

# PAPPLEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD AT PAPPLEWICK VILLAGE HALL, LINBY LANE, PAPPLEWICK ON WEDNESDAY 8th April 2009

Present:

**Cllr Mr C Womble (chairman)**  
**Cllr Mrs S Roberts (vice chairman)**  
**Cllr Mr D McCracken**  
**Cllr Mrs G McCracken**  
**Cllr Mrs J Robinson**  
**Cllr Mr B Zinn**

Absent                      **Clerk - Kay Mackenzie**

Parishioners              2 + Cllr P Andrews

The meeting commenced at 7.15 p.m.

Minute  
No.  
1/09

### **OPEN FORUM**

A parishioner raised the question of HGVs which were continuing to use Main Street.

2/09

### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2008 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3/09

### 2. CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT 2008-9

This is my third and final report as chairman and it has been another busy and active year for the Council. Indeed, we seem to have covered so much ground it is difficult to summarise concisely all the very valuable work that has been undertaken.

One of the early challenges we faced was getting the accounts and annual return for 2007-8 passed by the external auditor. It proved

necessary to call a meeting at short notice in order to approve the relevant documents and some considerable negotiation with the auditors thereafter. Fortunately, the Council was eventually given a clean bill of health, or what is known as an unqualified satisfactory opinion by the external auditor.

This all coincided with the decision of our Clerk, Vic Whyley, to resign from the post. Because any parish council is substantially run by its clerk, with the office standing vacant and no reasonable prospect of being able to recruit a replacement in what was a very short time span, the decision was taken, for the time being, to split the clerk's duties between Cllr. Robinson and myself.

I cannot emphasise too much the amount of work that has to go into the efficient running of a parish council. Most councillors, as I was, are blissfully unaware of the 'behind the scenes' work which goes into managing the Council's affairs. It is only upon reviewing the Council's archives and taking a 'hands on' approach that the plethora of duties become apparent. It is for this reason, on behalf of the Council, that I wish to place on record our thanks to our new Clerk, Kay Mackenzie, for coming forward and accepting such a challenging post and for the valuable assistance she has rendered since taking up her appointment on 1st January. I trust that over the years to come she will grow more deeply into the Council's business and find it a satisfying, if sometimes frustrating, job.

At this juncture I must also thank Cllr Janet Robinson for looking after the Council's financial affairs between clerks and for all the support she provided during that difficult time. The upheaval of losing a clerk presented an opportunity to thin down the ever increasing mountain of paperwork which had been accumulated over many years. Most extraneous material unconnected with the parish was disposed of, as were a good deal of unimportant documents such as old correspondence. However, the major bulk of documents of direct relevance to the parish were retained either in house or via deposit at Nottinghamshire Archives. We are now endeavouring to retain all future documents in digital form so that eventually the need to keep filing cabinets full of old material can be largely dispensed with and I hope that this policy of digitisation will continue in years to come.

A parish council serves no useful purpose unless it serves the parishioners it represents. Within the constraints under which we work, I remain firmly of the opinion that we are an effective Council, one that gets things done for the parish and one that provides excellent value for money. I will deal with the effectiveness of the Council first. Most of the difficulties that arise within the parish and which cause most concern for residents, the Parish Council has no control over. However, we do lobby other organisations to get things

put right. Rarely are solutions immediate but we continue to push in a number of areas, most notably in relation to problems with the highway network in the parish and also on the subject of securing adequate policing.

Turning to value for money, our precept for 2008-9 was approximately £5,574. In the same year we spent upwards of £35,000. I'm sure that any parishioner will appreciate that investing five and a half thousand pounds to get £35,000 in return represents an excellent deal. Let there be no misunderstanding; if it were not for the Parish Council, this money would not be coming into the parish.

But it is not only about money brought in. The actual value of work achieved under the Council's auspices is much greater than that. I cannot begin to put a value on, or even account for, the vast number of voluntary hours that are put in on the Council's behalf. Not only by councillors - we rely greatly upon people coming forward and giving their time, sometimes only a little, sometimes a lot, but all very welcome. It is this invaluable voluntary contribution above all else which enables the Council to do as much as it does and without it our money would go nowhere near as far.

With that in mind, I have to thank the army of volunteers who assisted at last year's Bonfire and Fireworks Event. Once again a hugely successful and enjoyable occasion and we are most grateful to Richard Hull for the considerable amount of time he devotes to that event each year.

Our other major achievement has been the continuing upgrade of facilities on the Playing Field. A good number of people turned out to assist us with demolishing the old agility equipment and removing the safety surfacing when we held a workday on 5th October. Again, had not Ron Walker come forward voluntarily and provided a JCB to assist with the demolition process, several of us would have needed to toil for many hours to achieve the same result. As it was, the job was finished in under half a day. On behalf of the Council I thank all those people who turned out to assist and particularly Ron for bringing the JCB.

