

TROWSE with NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL
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**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Trowse with Newton
Parish Council**

Held on Monday 23rd April 2018 at 07.00 pm

At the Manor Rooms, The Street, Trowse

Present

Cllr K Prentice – presiding

Cllr A Greenizan; Cllr A Brown, Cllr J Smerdon; Cllr R Herring

NCC Cllr V Thomson; Mr Paul Greenizan (minute taker)

2018/1) Apologies for absence

Received from Cllr S Cattee; Cllr D Benterman; Gina Lopes, Clerk to Trowse with Newton Parish Council; SNC Cllr T Lewis; PC Sansbury, Norfolk Police; Rev. J Scott, St Andrew's Church; S Odell, Trowse Primary School

2018/2) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman made introductions and the members of public (5no.) present also introduced themselves.

2018/3) Minutes of the 24th April 2017 Annual Parish Meeting

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2017 as a true & accurate record of the meeting, the minutes were duly signed by the Chairman

2018/4) Annual Report from the Chairman of Trowse with Newton Parish Council

The Chairman read her annual report as follows



Parish Council report – Monday 23rd April 2018

Firstly I would like to welcome you all to the meeting and a special welcome to Councillor James Smerdon who has joined the Parish Council a few months ago and has definitely jumped in feet first!

I would also like to make special mention to Cllrs Lyn Fabre and Colin Steward who had both left the council after many years of service and having served as chair. There will be a special presentation to them both during the drinks and nibbles reception later.

We also had a resignation from Cllr Hazel Smith and I would like to thank her for contribution.

I have taken up a new role as Chair and Cllr Sandra Cattee is now vice chair.

We do have 2 vacancies for councilors if there are any willing volunteers?

What have the council been up to on your behalf over the last year?

The common, cemetery and church.

We have employed new grounds staff who seems to be working well. The council was let down on several occasions by the previous contractors last year so we hope the new arrangement will continue positively.

Parking

We continue to suffer parking issues and Cllr James Smerdon has been leading on the 'Trowse Parking for Trowse people' initiative . We are gathering

evidence into the issue and working with the relevant authorities to try and find a solution.

Bus gate

The bus gate has been monitored recently by the police and we are looking at a more permanent long term measure to combat the consistent flouting

Speeding – SAMs machine

We now have the SAM machine installed and is being moved round the village to capture the speeding issues we have in various locations. The data has been most alarming!

What's next for us:

Community speed watch

We have the go ahead for a community speed watch scheme, which will hopefully help to reduce the excess speeds we often see. We currently have 7 volunteers; if you are interested in joining please let us know.

New play equipment

We will soon have new play equipment on the common, which has been given the thumbs up by the children at the school. I must thank Stuart Odell and the children's school council for their amazing support with this project. We are

hoping the equipment will be installed in June ready for the summer holidays. I also cheekily asked for the (much more expensive) wet pour surface to match our existing equipment.

Defib / CPR training

We are looking into CPR and Defib training for anyone in Trowse that would like to attend and more details will be available soon.

The defib has only been taken from the casing once, fortunately was not needed but it is a valuable resource that we have.

Planning applications

Undoubtedly we will have new and revised planning applications soon and possibly a change in ownership of the top field. It looks like we have prevented the traffic through the village for now but we are ready to continue our fight.

There are many other issues we deal with but just wanted to give you a flavour of the top line. Remember we meet every month (but not August) and you are always welcome to come along to the meetings. The agenda's are available prior to the meeting on the notice boards.

I would like to thank

Vic Thomson our county councilor for all of his support and 'nudging' of appropriate people

Trevor Lewis for his advice and guidance.

Gina for her everything she does.

Neil Roberts and Paul Wootton for their much needed assistance in recent planning matters.

Last, but certainly not least to the volunteer councilors without whom this council would not exist—Thank you to you all

Kerry Prentice Chair, Trowse with Newton Parish Council

2018/5) Guest Speakers

Cllr V Thomson from Norfolk County Council read his annual report as follows –

This the end of my first year as your County Councillor. In some ways it seems to have gone very quickly but there have been some big steps along the way.

Can you remember the dying moments of Devolution?

The snap election, putting everything on hold.

The Beast from the East and enough rain for a Bible story.

Roads

Potholes continue to be a big story. Given the weather we have a bigger problem than usual. We have been given more money BUT

Must do a quick safety fix and come back later

Wait for some floods to go down to see full effect

Try to get more contractors: everyone in same boat

Road works

NDR about to be completed and Western link decided

Hales roundabout about to be completed and now we need George Lane roundabout

Dualt a campaign to get the A47 completely dual carriageway

3rd crossing at Great Yarmouth

Long Stratton By Pass and Hempnal Crossroads

Speeding

Parish councils are stepping up to the plate locally with Speed Watch, wheelie bin stickers and SAMs cameras.

