

BENWICK PARISH ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of Benwick, held on Sunday 8th May 2016 in Benwick Village Hall, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs: M Chapman (Chair); L Keppel-Spoor; R Emmitt; V Gobie; J Hindle; J Richardson (Clerk) and 7 members of public

1. Chairperson's Address

Cllr Mark Chapman opened the meeting by introducing himself as Chairman of the Benwick Parish Council. He welcomed and thanked residents for attending this Annual Assembly for 2016.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on 19 April 2015 were correctly recorded and that they were signed as being a true record.

3. Benwick Parish Council Chairman's Report

During the past year the Parish Council has:-

Noticed how many times the District & County Cllrs have informed of budget cuts and despite this the Parish Council has kept the precept to a small increase, and the financial accounts show the sensible approach in this time of austerity. This should help with future projects such as Cemetery and Play Park

Collaborated with the school to co-fund the defibrillator.

Handed over the stock of street lights to FDC so the village does not have to pay for replacement of Cat 1 lights and this helps for the future.

Planning permission obtained for Cemetery use to extend the burial plots and cremation plots.

A few issues with allotments regarding weeds. Have tried to work with allotment holders to form an association but this has not come forward. Had to issue notices to quit, people do not want allotments due to weeds etc. If holders move off then whole area will be ploughed.

Bus Shelter has been cleaned and painted with the help of Benwick In Bloom

Play Park monies available along with grant funding and the plan is to spend around £170k to upgrade the Play Park.

Have not managed to get Highways Improvement bid this year. It would be useful if parishioners had ideas for the future.

No Xmas Tree in the village last year due to Health & Safety issues, on agenda for discussion today.

Dog fouling is usually brought up in Parish Council Meetings, have done things to try and stop this.

Have worked with the school, children have designed posters which are now up around the village.

4. Financial Report

The Clerk reported that Income for the year 2015-16 totalled £18,232.09 (14-15 £19,235.42) Expenditure was £13,418.92 (14-15 £14,391.22).

This resulted in a retained surplus of £4,813.17 (14-15 £4,844.20) with Earmarked Reserves of £32,891.79

Current assets are £90,442

5. Village Organisation Reports:

Benwick In Bloom

Season started with litter picking and new tubs are now in situ. Meetings take place at pub on Mondays. Recruited more members. Ongoing collage project and entered Anglia In Bloom. Bus shelter garden area has been tidied up and looks nice, also tidied up area at back of bus shelter. Plants for tubs have been ordered. St Marys church footprint is now coming into bloom. Now on Facebook and website to be updated. Planting of new tubs next Saturday. In Bloom 15th July judging. Fund raising events are to take place.

Burnthouse Drove Wind Farm

Have awarded grants totalling £45k and have a fund balance of £27.5K. Beneficiaries in the village are Forget Me Nots. Money is there to be distributed

Fund is there and is donated by owners of the wind farm which is for community projects within 5 miles of the wind farm. The panel meets twice a year and makes donations up to about £6000 Questions were asked about the donation given to FACT, details were not available but it was believed it was for a specific project.

Doddington short mat bowls were awarded a grant and are now receiving money annually which they have not requested. This will be looked into.

Ransonmoor Community Fund

This fund is now coming on stream. Supports Benwick, Doddington and Wimblington for environmental projects up to about £5K. People can apply. Next round is expected to be September.

Questions were asked about having to pay out monies when fund money is received, but it is not believed to apply to this fund or the Burnt House Drove Wind Farm one.

6. Discussion on Village Xmas Tree

Chairman asked for this agenda item. Parish Council have done this for the last 4 years. First tree was bought and then trees were donated. Volunteer labour and equipment were used and then this was reported to Health & Safety Executive. Had a tree offered last year and loss of space next to the War Memorial meant that the tree did not happen.

It was thought that maybe a permanent Xmas Tree could be installed in the village for the future, example could be the top end of the High Street. Felt that this is a good idea but the size of plot was questioned. It could be on the ground near the litter bin. It was felt that this area could be turned back to a village square. It was also said that the area is not attractive currently. Another area could also be on The Pound, which may not be as visible. It was suggested that the tree on The Pound could be decorated. The idea of a Flag pole tree was raised. Suggested that flyers be sent round the village asking if the area could go back to a village square, and a permanent Xmas Tree planted there. Concerns were raised that it could then become a village meeting point again. Feedback was in favour of a Xmas Tree and the matter of the end of the High Street will be placed on the Parish Council Agenda for June.

7. Open Forum

Disappointed at grave yard, grass not cut, the Clerk will investigate why this has not been done. New shop, planning application was commented on by the Parish Council who highlighted parking and the need for double yellow lines. Planning permission was granted and as a condition he has to carry out a number of parking assessments and forward the results to CCC Highways. It is felt that the fence may be outside the planning application. This will be placed on the Parish Council agenda. Chairman will try to get the Chair of Planning to look at this. Also junction of Lilyholt Road and Doddington Road parking is a problem. Vehicles parked on road opposite the shop are

commercial vehicles and should not be parked there. The Parish Council has no powers to introduce double yellow lines. The Chairman will speak to the Chair of Planning to look at the area and the problems. The Clerk will look at the original planning application regarding the design of the fence around the shop.

The Chair, Cllr Mark Chapman, thanked all the various Groups for their reports and everyone for attending.

Meeting Closed at 7.55 p.m

DRAFT