

**DRAFT Minutes of the CHRISHALL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Chrishall  
Held on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 at 8.15pm in the New Village Hall, Crawley End,  
Chrishall.

PRESENT: Mr Tom Jackson (Chair), Derek Ailes, Mrs Jane Holloway, Mr Tony Kinsey, Mrs Tracey Slade, Mr John Kay, Mr Stephen Parish.  
Belinda Irons (minutes)

PUBLIC: There were 28 members of the public present.

APOLOGIES: Mrs Helen Melville – Smith, Mr Ian Pitfield,  
Uttlesford District Councillor Robert Chambers  
Essex County Councillor John Lodge

1. Chairman’s Introduction

Chrishall Parish Council has been fortunate to have a team of dedicated and committed Councillors. In this election year, we have lost two valued members of the team – Brian Burlinson and Mary Picton-Turbervill. The chairman thanked both Brian and Mary for their valued input into the Parish, and thanked the outgoing Council and hoped the incoming Council would enjoy the forthcoming year.

There have been two major schemes in the past year - the affordable housing development on Jigneys Meadow, and the purchase and refurbishment of the Methodist chapel and hall. Full updates were provided by Derek Ailes and Guy Rackham. The Village Hall Committee were thanked for carrying out a super refurbishment, and, going forward, the management of both halls. Derek has been patient and persistent in his pursuit of the affordable housing for the village, and obtaining Jigneys Meadow for the village despite many and varied obstacles not of the Parish Council’s making. The newts have proven to be a particular challenge!

Dog fouling has again become a serious issue. Everyone was reminded that there is a requirement to pick up your dog waste, and put it into one of the many dog bins around the village. It is not acceptable to leave it on the footpaths or verges, or put it in a bag and then throw it in the hedge. The chairman asked that if anyone was seen carrying out this antisocial behaviour, please report it direct to Uttlesford District Council or to the clerk. The chairman commented that he will personally seek to identify anyone who behaves in this unacceptable manner, and they may find their name appearing in the village newsletter!

Highways issues can be reported directly to Essex County Council on their web site. Whilst the clerk is able to report issues such as pot holes, it is

important that as many people as possible report highways concerns, as this increases the likelihood of a repair being carried out swiftly.

Littlebury bridge is due to be repaired in June, and we hope that the timescale will not slip as it has in the past.

The Parish Council met with Cambridge County Council last year to explore the renovation of Heydon Lane. Whilst the resurfacing has helped with the very dangerous pot holes, there are still land drains discharging onto the highway. Heydon Lane will remain under surveillance to ensure issues are raised swiftly with Cambridgeshire. As with Essex County Council, Cambridgeshire has an online highway reporting system, and this would also benefit this parish if everyone reports faults.

Essex County Council has been instrumental in providing funding for the renovation of the play ground, for the renovation of the Methodist chapel and hall, and we also have funds to go towards the renovation of the pavilion. A vote of thanks was offered to Essex County Council Community Initiative Fund Members who have provided funding to help us achieve many beneficial initiatives.

Uttlesford District Council provided the nest swing and the roundabout free of charge to the parish. A vote of thanks was offered to Sue Hayden for thinking of Chrishall when these items became available.

The World War One Commemorative Service was very moving, and it was wonderful to see so many parishioners attending. Thanks were offered to Neil Marshall for organising the event, and Sheena and Gary Lashko, and Marcus West for a very moving tribute. The release of the pigeons combined with the artillery fire provided a very atmospheric backdrop to the event. Lucas Ling was thanked for making a very fitting tribute which will be fitted to the war memorial base once it is properly repaired. All those who helped with the cleaning of the memorial and tidying the verges on the green were thanked.

John Kay kindly led the Armistice Day ceremony, which was very fitting, so thanks to John for stepping into the breach and doing a very fine job. Thanks were offered to Steve Foot for producing the newsletter and taking control of Emergency Planning, Stella Potter for her sterling work as parish transport representative, and the Open Door committee for providing a welcome opportunity to have a relaxing and social lunchtime treat twice per month.

