

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (BLAKENEY) 2014** which was held on **Thursday 20th March 2014.**

Present:- Tony Faulkner (Chairman of Blakeney Parish Council), Christine Procter, Phyllis Reynolds, Deborah Reed, Lal Wright, Tom Green, Stephanie Green, Rosemary Thew, Dee Welsh, Keith Robinson, John Byfield, Pam Peake, Glenn Aikens, Kevin Aikens, Margaret Benson, Tom Benson, Jane Armstrong, Alistair Lindop, Pam Peake, John Peake, Ann Wootten, Louise Goodison, Roland Goodison, Marie Strong, Mike Strong, Barbara Franklin, Lilian Timms, Rev. Libby Dady, Rev. Jenny Pathmarajah, Chris Wheeler, Anne Maw, Elizabeth Wilkinson, Godfrey Sayers, Sophie Fallon, Edward Hackford, Jill Hackford, Geraldine Watson, Mick Adcock, Anne Rumsey, Brian Rumsey, Lindsay Brettle, Peter Franklin, Mary Marsden, Wendy Faulkner, Richard Daley, Hilary Daley, Jess Tutt, Danny Tutt, Mary James, Paul Reed, John Matthews, Jeremy Weston, Mike Reed, Diana Cooke, Louise Leonard, Willie Weston & Roger Hall.

Clerk:- Tracey Bayfield.

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman; Mr Tony Faulkner & Apologies for Absence;**
Norman Lamb MP.
- 2. It was *proposed & agreed* to approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 21st March 2013.**
- 3. Guest Speaker(s) –**
 - The Chairman introduced and welcome our new **REV. LIBBY DADY**, who thanked everyone in the parish and in the Glaven Valley for the very warm welcome that she had received.
 - **TOM GREEN** – Presented a slide display showing the scene of devastation from Cley to Morston from the top of St. Nicholas Church the morning after the December tidal surge and factual description. It showed the reasons why Blakeney has become a tourist magnet and why so many people come to live here and more importantly the elements of farming, small business. Leisure, pleasure and well-being which motivates and sustains this community.
 - **GODFREY SAYERS** – Presented the Case for the Managed Realignment of Blakeney Freshes using slides showing pictures, maps and graphs.
 - **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY** – Sophie Fallon (Team Leader for North Norfolk).

Over 250 people attended the drop in session which was held in Blakeney in February a meeting which was instigated by the Parish Council. This was one of the very best attended meetings in the region, ever! A whole array of thoughts and ideas were discussed during this event, but no decision has yet been made, although we do now have 4 options to consider, which we will be

consulting further on and we expect this document to be available in the next few weeks.

- Do nothing.
- Reinstate the former flood defence, but lower, shallower and broader.
- Reinstate it back to as it was.
- Build it as it was, but much higher.

Whilst much will of course depend on finances, we will consider which option is best both scientifically and economically. It will be a partnership approach and will require funding from other parties also.

One of the overwhelming opinions was the concern over the coastal footpath, and hence the Environment Agency, National Trust, Natural England and Norfolk County Council have decided to get the footpath up and running again before Easter. Whilst some sections will be built up, they are not flood defence banks. We hope to be finished with the heavy machinery early next week and then the National Trail team will come in and lay the footpath topping over the next few weeks and the National Trust will be installing boardwalks along the really muddy and slippery areas. We understand the importance of tourism to this area and hence the push to reopen this footpath.

When we have the report from our specialists we will consult with Norman Lamb, NCC, NNDC, Blakeney Parish Council and all of the other local stakeholders. There were concerns over the dredging of the channel through the Freshes and we have now secured funding and since the event we have now opened two sluices.

Questions and comments put to Sophie included;

- Should we not be protecting the village ie. The Manor Hotel, the Anglian Water Pumping Station on Friary Hills, but no other property?
 - In North Sweden they shore up many villages which they protect by ring banks filled with concrete which are rather attractive and do a great job.
 - In order to save lives any scheme should be designed to fail slowly, not quickly.
 - The most beautiful thing is the harbour itself, but it is depreciating quickly.
 - Have the Dutch engineers been consulted? (Godfrey Sayers advised that he had sat on the last Shoreline Management Panel and there were 3 such engineers and they suggested that the area from Salthouse to Brancaster be realigned.)
 - Any future defences must be built carefully, so as not to be detrimental to Cley and Wiveton.
- **NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL** – County Councillor, Dr Marie Strong.

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Floods - During the December flood, there were 240 properties at risk in Wells on the evening itself. People still did not believe that there was anything to worry about! In the end 23 shops and properties were flooded. At 5pm all mobile phone signals were lost. When the Prime Minister, David Cameron arrived the next day we showed him the local flood maps covering the whole of our area along the Coast.

Norfolk County Council is putting in £42,000 towards reopening the coastal path. We are promised that the Environment Minister will come, but of course he has been caught up elsewhere in the country.

Marine Conservation Zones - (MCZ); we now have a petition online, it is easy to use and we have over 1,000 signatures so far, but we want 2,000 so please all sign up.

