

HECKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Heckington Parish/Community Meeting held in the Village Hall, High Street, Heckington on Thursday 9th May 2024 commencing at 7.30pm.

Attendance:

Chairman and resident - Cllr Mrs J Palmer

Minute taker and resident – Theresa Williams, Clerk

Other attendees –

2 x Guest Speakers

53 x Residents (including 4 P/Cllrs)

1. Welcome and opening remarks by the Chairman

Councillor Mrs J Palmer, holding the role of Chairman of this meeting, welcomed everyone and gave a short Fire Safety evacuation instruction.

Chairmans report 2024

I have the privilege of being Chairman of this Council, but have to emphasise, I work with a team of people, particularly our staff, to run what I hope is a progressive Council. We endeavour to be proactive rather than reactive.

Unfortunately, one of our long term Councillors , Dave Long, resigned thus creating a vacancy, which was filled last week by election. Jacki Wright is the newly appointed Councillor. We look forward to welcoming her.

The Council continues to look after its main obligations, the Cemetery, Allotments and Library. All of which present their respective challenges. However, the allotments are being run very well by Lawrence Motley, backed up with clerical assistance for the legal side, by our Clerk, Theresa. The library, run by volunteers continues to be successful under the management of Vanessa Marshall.

The roads and pavements within the village continue to raise concerns. However, we are pleased that Heckington is now in line to have some roads resurfaced and some pavements the same. We thank County Councillor Key for his backing together with ourselves in lobbying for this work to be done. However, please continue to report on “Fix my Street”, any issues that you come across. We are aware that this is not 100% , but it is getting better.

We now have 51 bins within the village to provide for general and dog waste. There is absolutely no excuse for owners letting their dogs foul on pavements etc and not pick up. These bins are getting increasingly expensive. We have just ordered two replacement bins at a cost of £1027.00.

We were pleased to welcome new tenants, Alison, John and Josh to the Pavilion and Playing Fields in January. It is good to see these facilities being so well used under their careful management. Hopefully with some welcome good weather more people will take advantage of the facilities.

We were privileged to be involved in the provision of plants etc for the school sensory area and provide a pathway through to and around the pond to a standard suitable for disabled access as the concluding piece of our Coronation celebrations. We were fortunate that the path was provided by Balfour Beatty as part of a scheme whereby they provided

the labour and ourselves the materials. This was a considerable saving for this Council and we are grateful to our County Councillor for his assistance in facilitating this.

One of our major achievements this year, has been managing to purchase a six acre piece of land with the aim of providing parkland for our parishioners to enjoy. Over recent years this has been a constant trial, residents wanting more "green space" and despite several attempts at purchasing land, our efforts have come to nothing. As everyone is aware, we have no available land within the village now, due to it all being built on to provide much needed housing. We have therefore had to spread out net a little wider with this purchase down Heckington Fen. This is similar to the three very good parks at Boston, who have been very successful in establishing their facilities outside of the actual town. Their problems being similar to our own = no available land in Boston itself.

The intention at present is to turn this into a nature based, woodland walk with paths accessible to all, maybe a wetland or pond, etc etc. However, the first thing we have been advised to do is to graze the land to clear it. We are then very fortunate to have Mr Isaac, the founder of the three parks at Boston, willing to advise on the way forward. Once this is done, we envisage having a public meeting to discuss the proposed plan. We have already had people making suggestions similar to what we envisaged, but at present this is an open book.

I am well aware of the furore on social media, caused by ill informed speculative people. I am not prepared to comment further on this due to subjudice and police investigations.

Our District Councillors continue to assist us with North Kesteven matters. We look forward to working with newly elected Councillor Chris Collard.

Heckington in Bloom volunteers continue to enhance the village with their plants and litter picking.

I cannot end this annual report without thanking people who help the Council function on a daily basis. Being a Councillor is not just a case of turning up for a meeting now and again. Firstly, we have to abide by the Nolan principles : Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership. This is an integral part of being a Councillor.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors. Special thanks go to Richard Higgs, who as Vice Chairman has taken over several major projects to allow me time to assist on more mundane issues such as admin. He is very adept at providing full reports on issues.