Development is a big issue everywhere. The Parish Council will again consider whether a Neighbourhood Plan would benefit the parish. The old chicken farm has had a recent planning application turned down because the site is outside the development envelope for the village, is in the rural area beyond the green belt, and is not considered to be a 'sustainable' site for housing development. It is important to remember that if development is granted on this site, there may be unforeseen consequences as the status of the site is still 'agricultural' when judged against the National Planning Policy Framework.

The landowner has contacted the Parish Council and would like to approach the village to discuss the future of the site.

Given recent changes in planning law and the pressure for development locally, Chrishall Parish Council will be holding a special meeting to consider whether or not to go ahead with the Neighbourhood Plan. Obviously the Parish Council would welcome as much input from the village as possible. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to identify areas suitable for development. You can't have a Neighbourhood Plan that just says 'we're ok as we are thanks'. However, it can be a tool to guide development into the appropriate areas. The other option is to do nothing and wait and see what applications come forward, and deal with them on an individual basis.

Finally, thanks were extended to the volunteers who have turned out to do the litter picking, cleaning up the village, helping out in the community, and the many who just 'do it' using their own initiative. Thank you!

2. Essex Neighbourhood Watch: unable to attend

The Chairman commented that there have been a number of incidents in the village over the past year including thefts from sheds, catalytic converter thefts, and oil thefts. It is important that any suspicious behaviour or vehicles are reported immediately to the Police on the telephone '101' number, or, if a theft is in the act, '999'. The Police need intelligence to build a picture of what is happening in the area.

The Police can arrange property marking either at an event, or they can attend a private property.

3. New Village Hall: update

Guy Rackham updated the meeting on the refurbishment of the halls. The refurbishment has cost £80,000 which has been achieved through grant funding and personal donations.

There is a kitchenette, toilets, store, the floor has been levelled providing safe access, rewiring, replumbing, a new security system and fire alarms have been fitted throughout. The overhead projector was donated by a private company.

Grant funding will continue to be sought to finish off this phase of the refurbishment, and grant funding will be sought to undertake the next phase of the refurbishment which will insulating the ceiling in the chapel hall.

It is anticipated that Chrishall Pre-School will move into the South Hall, but this will not be exclusive use, as some groups require the larger kitchen. On such occasions, pre-school will move to Chapel Hall.

Jean Hards-Nicholls has done a wonderful job as treasurer/ booking clerk, and it is with regret that it is reported she is standing down. The new bookings clerk will be Emma Duffas, and Helen Melville-Smith will be treasurer. John Kay is the Parish Council representative.

The financial situation is healthy, and more events are planned for this year. Thanks were extended to the Village Market for their welcome donation, Essex County Council CIF, Thomas Amos Charity, Uttlesford District Council, for grant funding.

An open day is planned for the 28<sup>th</sup> June 4 – 7pm

A defibrillator has been achieved for the village and it will be sited in the new village hall entrance.

A 'one hundred club' will be formed to raise funds.

Questions from the audience:

Q: There is considerable 'echo' in the building – will this be resolved?

A: The new vinyl floor will help, as will soft furnishings. A false acoustic ceiling will be investigated.

Q: What will happen to the income from the old village hall?

A: the hall will be transferred to the Parish Council.

The chairman thanked the village hall committee for their hard work and commitment to the project.

4. Finance update:

The accounts were available at the meeting for inspection.

5. Village Organisations: update

Women's Institute:

Two representatives of the WI updated the meeting on what the group have been doing, and the forthcoming itinerary. Tuppa Wiseman, the current Chairman, explained that Chrishall WI was a member of the Cambridge Federation, rather than Essex due to its proximity to Cambridge. All groups belong to the National Federation.

Joan Dearman advised that meetings are held each month with a special fund raising lunch in August. There are speakers, and outings, and non-members are always welcome. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month commencing 7.45pm in the new village hall.