A week later and Playdale were proceeding well with the installation of two new items of equipment costing £27,000. Since then, further work days have been held to install new seating, another picnic table and a second shelter. We have also purchased the components for a CCTV system that will hopefully help in preventing a recurrence of anti-social behaviour witnessed 18 months ago. This will be linked into the Village Hall's system for monitoring purposes. I cannot let the opportunity pass without sincerely thanking Richard Hull for all the effort he has expended both leading up to and during these workdays. He has also managed to source the CCTV equipment at

very reasonable cost and this will be installed shortly.

Elsewhere in the parish two new seats were installed, one at the end of Church Lane and another at the junction of Forest Lane with Mansfield Road. Bulbs have been planted across the parish thanks to a grant from our representative at Gedling Borough Council, Cllr. Patricia Andrews. It is hoped these will continue to thrive and multiply over years to come, making a significant contribution to brightening up the whole parish. We continued to support various parochial organisations with grants, including the Parochial Church Council, Cricket Club, Pumping Station and Village Hall Day Centre for the elderly. Progress has been made towards completing our next project, a scheme to enhance and preserve the grassed island area at Hall Gates, and hopefully this will see fruition over the next year.

Three editions of the Council's Newsletter were produced, two of which ran to four pages each. Again, considerable voluntary input is required to produce this Newsletter and get it circulated to each residence in the parish. Without our army of delivery staff, this would not be achievable and the Council's thanks go out to them all. The last edition included a 'Hidden Valleys' leaflet produced in association with Ashfield District Council and the Friends of Moor Pond Wood. It promotes a number of walks around the parish and will ensure that Papplewick receives the publicity it deserves to a much wider audience than we would have been able to achieve alone.

On the subject of the Moor Pond Wood project, both the Steering Group and Friends have had another successful year. One particular highlight must be the creation and opening of the permissive path from the north end of Papplewick Dam through to the Meadows path. Whilst only short in distance, its use as a link between these two places cannot be underestimated. Parishioners and others can now make circular walks around that part of the parish and enjoy the many benefits our countryside has to offer.

Not all our efforts have, however, been successful. I particularly have in mind the efforts we made to secure accommodation for the Council. An approach was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund but when Cllr. Robinson and I attended their offices in September, we were told that because the property we had in mind had already been modernised and renovated, it was no longer at threat and they could not help us. Thereafter, an application was made to the Jones Trust for assistance and that too has since been rejected. Notwithstanding the negative outcome of these efforts I firmly believe the Council should continue to press at every available opportunity for its own premises.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow councillors for their support and assistance throughout the year in question.

4/09 3. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Chairman read a report from the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer, a copy being appended to the minutes as Appendix I.

5/09 4. REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

a) Moor Pond Wood

Cllr D McCracken reported that the Moor Pond Wood web site would be substantially updated and virtually renewed. within the near future Two students involved in the project were already working hard to get things moving. The Steering Group were trying to source grants to cover the cost of this work. It was hope to have it fully operational quite soon.

Through the Breathing Spaces scheme around new 26 oak trees were to be planted in order to replace non-native sycamore that had been felled

The Parish Council had given funding towards surfacing the new footpath from the northern end of Papplewick Dam through to the Meadows path. Clearing of undergrowth in Dam Banks was now complete and the results were looking very good.

A programme of topics had been compiled for future Friends meetings right through until October. New information boards would be erected around the project area soon.

Cllr Patricia Andrews added that new signs would be erected around the perimeter of Moor Pond Wood and adjacent areas in an attempt to reduce dog fouling. These signs would be paid for by GBC.

b) Julian Cahn Trust

Cllr Roberts read a report as the Council's representative, a copy of which is appended to the minutes as Appendix II.

c) Parish Paths Partnership

Chairman reported that due to other Council commitments he had not been able to devote as much attention to the rights of way

network as otherwise might have been the case. However, there had been no major problems reported during the year and all paths had remained open and reasonably accessible.

Our contractor had twice during the year cut grass on sections at Stanker Hill. Some vegetation clearance around styles and along paths had also been undertaken but due to the time consuming nature of this work (it took about a full day to attend to all the small areas around the network) vegetation clearance had not been undertaken as often or as timely as in previous years.

d) Playing Field

Cllr Robinson read a report a copy of which is appended to the minutes as Appendix III.

e) Village Hall

No report was available.

6/09 5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

The meeting ended at 7.45pm

Signed Chairman ..... Vice Chairman .....