

STOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Lorraine Green

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL 2006 AT STOCK VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM.

Present: *Cllrs. Johnson, Williams, Elliott, Tully, Watling, Blackburn, Otter & Phillips*
In The Chair: *Cllr. Easton*
Minute Secretary: *Lorraine Green*
Also Present: *Chelmsford Borough Councillor Ian Grundy and 15 Members of the Public*
Apologies for Absence: *None*

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2005.

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were taken as read and the Chairman confirmed that they were signed as a true record at the May 2005 meeting. All agreed.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

Nothing to report.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Chairman had prepared and circulated the following report:-

Council Membership

During the past year we have seen a number of changes with the resignations of Sarah Lewis and Dennis Lusty as Councillors and recently Nick Peacock as both Chairman and Councillor. As no elections for these vacancies were requested, these posts were filled by advertising for applicants. Accordingly Roger Watling and Keith Blackburn were appointed Councillors, and we are in the process of appointing another Councillor. I am most grateful that Sally Johnson has agreed to continue as Vice Chair. Next year a full council election will be held.

Our County Councillor, Lord Hanningfield, unfortunately was unable to attend any meetings last year, but has indicated he will attend the meeting in August this year. Ian Grundy, our Borough Councillor, attends all our meetings and provides updates each month of any news or developments which concern our village. We are all very grateful for his active and practical support.

Planning

The Council continues to spend a considerable amount of time reviewing and commenting on planning applications, with the vast majority of these being put to full council. We continue in our aim of maintaining the village character and appearance, and keeping the village within the village envelope, conscious that 92% of parishioners do not want to see any development of the Green Belt. However our views are only one aspect taken into consideration by Chelmsford Borough Council Planning Department, which continues to make some decisions that surprise us.

Policing

For some months Stock has been without a dedicated policeman. This is a matter of some concern that has been raised with both Lord Hanningfield and the Chief Constable of Essex Police. We are awaiting their response.

Local Amenities

New play equipment has been installed on the Common, which is proving very popular with our young parishioners. We are purchasing 2 benches to be put near the play area for the comfort of the adults accompanying the children. Two other benches on the Common will be renovated shortly.

Keith Blackburn continues to be very active as our Tree Warden and recently organised, in conjunction with our primary school, the planting of 14 trees around the village: 9 in Brookman Road, 3 in Swan Lane, 1 by the War Memorial and 1 on the Common. A grant from Chelmsford Borough Council was obtained to defray the costs.

The Council contributed 50% of the costs of resurfacing the Village Hall car park. It also arranged for the improved drainage and resurfacing of the road outside the Almshouses, the clearing of the ditch around the Common and the resurfacing of All Saints church car park. The village pump has been restored and the village pond cleared. Additional litterbins and dog litterbins have been provided around the village.

Village Action Plan

In order to find out the interests and concerns of parishioners, and to ensure that we are working to address these, a series of 3 meetings were held. The results of these meetings are still being evaluated and will be used to identify projects to be undertaken in the coming year. Also as a result of these meetings a committee has been set up to draft a Village Design Statement. This project will be run independently of the Parish Council, but Cllrs. Blackburn and Johnson will act as our representatives on this committee. Please contact them directly for further information on this exciting development.

Best Kept Village Competition

Cllr. Williams has kindly agreed to coordinate our application. The results were disappointing last year so we will be making even greater effort this year, but we cannot do this alone. Accordingly could we please ask you all to do your part by tidying-up around your property, particularly those that are undergoing building work. Our annual 'bin-it' day is scheduled for 22nd April, starting at 10 a.m. on the Common and we would be delighted to see more volunteers this year. But a pleasant environment is not achieved by a once a year event: we look to everyone to do their bit on an everyday basis by picking up litter, discouraging parking on the verges and reporting any council property that requires attention.

Traffic

There has been a frustrating lack of progress in resolving the traffic problems experienced by this village. This has been primarily due to certain responsibilities for the highways being moved from the Borough Council to the County Council, with resultant changes in personnel responsible and breakdown in communication. We will be making every effort to re-establish a dialogue and press for changes in the coming year.

Website

Cllr. Watling continues to do a sterling job compiling the data for our excellent website, www.stock.org.uk, where you can find all our notices, agendas and minutes, along with contributions from villagers. He is currently also working on enabling us to view all the building plans electronically on a screen in the Village Hall, rather than by passing round large and unwieldy pieces of paper. A grant from ECC went towards the necessary purchase of a laptop computer, router, screen and projector.

Thank you

We work hard to maintain a pleasant village environment and to represent the views of the village in our interaction with the Borough and County Councils. Accordingly I should like to thank all the Councillors for their support and our Clerk, Lorraine Green for her invaluable assistance.

We would appreciate more active participation from everyone in the village, particularly at our meetings, which are generally held on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at the Village Hall.

4. TWEEDY CHARITY.

The Clerk read out the following report that had been prepared by the Trustee, Mr Tony Barker:-

The Trustees of the Tweedy Charity are pleased to submit their Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2006.

The Almshouses continue to enjoy full occupancy, which has enabled the Trustees to enlarge the scope of the services provided to the tenants.

The front gardens were getting overgrown and a gardener is now employed on a fortnightly basis in the Spring and Summer, which has improved the gardens immeasurably.

The front hedge, which caused some caustic comment after last year's drastic pruning, has recovered well. With constant care this should not now be an eyesore.

At long last the Parish Council has kindly repaired the track, with good drainage and a lot of gravel. At first the residents had some difficulty walking on the resulting 'beach', but it is now bedding down and we hope will continue to improve with age.

Mary Perry, at No. 4, has benefited from a District Council grant, providing her with a re-modelled shower room instead of the bath, which was causing her difficulties. The Council also re-laid her path with steps, and assisted towards the cost of hardwood handrails to both sides. Our thanks to Terry Vanner whose knowledge of ancient structures and assistance was invaluable. Rose Barker, at No. 1, has become aware of this last improvement, and we are trying to obtain a further grant for her to have similar handrails.

The Trustees thank the Parish Council for the much appreciated grant of £150.00, which enabled them to upgrade parts of the work to Mary's dwelling, to the benefit of this ancient building.

Tony and Diane Barker, who took over from Barry and Eija Woodgate at short notice last May, also wish to thank Peter McMillan, the Boreham representative, for his support and knowledgeable advice, particularly during the first few months. They are beginning to get to know the ropes now.

The accounts have not yet been fully prepared or examined, but once completed and checked will be submitted to the Council.

All in all, the Trust has had a good and quiet year. We hope that will be the norm.

Cllr. Watling asked if there was anyway the Parish Council could influence the finances for Rose Barker at No. 1. It was agreed that as the Trustees had applied for a grant the Parish Council would wait and see if the grant was received and then discuss the matter further.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

A parishioner, Maurice Elliott, asked the Parish Council to consider having the churchyard cut on a more regular basis. He advised that the tombstones are sticking out of the top of the grass and that the grass needed to be cut once a fortnight. Mr Elliott stated that Cllr. Peacock was going to speak to the Churchwarden regarding the matter but that it was never minuted that this had been done. Cllr. Johnson advised that Cllr. Peacock had spoken to the Churchwarden and it had been agreed that the grass would be cut four times a year and if it was felt necessary to increase the cuts then this would be considered. The Chairman asked all the Councillors to take a look at the churchyard and let her know their comments. The Chairman asked Cllr. Johnson to arrange a meeting with the Church Warden in order that the matter could be discussed further.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming; the meeting closed at 7.42pm.

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN).....DATE.....