There will be an open meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> September when gentlemen will also be welcome. The speaker will be John Romaine from Elmdon speaking on aircraft restoration.

This year is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's Institute, and Anne Jeffery and Tuppa Wiseman have been nominated to attend the Buckingham Palace garden party celebration.

Chrishall WI has a very active and successful darts team.

Denman College provides a wide range of courses for those who want to expand their knowledge.

New members are always welcome.

Chrishall Primary School:

Laurence Brett, Chair of Governors, said that Chrishall is blessed to have such a fantastic school, with wonderful staff. Education has changed significantly. Chrishall has been featured in 'The Guardian' newspaper with its innovative outdoor classroom and forest classroom. There is an 'eco-squad', and all the children have lessons in gardening, ecology and cooking. Chickens encourage the children to become engaged with food production. This is a flagship school under the leadership of Tracey Bratley, the headmistress.

Technology is very important in the school with every child having an Ipad which was sponsored by Friends of Chrishall School. There is a school website and weekly blog.

The children are engaged with the local community with 'Community Lunch' each Tuesday, and take part in District and County sporting events.

Parents are encouraged to walk children to school, or to park in the Red Cow car park.

Laurence Brett made a plea to the community to only use the High Street public footpath accesses during school times as Ofsted would like to see the school completely fenced off, but the Governors want to keep the site open.

Bridge Club:

Gordon Crabbe encouraged those who are interested to contact him so that a club can be formed. The intention is to start a 'Duplicate Bridge Club' which is competitive. For those who can't yet play, lessons are available in Melbourne.

#### 6. Jigneys Meadow & Play Area: update

4 years and 68 days ago, Derek Ailes telephoned the landowner of Jigneys Meadow and floated an idea that the Parish Council would wish to own the Meadow.

Following much detailed negotiation, including issues with newts, it is anticipated the build of the affordable homes will commence this autumn.

The pavilion has had very little spent on it other than utilities and some roof and window repairs which amount to some £900pa. The Parish Council now intends to refurbish the building, and install much needed office space for the village museum, a community library, and a parish office. The main area will be a meeting place with tea and coffee provided to encourage villagers to get together and reduce social isolation. Parents will be able to use the area when they are watching sports on the field. School has been offered the free

use of the changing rooms during term time. The building will still be a sporting pavilion, but with extended use.

Questions were raised regarding the planning application. Derek Ailes advised that the application was purely for an extension of use of the building, and was not intended for any other reason. Further discussions will be undertaken with close neighbours.

The anticipated expenditure is in the order of £20,000, of which £10,500 has been achieved. Grant funding applications will be made to raise the outstanding amount.

7. Current Village Hall: the future

One pre-school has moved to the new village hall, it is anticipated that Chrishall Primary School will take over the old village hall to increase available class room space.

The Parish Council sought a valuation by Mullucks Wells, who advised that due to its close proximity to school, a full market price would not be achieved. The Parish Council agreed that a reasonable rent should be charged to school of £3,000pa. The Parish Council will maintain the exterior of the building.

8. Parish Council vacancy

There is one vacancy for co-option following the election. Anyone who would like to become a Councillor was urged to contact either a Councillor or the clerk.

9. Broadband: Steven Parish reported that despite numerous emails, there had been no response from BT or Essex Superfast. There is no documented phased introduction for Chrishall.

A parishioner had spoken to an engineer who advised that fibre was being installed into the High Street, but this has not been formerly supported by BT. The Open Reach website indicates Chrishall is still under the planning phase.

10. Public Discussion

Red Cow Barn: a planning application has been received to demolish the barn and rebuild to match as close as possible the existing, to provide bed and breakfast accommodation. The barn is listed, and is reported to be the oldest barn in Essex.

A parishioner commented that it was an asset to have bed and breakfast in a nice building.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

*The meeting closed at 10.30pm*