

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Hales and Heckingham Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 at 7.00p.m. in Hales Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllr. J. Herring, Chairman, Hales and Heckingham Parish Council

12 members of the public & Cllr K Billig & Cllr M Somerville

**In attendance** Mrs. J Hale, Clerk to the Council

**Apologies:** Cllr Mrs H Hellendoorn.

### **Welcome**

The Chairman of the Council, Cllr. John Herring, welcomed everyone present and thanked them for coming to the Annual Parish Meeting.

### **To approved the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.**

Following circulation of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, they were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **To receive a report from the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr. J. Herring on the Council's activities during the past year.**

The Chairman's report is appended to these minutes.

### **To receive a report from the Clerk to the Council on the end of year finances of the Parish Council.**

The Clerk reported that at last the Council balances were looking healthy with an anticipated end of year balance of £18,120.62. The Council had kept within or under budget and had some 'earmarked reserves' for both the village sign and the playing field. The precept for Hales & Heckingham has been set and the Council are pleased that on a Band D property (the average given) a reduction of nearly £5 per property has been made but due to the increase in properties the Council will receive the same precept as for 2014-2015.

### **To receive a report on activities over the past year from District and County Councillors.**

County Councillor Mrs Margaret Somerville

The County Council has had a difficult year with there being no overall majority thereby making decision making more difficult. There have been no major road projects undertaken or planned but potholes are being managed well. The Rate Support Grant has been reduced but the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Alliance are trying to stop the increase in Council tax. At the present time the County Council is finding the financial climate tough.

Cllr Somerville was asked about the new property entrances and the destroyed lay-bys on the A146 – she was not aware of the work but would find out what was going on.

Cllrs Mrs Somerville was on two committees, Adult Social Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny. There have been some big changes with the implementation of the Better Care Act and the use of Personal Budgets.

The A146/Yarmouth Road junction continues to cause problems and Cllr Mrs Somerville was advised by residents that there had been 3 further accidents there since Christmas.

District Councillor Mrs Kay Billig

Cllr Billig advised that the District Council was once again holding council tax and that the District Council was working well and under the current leader the District Council was being run on a very business like basis. The Council had been able to upgrade the recycling centre thereby providing residents with the opportunity of recycling more. A new fleet of bin lorries had been provided which were more efficient. The Council had also purchased new road sweepers. The Council had agreed/built 900 affordable homes, more than the rest of Norfolk in total. The Council was investing in small businesses and business units. The District Councillors all had a small personal budget this year and Cllr Billig had been able to help provide a defibrillator in Ellingham and also helped Hales Cricket Club.

**To receive a report from the Norfolk Constabulary**

There was no report.

**To receive any questions from members of the Parish**

There were no questions.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Signed.....  
Chairman

Date.....

**Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr J. Herring on the Council's activities during the last year.**

This Council meets six times a year and should run with seven councillors, although most of this year we have been one short for one reason or another. These facts are important because that defines the amount of progress the Council can make in taking forward local issues. In order to identify local issues we have held two "surgeries" and as a result created a number of working parties that each focus on one topic and is led by a councillor. We have also issued two newsletters that were designed with a dual purpose in mind.

1. To keep the community up to date with progress
2. To engender two-way communication with the parish

The latter point is important because if the people want facilities developed and improved then, it has to be a joint effort between the councillors and the community.

**Working Parties  
Village Hall**

Over this year it has become apparent that the village hall struggles to be fit for purpose. The heating especially is a problem and the structure of the building needs attention. The current management committee have indicated that they would like the parish council to take over the running of the hall.

#### Road Safety / Bus Service

These two working parties have overlapped to a certain extent. It has become clear that the Vehicle Awareness Sign now has limited effect on the speed of traffic, I'm glad that NCC are picking up the electricity bill. The bus service seems to have stabilised but we are aware that the village wants a regular service as before. During 2014 year we managed to engage with NCC and it was decided to explore the possibility of a bus stop on the A146. We were promised a feasibility study initially by the end of the year – we are still waiting.

#### Playing Field

Parish Councillors take turns in checking the playing field and the equipment on a regular basis and also arrange for the grass to be cut on a regular basis. The lead councillor for this working party left the council early in the 2014 and we have been unable take this forward, given other commitments.

#### Community Composting Scheme

Planning permission for the scheme was given last March. We successfully applied for a grant from the National Lottery and this has funded to all the costs needed to set the scheme up. Volunteers have helped with the construction of the site and we are now operational. The official opening will be on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 by Sir Nicolas Bacon and all will be welcome. Thanks to the Raveningham Estate, Peter Cargill the farmer and Norfolk County Council for their support.

As in previous years there have been a number of planning applications and the council has debated these and responded accordingly to either the District Council or the Broadland Authority. It is good to see Heckingham Park progressing although the Badger development is yet to start. And the Garden House reincarnated as Marsala Gardens seems to be doing well.

Early last year the police advised us that they would no longer attending parish council meetings and will rely on parish councillors contacting them should further information be required from the monthly report. We have had some issues over the way the figures have been presented but crime levels remain similar to previous years.

#### Superfast Broadband

We became aware during the year that the villages were not going to be included in the first phase roll-out in Norfolk. As a consequence we have been lobbying the programme director for Superfast Broadband in a endeavour to ensure we get I included in the next roll-out phase.

I would like to close by thanking members of the Council and our Clerk for their efforts over the year. It is with regret that we received resignations from Councillors Nichol and Wilkins and we thank them for their contributions whilst in office.

John Herring

Chairman Hales & Heckingham Parish Council