

Sutterton Annual Parish Meeting

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF SUTTERTON HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1st MAY 2024 AT 6.30pm IN THE COMMUNITY LOUNGE AT SUTTERTON VILLAGE HALL

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies received.

2. Chair's Report

This year has seen many changes within the Parish Council and I feel, as I hope you all do, the Council has grown in both strength and confidence over the past 12 months. The role of a Parish Councillor is a voluntary one and I would like to thank all Councillors for giving their time, support to each other and working together as a team in what I think has been a “new brush sweeps clean” approach in the last 12 months. We have had 2 new Councillors join since May, Cllr James Cantwell joined us in May 2023 which was an election year but uncontested in Sutterton and Cllr Mark Bateman was co-opted on to the Council in January 2024. Sadly, in March this year Cllr Cyril Baker passed away. Cyril served on Sutterton Parish Council for over 40 years and will be missed by all who knew him. Another big change has been the role of the Clerk and the Responsible Finance Officer within the Council. In May 2023 Mrs Wendy Depear gave notice to the Council. Wendy had been with us for over 10 years and we thanked her for her work. After advertising and interviewing applicants, we welcomed Sarah Smith as Clerk and RFO in September 2023. Sarah has attended a training course for new Clerks with LALC and has worked incredibly hard over the last 7 months learning new skills and working with both patience and determination. I would on behalf of the Council like to thank Mrs Maxine Warr and Mrs Diane Fairweather, both local Clerks who have mentored Sarah in her work sharing both their knowledge and time and have been an invaluable asset to both Sarah and Sutterton Parish Council.

So, what have we done this year? In May 2023 we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III and the children of the Parish were presented with a commemorative mug. The play equipment in the Rec has been undergoing repairs after the annual inspection by RoSPA. Some are only minor repairs but some have been more major like the zipwire. This is an ongoing matter but is all in hand. Dustbins have been a concern with some residents and so this year 3 new dog waste bins have been added to the village and 3 general waste bins relocated. We are also looking in to installing 2 wheelie bins into the Rec to help with the crows and chip paper but this is a matter in progress and will be updated as and when. A new cart was purchased for the litter picker as the old one was heavy and cumbersome. Two speed indicator devices will be installed shortly as the original machine has not worked properly for a while and is beyond repair and outdated. The budget for 2024-2025 will include the cost of 2 more indicators so that hopefully by May/June of 2025 each road in to and out of the village will have one. It was decided to keep the precept to a minimum this year to help with the cost of living. Admin has also seen changes this year and being led by the Clerk the Council now works with online banking and is becoming more tech savvy. Council Policies and Standing Orders have either been, or are in the process of, being updated and adopted and everybody has worked incredibly hard on the Standing Orders. So I do hope that Sutterton Parish Council will move forward in the next 12 months as a team working with all residents in a community within a village that we can and should be proud to call home.

3. Fourfields Primary School Report

Unfortunately, no one was able to represent the school but a report was sent through. See Appendix A.

4. Village Hall Report

Chair of the Village Hall, Lesley Ingham, gave a report.

The Village Hall is financially secure. The Hall is not available for hire on a Monday as that is the day allocated to the school. Regular events held are Zumba, Baby Ballet, Parish Council meetings, WI, Ladies Club, Yoga, Fenland National Health and Quiz Nights. However, the biggest event, with an average of 90 people attending every week, is the Bingo on a Friday evening thanks to Mark Morrell and his wife. The tabletops are big fundraisers as there is no outlay and an auction is being tried this year for something different. Mark would also like to do a 60's, 70's and 80's night and there has been a lot of interest in this. The Gala's, unfortunately, are too expensive due to too much outlay. Sadly, they also lost a long-standing member, Cyril Baker. A meeting was held and it was agreed that a new younger person would be good for the committee.

5. Sutterton Parochial Charity Report

Chairman, Peter Cropley, provided a report which was read out by Debbie Sands.

