading; this grading was reduced in December due to an administration oversight. There are 9 members of staff and fundraising is essential. The big fundraiser this year will be a 10k multi terrain race and a 3k fun run and we hope this will become an annual fundraising event.

Players and Junipers have now got their own face book page. The players have been going for 52 years now and their last year's panto is up for an award. There was an evening of entertainment, Jack and the Beanstalk and Kindly Leave the Stage performed last year.

The Junipers have been going for 23 years and have performed First World War Poems plus there will be a panto next year, probably Rapunzel if Steph has got round to writing it.

A report from the Bumpstead First Responders said they were in their 13th year and still have 10 members. The number of call-outs ranges from 8-16 per month. Training is free so contact Carole Jones on 01440 730712 if you are interested in joining. Members have to be 18 year old or over and have a clean driving licence for at least one year. CRB checks are undertaken.

Mary Nicholls, Head teacher of the Stanley Drapkin Primary School said the Ofsted report last June was disappointing but things were improving. There was now a new deputy head, Charlotte Daines. In sports the school is doing well, there is a forest school to interest and educate the children. Many trips had been arranged including a choir trip to the 02 plus skiing. Pre-school attend the school on Wednesdays.

Sheila Bronson, events co-ordinator, reported on the Friends of St Mary's Church which was set up in 1998. Recently after a lull in events, the Friends have been re-launched. Presently they are trying to raise £10,000 for toilet facilities inside the Church for the comfort of one and all.

The Tree Warden, Simon Perry, explained that he reported on tree work planning applications to Braintree District Council on behalf of the Parish Council. Much work

had been carried out in the cemetery with the help of approximately 20 volunteers. Simon intends carrying out work on a database of village trees plus other work. With the help of scouts, Bellropes hedge has been cleared and re-planted. Next winter work at the ends of Bellropes hedge will be carried out. Hedge laying courses for 16 people have recently been completed.

Jim Girvan reported that the Pilots met on a Thursday and 24-26 children took part. The children were entertained with games, crafts and bible stories. Helpers include Sheila Burr, Jim Girvan and Sophia Girvan.

Sharon Housden reported on Brownies and Guides. In February some guides visited Alexandra Palace. Quilting for the juvenile diabetes fund raised the most money and these guides went to London and met Sophie Countess of Wessex which was very exciting. In October there was a large meeting in Wembley. Many badges have been achieved including craft badges, cooking badges and the Baden Powell challenge badge.

There is a wish to have a few more brownies join since four have gone up to guides now.

Theresa Lowe reported on the Cavell Community Choir which started up in 2013, meeting on Tuesday evening from 8-9pm. There are 64 members representing 9 local villages. This choir is a link between the community and the church. New members, especially men, are most welcome.

The Rev. Jonathan Lowe reported on St Mary's Church. He said that he and his family have been in the village for 2 years now. He feels the church is the heart of a village and the two churches in Steeple Bumpstead are working together. The church's kitchen area has been upgraded and heating is now under the pews. Hi-speed broadband has begun in the village with a transmitter at the top of the church tower. One future project will be a possible internet café in the church also there will be a summer fete.

Hazel Chapman sent in a written report concerning the library which Kerry Barnes read out. The library continues to exist even though the mobile library now visits the primary school and the mothers and toddlers group at the village hall. Every 3-4 months, 500 books are exchanged from Saffron Walden library. Audio books can be delivered to the homes of partially sighted or housebound villagers. The jigsaw puzzle swap shop now has over 100 puzzles and is proving quite popular. The library is open from 2pm to 4.15pm every Tuesday in the Moot Hall – use it or lose it.

Hazel Chapman also wrote about the Cancer Research-UK - Bumpstead Friends Group was formed in 1981 and over the years has raised in the region of £70,000. Sadly the group has more or less ceased to exist although fund raising is very important to Cancer Research-UK. The re-formation of the Bumpstead Friends is vital to raise funds for this worthy cause. If anyone is interested in re-forming the group please contact Hazel Chapman.

John Keen wrote in about the yellow book which is in its 22nd year of publication. The bi-monthly magazine is increasingly in demand and is distributed free of charge to over 700 households and businesses located in and around Steeple Bumpstead. The yellow book is prepared and distributed by volunteers at no cost to the magazine but it is printed commercially. The magazine is non-profit making and is also self-financing. Although the Parish Councillors and a few volunteers deliver the magazines, more volunteers are still needed to help prepare it. These volunteers would need some IT knowledge and capability but mainly they should have enthusiasm and commitment to carry the task through. Please contact John Keen if you are interested in helping.

Finally Open Discussion.

The question of a 20mph speed limit along Bower Hall Drive is in consultation phase. The final decision as to whether or not to go ahead with this scheme will lie with the new Parish Council. The siting of the poles seems to be some peoples worry.

Robert Argent proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for all of his work during the year.

The meeting closed at 9.42pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

DRAFT