

BENWICK PARISH ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of Benwick, held on Monday 12th April 2021 electronically via Zoom 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs: M Chapman (Chair); L Keppel-Spoor, Cllr David Connor, Cllr Bob Wicks, Cllr A Miscandlon, J Richardson & Richard Robinson (Clerks) and one member of the public

1. Chairperson's Address Cllr Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on 20th May 2019 were correctly recorded and that they were signed as being a true record.

3. Benwick Parish Council Chairman's Report

The Covid 19 pandemic has severely impacted on the normal running of the Parish Council for most of the 2020/21 reported year. Meetings were exclusively held online via Zoom and there was very little public engagement. Nevertheless, the Parish Council still managed some significant projects.

The largest and most expensive was the upgrade of all the Parish Council owned pavement lights to LED lighting units. In addition, some older columns were replaced. Helped by a grant by Fenland District Council, this upgrade has improved overall pavement lighting whilst greatly reducing the monthly electricity costs (circa £250/month to £60/month).

After an accident on the White Bridge the Parish Council working with Cambridgeshire County Council managed to commission a repair of the bridge and the application of a much needed coat of paint. Unfortunately, the paint job was sub-standard and we are awaiting the contractors returning to make good the flaking paint.

The speed camera (pole mounted and with the ability to collect data for analysis) applied for in the 2019/20 Local Highways Improvements Grant has finally arrived, and the additional mounting poles installed. It is hoped that it will become operational in May 2021.

In the Cemetery the Parish Council commissioned a new cremation plot which has significantly improved capacity. Moreover, this plot will soon benefit from a new recycled plastic bench where loved ones can pay their respects in comfort after the Parish Council successfully applied for 3 new benches via the Ransonmoor Windfarm Grant Fund. The other 2 benches will be placed on the moorings.

On a final positive note, the Parish Council passed the 2019/20 audit with no observations. It was through robust and careful financial management that the Parish Council was able to request a zero increase in the annual Parish Precept allocation.

On the down side, some of the other projects – such as improvements to the War Memorial, have had to be put on hold. The lack of uptake of allotment plots is also still an area of concern.

It was also disappointing that Benwick In Bloom were also not able to carry out their normal excellent work trying to bring a colourful sparkle to the village.

On a sad note, we are about to see the retirement of the long-standing Parish Clerk (Mrs Jacquie Richardson). The Parish Council wish her well for the future and thank her for her excellent work and dedication to the role. We welcome the new Clerk Mr Richard Robinson and also wish him luck for the future.

I finish this report as we start to come out of the latest lockdown. It is my hope that normal service will soon start and that the Parish Council can carry on delivering projects that will add to the village facilities and improve the resident's lives.

Cllr Alex Miscandlon (on behalf of FDC) thanked Jacquie for all her hard work and wished her well in the future.

4. Financial Report

The Clerk's financial report is at Appendix 1

5. Village Organisation Reports:

Benwick In Bloom

Last year proved to be very difficult due to the Pandemic and as a result many of our plans had to be put on hold., and as a result were unable to enter into the Annual Anglia in Bloom Competition. Despite most of the volunteers isolating we were still able to maintain a good floral presence throughout the village.

We still as and when carry on with Litter Picking keeping our streets clean and tidy.

Bridge containers were emptied cleaned and are now waiting to be planted up again for this year.

Our tubs will be getting their annual refurbishment with wood preserver and will be planted up again.

The tub at the junction of Whittlesey Road is to be removed due to damage from the lorries turning and not be replaced.

The Play Park Borders will be tidied as part of our normal maintenance programme, the three tiered containers will also be replanted.

The Shrubbery Project is still on going and we anticipate replanting as and when the weather allows.

We will at some point establish a water butt at the shop making it easier to water baskets and containers, permission has been given.

The Pound is still on going whilst we wait for a suitable arrangement with the Parish Council on where to place the animals.

Forget Me Not Club

At the Annual General Meeting of the above club held on 6th February, 2020 it was decided to disband the club. This was due to the fact our membership was falling and we were unable to attract new members.

It was planned to hold a cheese and wine evening with a quiz in April and a final party with entertainment in May, all free of charge so the present members would benefit from the existing funds which they had contributed to.

However with the lockdown situations due to the Covid 19 virus these plans are still on hold, but will take place when the restrictions are lifted.

6. Open Forum

It was raised that even though the Parish Council did not raise their precept request this did not mean that individual householders did not see a rise in their council tax.

Thank you for coming

Meeting Closed at 19.15p.m

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021

The total income for 2020-21 was £30,022.49

		£
Maintenance Grants:	Precept	£12,852.00
	Concurrent	£1,593.00
	Grass Cutting	£703.88
Rents:	Town	£1,108.07
	September Gardens	
Recycling Credits		£118.68
VAT Refund		£3,289.22
Burials		£1,911.00
Bank Interest		£153.31
Rates Refund	Windfarm Grant	£8,293.33
SUB TOTALS:		£30,022.49

Total Expenditure for the year was £29,854.97

		£
Rates		312.54
Room Hire		18.00
Subscriptions:	NALC LCR Magazine	17.00
	CAPALC	428.38
	Cambs Acre	57.00
	SLCC	109.00
	Clerks & Councils Magazine	12.00
Maintenance	Verges	481.91
	Cemetery	2,786.91
	Street Lights	13,464.38
	Allotments	
Insurance		742.89
Energy		1693.38
Professional Charges	Internal Auditor	135.00
	ICO	35.00
Sundries		343.94
Telephone/Internet		60.01
Post & Stationery		57.42
Clerk's annual office expenses		150.00
VAT Paid		3,514.03

Wages/PAYE-NI		4,336.18
SUB TOTALS:		28,754.97
Election		
Development Projects		
Tourism (Cycle Races)		
Local Highways Improvement		
Play Park		
WW1 Commemoration		
Xmas Decorations		
S137 Payment	British Legion Poppy Wreath	30.00
Donations/Charity		180.00
TOTALS:		28,964.97
Parish Plan		
Verge Planting		
Cemetery Extension		890.00
Street Lighting		
The Pound		
War Memorial		
Mooring		
Allotments		
Play Park		
TOTALS:		£29,854.97

This resulted in Underspend for year of £167.52

(18-19 £2,876.88)

with Earmarked Reserves of

Parish Plan	£532.89
Verge Planting	£67.13
Cemetery Extension	£6,604.17
Street Lighting	£7,875.62
The Pound	£2,000.00
War Memorial	£4,000.00
Mooring	£4,133.66
Allotments	£2,191.35

Assets amount to

£ 105,508.37