

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall, Lakenheath
Monday 21st May 2018 at 7.00pm.

Present: - Cllr Morley (Chairman), 6 members of the Parish Council, Councillor Noble and 16 members of the public were present.

The Chairman, Edward Morley, welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies – Cllrs Gyte, Gentle, Whitehand and Norman.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2017 were available to all present. The Chairman allowed those present time to read the minutes, which were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Colin Noble gave his report:

- Although it is preferred not to have large increases, Council Tax has been increased by 5% after 7 years with no rise. £236m worth of savings have already been made with a further £54m still to be made. Salaries have increased by a minimum of 2% with most of the increase on minimum wage salaries.
- Three Academies are being interviewed to run the new school with the decision due to be announced in August. Cannot be sure of opening date at the moment, it is likely to be 2020 due to issues. The new school will start small, working alongside the existing school but can take up to 420 pupils.
- New homes means more infrastructure and more investment is needed.
- There are concerns about Doctor's Surgeries. Standards have been discussed and although the only topic of conversation in some places, others have no issues.
- Stepped down as Leader on Thursday. The Group doesn't seem to like austerity. Would continue as County Councillor. There are District Council elections next year.

Questions to Cllr Noble

Were all reports about the local doctor's surgery bad?

Most were anecdotal. These don't tend to be good new stories, only receive negative reports.

The additional houses will have an effect.

There hasn't been much housing over the past 20 years – no more than 20 properties.

What will the surgery do once the new houses are built?

The CCG struggle to get doctors with places offered abroad. Everywhere is under pressure with not enough doctors being trained in this country.

Some surgeries work well with better practices. A best practice club is needed to get different systems out there.

The surgery is working well under pressure and awful conditions.

When you need an appointment you can get one the same day.

St Edmundsbury are positioning themselves as front runners for the new council. How will Lakenheath be positioned/voiced and will the council tax increase to equal St Edmundsbury? Bury is currently cheaper than Lakenheath and monies will only go to the larger towns Brandon, Haverhill, Newmarket and Bury. How will it be equalised?

Forest Heath will equalise up by £5 each year for five to six years. The rules are that there is only one council tax rate for the whole council. Forest Heath will benefit from longer term cost savings. The merge will mean 198 less councillors and simplification long term. If the councils doesn't merge, costs will increase in the longer term. Councillors have the voice and must be strong, fair and robust. I am personally a strong voice for Lakenheath.

Council tax in Lakenheath is higher than elsewhere due to the house rentals to USAF personnel.

Although the point is made over and over again, nothing can be done. I agree that a grant should be paid over.

The new school transport system had responses of 90% against the proposals. What will SCC now do?

After consultation and discussion the proposals will be in the public domain. Savings have to be made. People will be given time to come to terms with any changes. SCC do not want to end buses, with transport already run to Brandon. Further proposals may come direct from the schools. I want pupils to have a choice.

Will MCA run buses as Brandon is not big enough to take all children from Lakenheath?

Look at the position of the schools. SCC is no longer the provider of education. Academy Trusts now run schools. If a school is full it is a statutory duty for SCC to take pupils to the nearest school. Both Brandon and Mildenhall could expand with housing growth which could mean a second school.

How will the new Mildenhall school location be effected?

Schools are funded directly from central government. I have seen the numbers but not the response from the school. I can't see anything that will stop the move.

Did all children get a place at Lakenheath School this year?

Yes and a couple outside of catchment. Numbers ebb and flow and a point has been reached when a new school is needed.

The chairman thanked Cllr Noble for attending and Cllr Noble left the meeting.

LAKENHEATH COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Community Speedwatch has been in operation in the village now for approx. 18 months. They try and get out and about at least once a week, although with only 6 volunteers this is not always possible.

Although very occasionally they have been shouted at, sworn at and ridiculed, the vast majority of motorists and pedestrians are really supportive of what they are trying to achieve.

And what are they trying to achieve? In short it is to encourage safe, lawful and considerate driving throughout the village. It is NOT to try and catch as many offenders as possible, although they are reported to the police if they are speeding and may receive a warning letter if the police consider it necessary.

They are only allowed to stand at designated sites in the village which the traffic police have approved. At the present time these are Eriswell Road, Briscoe Way and Drift Road. But they are currently trying to establish other sites at North Road and Undley Road.

They have no power to prosecute or fine motorists, they are simply trying to educate and encourage them to drive in a safe and considerate way, and observe the speed limit.

As mentioned at the start they are only 6 in number, so if anyone can spare an hour or so a week you would be most welcome to join them. Please contact the Parish Office.

LAKENHEATH HERITAGE GROUP

It is now a year since the Maids Cross sculpture was restored. This was achieved by a small group with an idea to create an easy way to look at history of the village. It is a massive job. Photos are now available on the Parish Council website along with time lines and stories. Any interesting stories are welcome. Support has been received from many people. The Records Office in Bury St Edmunds doesn't have much information about Lakenheath and would like more. Help has also been received from Mildenhall Museum.

LAKENHEATH GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Lakenheath Good Neighbours was formed 12 years ago and offers assistance to anyone in the village. It currently has 12 volunteers and although dedicated to help everyone there are times when there isn't anyone available. Trips are made to the Doctors, for shopping and household tasks undertaken. A donation of 40p per mile is requested for trips outside the village and volunteers will stay with people during hospital visits.

24 hours is normally required and information is double checked, although doctors appointments are currently on the same day and assistance will be given where possible.

474 jobs have been carried out in the past year with all but 4 fulfilled.

The good neighbours also put on an afternoon tea and volunteers provide the food. 20 – 30 people are collected and attend this very popular event.

The Parish Council help to fund the Group and have this year been asked for £150.

Many of the volunteers have been in place since day 1 and customers do not know what they would do without the group.

LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2018

Copies of the Annual Report were available to all present. There were no matters arising.

The chairman thanked all organisations and councillors that had taken time to attend the meeting.

PARISHIONERS' ISSUES

A resident of Pashford Close bemoaned that a No Through Road sign would not be erected by SCC as there is not enough traffic using it. This does not help the fact that their wall has been knocked down twice by lorries trying to turn.

A resident confirmed that after the Parish Council contacted SCC Highways a No Through Road sign had been erected at the bottom of Maids Cross Hill.

In closing, the Chairman again thanked all who had taken the time to attend the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:40pm.