In May 2023 Tea Party hampers were distributed to qualifying members of the Parish to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

£2000 was paid to a young autistic girl in the village to help fulfil her dream of going to Evolution Foundation Dance School in Colchester. She approached the Parochial Trust face to face with her mum and it was nice to be able to help and she is going forwards very well.

We also made the usual Christmas gifts of £60 to each qualifying inhabitant of the village.

During the year, Mr Peter Maguire of the Fish and Chip shop replaced John White of Wigtoft Road as a Trustee and Gordon Simpson of Boston Road was re-appointed for a further term of 3 years.

6. St Mary's Church Report

Unfortunately, no one was able to represent St Mary's Church but a report was given which was read out by Debbie Sands.

Last year they held the Flower Festival. Sadly, this was not repeated this year. Reverend Mark Williams has been appointed and was licenced on the 22nd April at Swineshead Church. He has approached the Methodist Church to work together.

Due to there being no Flower Festival this year they have been trying to do lunches as an alternative such as a "Spud and a Pud". The next one will be "Pizza and a Pud". A Cheese and Wine Evening is planned for the 7th June 2024.

A Church service is held every Sunday at 9.30am. There is a pop in every Friday 10am-12pm to which everybody is welcome. The second Sunday of every month is Jelly Church for children. Every third Saturday is Coffee morning 10am-12pm or lunches till 11.30am-1.30pm and Fourfields School hold an End of Term service.

7. Sutterton Playing Field Report

Chris Firth attended as representative for the Playing Field.

There are only two football teams that play on the field, both for The Black Bull at Kirton.

There was a Sunday team but unfortunately that has packed up now. This has had an impact on the income the Playing Field makes. It does struggle for income in terms of its costs and outgoings and they do rely on sponsorship to get things done. The changing rooms will need investment/updating soon as they do not meet current requirements. If this is something the village would like to keep we are going to have to look at how they can be updated over the

next few years. Generally speaking, it ticks along quite nicely. The reason it was taken on in the first place was so the facility was there for the village as a big open space. It is not used to its full potential and if anyone has any ideas for use then please do make suggestions. LHP seem happy to work with them and are happy for them to utilise the grass area at the front and make it larger. The football income is approximately £600 a year. Taking in to consideration the insurance for the building is £450, this does not leave a lot for anything else.

The issue of car parking was discussed with respect to the football clubs. The Playing Field committee do request that they park sensibly which is passed on to the home team but invariably the away team park wherever. The entrance to the Playing Field is also used as parking which could then also hinder Emergency Services if ever required. LHP have planted a hedge along the boundary at the front of the Playing Field and the Playing Field Committee are looking for funding to try and put some sort of gate across the entrance. A quote was received for fencing all the way around the field, but this was very costly.

8. GP Surgery Report

No report was received from the GP Surgery.

9. Methodist Church Report

Sue Ward gave a report on behalf of the Methodist Church.

They have regular coffee events held in a separate room which is a little less churchified and this is attracting more villagers which is making a nice community space. Sunday worship services are held every Sunday at 10.30am. Special services such as Easter, Harvest, Carols etc are held. Every third Sunday they join with Kirton which hugely extends the numbers. This is alternated monthly. Coffee mornings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month between 10am-12pm and are becoming more and more well attended by the villagers and by villagers further afield. The Flower Festival commences on Friday 3rd May to Saturday 4th May. A Strawberry Tea will be held on the 6th July between 2pm-4pm and the 13th December the Salvation Army will be attending at 6pm. The cost of running the Church is increasing like everything else but they are keeping their head above water and are welcoming more people in, not necessarily for services, but socially. They are looking forward to 2027 when the Church will be 100 years old.

10. Women's Institute Report

Unfortunately, no one was able to attend from the WI but new members are most welcome. Meetings are held monthly. Please contact Janice Despicht for further information on 01205 460 590 Ext 2.

11. County Councillor and Borough Councillor annual reports

County Councillor Mike Brookes gave a report.