Incinerator - We are still waiting for Eric Pickles (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) to reply, but in the meantime we now have a decision to make very soon, with regard what we can do. If we back out of taking the incinerator scheme forward, then it will cost NCC £29 million. On a plus side, we have managed to get £32.5 million back from the Icelandic Bank, following their demise.

Broadband & Mobile Phone Coverage – Once the superfast broadband comes our way, which should be starting January 2015, we will then be focussing on the lack of mobile phone signals in our area, starting with areas where an SOS signal cannot be received.

Coasthopper – This service has been bought out by another company and we hope to get news on the winter services very soon. The concessionary bus passes which can be used anywhere, ie. those from other counties do cause us a problem.

- **POLICE – WELLS SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM** – Sgt. Tony Perretta introduced himself to the meeting, he has been with the Norfolk Team since 2005 and started out as a Police Community Support Officer, then a Police Constable and now a Sargent and has recently taken over from Sgt. Tony Toynton. Tony is based in Holt and can be contacted via telephoning the 101 Police number for non emergency situations.

He also recapped the past year since the last Annual Parish Meeting.

6 x Theft offences (including shoplifting and unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle), 5 x Burglary type offences (3 being out of buildings) and 1 x Assault. The Crime breakdown is as follows:-

March 2013 – Theft from shop, April 2013 – Burglary in Langham Road & burglary from outbuilding, laptop stolen, June 2013 – Common assault domestic, theft of boat, August 2013 – Theft of two signs, and theft of

handbag and sunglasses left on table on the Quay, September 2013 – Theft from locker at Hotel room, credit cards stolen and theft of Hotel master key stolen from an insecure location, December 2013 – Burglary from dwelling in New Road, February 2014 – Burglary from a metal container on a building site and theft of a wallet from an unlocked vehicle.

There were 88 calls over the year from the parish, lots of suspicious circumstances relating to the boat yards/quay area. No specific issues or areas to highlight.

- **REV. JENNY PATHMARAGAH** – Gave an insight into the Café at The Methodist Chapel.
4. **PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY FUND** – Each group was presented with a cheque from the fund and then gave a brief report.

Blakeney & District Wildfowlers – £2,800 awarded. John Matthews (Chairman) advised that work has started on the clearing of the duck pond allowing the water to drain after which they would be able to fully assess the area.

Blakeney History Centre – £100 awarded. Pam Peake advised that this money would go towards a security cabinet for the model of the 'Hettie' lifeboat, which it is hoped will be displayed in the Church eventually.

Blakeney Scout Group Executive Council – £200 awarded. Phyllis Reynolds explained that this money would go towards new fire doors in the hut.

Blakeney Cubs and Beavers – £300 awarded. Danny Tutt; Leader explained that this money would be used towards items for camps and games.

Blakeney Methodist Church – £200 awarded. Lillian Timms advised that this goes towards the on-going maintenance of the building, and reminded everyone that the room was free for local groups to meet.

Blakeney Sports Club – £200 awarded. Barbara Franklin explained that in this coming year, they will be endeavouring to resurface both courts for the benefit of members, visitors to Blakeney and other local organisations that sometimes use the courts as they were last done in 2002. The cost of doing this work could be somewhere around £15,000, and so any donations are very welcome. The floodlights are also being looked at and will cost money to upgrade.

Holt Area Patient Group – £100 awarded. Lal Wright. As a member of the committee, I represent Glaven Caring and all of you who are patients of the Holt Medical Practice. The group provides a channel of communication between patients and the practice. We aim to make a contribution to the continuous improvement of services of the practice, and to encourage health education.

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The group produces a newsletter. Issue number 3 was in the Holt Chronicle in October, and this grant will go towards production costs. Our next meeting is next Thursday, so if you have any points or suggestions you wish to raise, then please do let me know.

Blakeney Bingo – £100 awarded. No one available, although we can report that this activity keeps many local people happy on a Monday evening in the Scout Hut.

5. OTHER COMMUNITY GROUP REPORTS:-

Blakeney Dinghy Park Management Committee – Edward Allen. After many years of effort, the dinghy park regulations have been proved to be a great help for everyone. Remember the trailer loads of junk we took away in the 90's, well this year when the storm surge hit on the 5th December 2013, most people had got their craft of the dinghy park in order to comply with the closure date of 1st December. As a result the annual Carnser and dinghy park clear up, produced 1 rowing boat that has recently been claimed by its owner. The handful of boats with the winter permits were washed away but have been found and retrieved by their owners. Nature had taken its course and very little was collected to take to the skip. Thank you all for your support in complying with the regulations, the area is a better place for all concerned and the visitors who enjoy the beauty of our coast.

As a result of the breaching of the bank protecting the Blakeney Freshes, the fresh water marshes, the dinghy park has lost a considerable number of spaces. At the time of writing, the Environment Agency have not announced whether they will be rebuilding the bank, but the coastal footpath to Cley is being repaired and should be open for Easter.