We are also supported by members of the public who deserve a "thank you " for the efforts they put in to help, whereby without them our costs would rise significantly.

Then of course there are the staff. Where again proper procedures have to be followed working with them. Bullying of staff cannot and will not be tolerated on any level.

Andy Ward our Caretaker, who does a brilliant job keeping the village tidy, despite some very unpleasant jobs we heap on him. The Cemetery is the jewel in his crown> His knowledge is second to none and we receive so many compliments about it and this is solely down to the pride he takes in it.

Lastly, but certainly not least, our very able Clerk, Theresa, who has had a baptism of fire in her role this past year. Clerks, these days are on the receiving end of constant new legislation, and she performs an excellent job, ensuring we comply. However, she has recently displayed her flexibility and willingness in helping a volunteer to empty the 51 bins regularly, in the absence of our Caretaker. This is not in her job description.

I see one of my main roles as ensuring our staff are cared for and treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. I hope that I have achieved this as they are an extremely important part of the machine that is HPC.

So thank you, it has been a privilege to work with you all and I hope this can continue to help keep Heckington the tremendous place it is to live.

2. County Council report – Councillor Mr Andrew Key, Sleaford Rural South

County Councillor Andrew Key had sent his apologies, but a brief resume of the progress the County Council have made particularly the new reduced speed limit in East Heckington, current road improvements scheduled imminently, in St Andrews Street, specifically, and the fact that he was not seeking re-election at the end of his current term.

3. District Council Report – Councillors Mrs Christine Collard/Mrs Sally Tarry, Heckington Rural Ward

District Councillor, Sally Tarry, has sent a resume of NKDC's achievements and aims which were available in printed form.

4. Guest Speakers

The following guest speakers gave very informative presentations and provided useful information about the service they provide and how it works –

i. The Chairman welcomed Emma Whiley, who spoke about her work “behind the scenes”, of all major events in this part of the County. She is responsible for everything at events from terrorism to protests and everything in between. Including drugs raids, whereby it is her role to ensure that the right people are in the right place at the right time with the correct vehicles and equipment required. Quite a complicated task with all the different elements involved. On a local issue she reported that she had just received the details to review for the event safety at Heckington Show 2024.

ii. Tony Hall was then introduced who gave a very interesting video presentation of the types of accidents and emergencies the Air Ambulance attends. This is at a cost of some ten million pounds per annum, funded mainly by the lottery which they organise together with Legacies, and donations including from their four charity shops. He explained that the Doctors are mainly A & E personnel, who provide this vital work. They also have two vehicles, who are fully equipped A & E trauma vehicles. These are used either between the hours of 2 am and 7 am, or for when the actual air ambulance is already on a call. He further explained that the Lincs and Notts Ambulance, due to its unique capability of night flying, sometimes covered other nearby counties.

The Chairman then presented a cheque for £100.00 from the Parish Council.

The Chairman thanked the guest speakers for attending and giving very useful and interesting presentations. Subsequently, members of the Public in attendance were able to speak individually to the guests which was mutually beneficial to all parties and very worthwhile.

iii. Richard Higgs, as treasurer of Heckington Voluntary Car Service, gave details of the amount of journeys they undertake, together with the fact that they have quite a variety of equipment to loan out to help when people have accidents whereby a wheelchair or even a mobility scooter can be used on short term loan.

5. Public Participation

The floor was then opened for public comments. There were many negative comments made about the recent purchase of land, many of which were appeared to be fueled by speculation rather than fact. Many were against the purchase. The Chairman explained that buying land had been a long term aim of the Parish Council to provide “green space” for parishioners, and over the years had tried to obtain several pieces , all of which had failed for one reason or another. The intention was to hold a public meeting once proposed development plans were available, but as the land had only been owned by the Parish for the last two weeks, nothing had been done as yet. Although, the gentleman who had developed and created three parks near Boston, had offered to advise on various aspects of providing a natural area with trees, paths -accessible to all, wetland, etc etc. Unfortunately, due to the constant interruptions by some members of the audience, a lot of serious questions could not be heard. To avoid the meeting deteriorating anymore, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

Meeting concluded at 8.40pm – all relevant issues will be taken forward to a future Parish Council meeting.

Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____