He regularly attends and reports to the Parish Council meetings throughout the year and deals with County Council matters as they arise throughout the year. He is always available to deal with queries when contacted.

Road Maintenance – roads continue to be a top priority for the County. In 2023 just over £100 million was spent on road maintenance and investing an extra £12.83 million beyond the £91.01 million required to simply maintain the current state of the County's road network. This also included £19 million from savings in other budgets that the County Council decided to put towards highways rather than other projects as this is the main priority in the County. The budget for 2024-2025 is £129.4 million. In 2023 110,00 potholes were fixed, repaired 224 miles of road and rebuilt 77 miles of footpath and cleaned 192,235 drains. All this information is available in the County magazine. There is now focus on uplifting the unclassified roads.

What has happened in the past is they have concentrated very much on the classified roads, the A's and B's and trying to improve those. The unclassified roads have suffered with respect to this. The plan now is to keep the A's and B's at a standard where they are now with maintenance but try to uplift the number of County Council roads so they are not requiring maintenance. They are giving more focus to the unclassified roads now. Hopefully over the next few years a rise in the standard of those will be seen. The government have recently announced that £8.3 billion is planned to be invested in the UK roads over the next decade and that will be split between local authorities throughout the country. It is understood that that £2.2 billion will be coming to the East and West Midlands to be shared.

Flooding – in recent months storms have caused unprecedented flooding incidents which has had significant impacts on the communities. Section 19 investigations are still ongoing and an additional £4 million has been set aside for major flood alleviation schemes. Also an extra £1 million for design and implementation and £2 million for getting and clearing drainage with recurring flooding. Extra resources are now available for 4 full time jetting crews and 4 drainage construction gangs to try and make sure the drains are not blocked up in the first place.

Devolution – proposals for a devolution deal for Greater Lincolnshire have been approved by Lincolnshire County, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire Councils. A recommendation has now been submitted to central Government requesting statutory legislation to be put in place.

Borough Councillor James Cantwell gave a report on behalf of himself and Cllr David Brown.

Since being elected in May last year we have been active in supporting all our Parishes in the Ward and it has been great to meet to many of our residents as well. We both regularly attend Parish Council meetings and help residents when they contact as well. We hold monthly surgeries and we will continue this going forward. You will also find our contact details/ward surgery dates on posters around the Ward. For residents worried about the National Grid Pylon route we have held a public meeting with Matt Warman, MP, where residents were able to voice their concerns. Furthermore, we both sit on the Outer Dowsing Energy Project Community Liaison Group and always raise concerns of our residents. Both of us are Parish Councillors for different villages and I sit on the Bicker Trust while Cllr Brown sits on the Rural Services Network (SPARCE Rural, Rural Services Partnership, RSN Community Group) as Council representatives so we are keen to get stuck in supporting our villages.

For the past year Cllr Brown has sat on the Planning Committee and has continued to give his views and put his vast experience on the committee to use. I have sat on the Licencing Committee and we have updated the policy and guidance for Taxi Drivers introducing a points system that drivers must abide by. I also sit on the Audit and Governance Committee and have worked with other Cllr's to get the 2021/22 and the 2022/23 accounts agreed, scrutinised failings with payment cards in the Council and worked with our auditors to ensure that residents are getting value for money out of their Council.

Cllr Brown has had a busy year as Mayor of Boston and has raised a considerable amount for his chosen charities, The Salvation Army and the RNLI. He has attended many events throughout the year in Boston, wider Lincolnshire and outside the County as well. We have both continued to raise the needs of our villages with the Borough Council and will continue to do so, both at Boston Full Council Meetings and directly with Council Officers.

We look forward to supporting our Parish Council's in the future and it is important to thank the Parish Council and all the village groups for their hard work this past year.

12. Open Session – Parishioners may raise any matters of their choice (15 minutes maximum)

Flooding was raised down Eastfield Close. Cllr Brookes reported he would look in to this.

Signed..... Date.....