Dredging Project – David Woodcock. The project moves slowly forward, it is focussed on improving a 200 metre stretch from just north of the dinghy park slipway where the channel has been moving steadily westward and with the main flow becoming much narrower. This increases the navigational risks at half tide particularly on the ebb and is becoming increasingly dangerous. Our objective is to straighten the channel with a wider navigable channel and to improve the tidal scour, part of the thoughts are to redirect the outfall of Bridge Creek, the cause of the major sandbanks at that point. There will be no loss of moorings if the project goes ahead although some may be repositioned.

We are awaiting the first design plans having completed a site survey and have estimated the amount of spoil to be moved at 6,500 cubic metres. We half hoped that the various holes that appeared after the December flood might be a suitable place but our spoil is the wrong material.

There is a positive galaxy of consents needed before work can start and we also have to raise the money although that may be a little easier following recent

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events. The work to date has been funded by the Sheringham Shoal Fund to whom we are very grateful.

6. GENERAL REPORTS:-

Blakeney Parish Council - Report for the past year by Mr Tony Faulkner (Chairman) & Finance Report by the Parish Clerk. *See appendix 1 & 2.*

Red House Trustees – Brief report read on their behalf. We thank the Parish Council for their continued support and for the recent funding of the parking posts, a much needed improvement. We would also like to express our gratitude for the clean up on the Red House Land following the floods. In addition we would like to take up the kind offer of replacing the current seats on the Red House Land as and when the requests come in.

Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society – John Seymour (Chairman), read by Anne Maw. Chairman's report for the year to 19th March 2014.

I do not intend to comment on the financial side of BNHS activities. I work closely with the Treasurer and his report together with the abbreviated accounts brilliantly cover all aspects of cash movement, donations and legacies including expressions of gratitude to the many individuals and organisations that help us in so many ways. His reports are available from the Society.

Another busy year has flown by. The sale of 27 High Street left us with sufficient funds to pursue a hectic programme of refurbishments in 2013 on top of the extensive works carried out in 2012. The total restoration of 87 High Street was completed along with the removal of the old pebbledash rendering to the whole terrace and the restoration of the brick and flint walls. In addition two properties have had new roofs, two properties have had new bathrooms with associated building works and several new wood-burners have been installed, all on top of the usual cyclical painting, chimney sweeping, boiler servicing and other repairs including those led by tenants.

2014 will have to be a more considered year and although we have a long shopping list of quotes to discuss we may have to delay some of these until 2015. The refurbishment of two more cottages is high on our list.

Last year I reported an additional level of management was to be introduced into our contractor's structure to ensure smoother running of outstanding works. I believe this has worked well so far. We have also introduced a priority coding system into tenant led jobs and, given that I haven't had any complaints, I have to assume it is also working well.

We now have a new Housing Officer, Linda Cripps. My thanks go to Lal Wright who temporarily filled the gap left by Elizabeth Moore who retired last year. Every year the Housing Officer writes to the people on the waiting list to establish whether or not they wish to remain on the list for the following year. We now have

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an active waiting list of fourteen of which three are couples and eleven are singles and a non urgent list of four of which two are couples and two are singles. In 2013 one name was taken from the waiting list with the new tenant for 87 High Street. 1 Little Lane is empty at the moment. It will be used as temporary accommodation while another cottage is refurbished after which it will be allocated to a new tenant. 117 High Street is also empty and is being prepared for a new tenant.

Our policy of increasing rents to align them with housing association rents continues and we are very close to completing this exercise. When completed, rents will go up by no more than inflation plus up to 1%. We are aware this brings difficulty to some people and we are fortunate that there are very few rent arrears at any one time.

I am very pleased to report that four new committee members joined us in 2013. They are Michala Shaw and Liz Kendall, Gerald Peplow and Linda Cripps our new Housing Officer. We are enjoying working with the new faces and the ideas they are introducing. I thank my fellow committee members for all the hard work throughout last year. Thanks also to our financial and legal advisors and especial thanks to our many supporters and fundraisers who work so hard to make the Society a success.

We do, however, have a problem. Peter Farmer, our excellent treasurer is leaving us to return to the Phillipines. We wish him and his family every happiness and success with their move and we thank him for everything he has done for the Society.

Peter will leave an enormous gap and although Anne Maw has willingly volunteered to take the reins it is only intended to be for the short term. We have advertised the position and it is very disappointing that in the active community surrounding Blakeney that no one has come forward to help. If anyone knows of anybody who would like to join us as Treasurer please get in touch.

At 31st December 2013 there were 87 shareholders including four new members who joined during the year. Two shares were cancelled during the year.

The AGM of the BNHS is on 21st May at 7.00pm in the Methodist Chapel. We look forward to seeing you there.

7. OVER TO YOU; OPEN SESSION - A chance for those present to comment on any items already discussed. The points raised were all related to the sea defences, and hence Sophie Fallon took contact details where necessary.

Meeting closed at 9.17pm.

Chairman _____