Mobile Coverage

We have just completed the most comprehensive coverage of the whole of Norfolk including coverage on roads and railways.

This is the actual user experience and we compare it to the Network published coverage.

This will enable us to clearly direct the mobile providers to the poorest reception areas.

Will provide more information over next few months

A copy of the Norfolk County Council Parish Council Annual Review 2017-18 March 2017 –March 2018 was also noted

Cllr Prentice read out the annual report from Cllr T Lewis from South Norfolk Council

This has been a year where major changes for the future are either underway, decided or under consideration.

DISTRICT COUNCIL WARD BOUNDARIES

South Norfolk Council was required to review these by the Local Government Boundaries Commission for England (LGBCE), since substantial new housing in some wards had resulted in an imbalance of the number of electors a district councillor was required to serve. This process concluded in November 2017. With effect from the May 2019 District Council elections, there will still be 46 District Councillors in South Norfolk, but the composition of the wards (for which whole Parishes are the building blocks) has changed radically.

Any new disposition had to result in there being little variation in the number of electors per district councillor, and that had the knock-on effect of making many single-member wards outside those parameters, resulting in more larger multi-member wards.

As a result, this current single-member ward of Stoke Holy Cross will disappear, and its constituent parishes will be distributed as follows:

TROWSE w NEWTON, BIXLEY, CAISTOR ST EDMUND

These are added to Poringland and the Framinghams (currently a two-member ward) to form a new three-member ward called Poringland, Framinghams and Trowse.

STOKE HOLY CROSS

This parish is added to Mulbarton (currently a two-member ward) to form a new three-member ward to be called Mulbarton and Stoke Holy Cross. (As well as Mulbarton and Stoke Holy Cross themselves, the constituent parishes are Ashwellthorpe and Fundenhall, Wreningham, Flordon, Bracon Ash, East Carlton, Swardeston.) It's poor fit IMHO – even the LGBCE conceded this, but found itself unable to agree any other option.

This district ward rearrangement was followed immediately by a review, also instigated by the LGBCE, of the boundaries and composition of the individual parishes. It's called a Community Government Review. It was clearly putting the card before the horse to change the district wards before reviewing the parishes that the wards contain, as this put a major constraint on possible changes. The LGBCE said that it was powerless to do otherwise, each process being triggered by separate legislative provisions.

The South Norfolk Community Governance Review has recently been concluded, has been approved by South Norfolk Council, and is expected to be the subject of an order by the LGBCE, also to take effect from the May 2019 local elections.

CHANGES TO LOCAL PARISHES UNDER THE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Stoke Holy Cross, Trowse

No change

Caistor St Edmund, Bixley

These two parishes to combine into a new Parish of Caistor St Edmund and Bixley comprised of 9 parish councillors, divided into two wards comprising Caistor St Edmund (six parish councillors) and Bixley (three parish councillors and subject to boundary modification as below). This will take effect from May 2019. I hope that the new parish council will be borne next year with a healthy competition for election. (It should be noted that a parish councillor does not need to live in the parish, let alone the parish ward (s)he represents. There are several qualification opportunities, of which the most flexible is that a parish councillor can reside within three miles (as the crow flies) of the nearest part of the parish concerned.)

The southern end of Bixley, comprising the new Bennett Homes development and the Octagon Farm area on the other side of the B1332 will become part of the parish of Poringland.

POSSIBLE MERGER OF THE STAFF OF SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL AND BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

There is a project underway to investigate whether the staff of these two District Councils could be merged. While cost savings are one factor – and cost savings are needed because of the progressive reduction in government grant support for local councils – this may give rise to greater efficiencies and a better quality of service. The two Councils will remain legally separate, so that each will have its own elected councillors, and each Council will have its own policies and processes. So it is quite possible that council employees may find themselves having to treat issues in different ways, according to the Council area involved.

A step has already been taken, where three senior Planning roles are now joint ones. This opportunity arose early this year because of senior staff members moving on. So far, it seems to be working satisfactorily. It was a one-off exercise, and does not predetermine the outcome of the wider review – but it is a useful pointer.

No immediate decisions will be made about where staff are located, and for the moment there will remain the South Norfolk Council offices in Long Stratton and the Broadland District Council Offices in Thorpe St Andrew. If the staff merger goes ahead, there will probably have to be earlier decisions about individual Council services – do they move to just one of those offices, or will they remain as at present (but with senior officers spending time in both locations?)

Compulsory redundancies cannot be ruled out, but both Councils have a track record of managing change without the need for such measures.

If the decision to go ahead with the staff merger is made, one of the early tasks will be to appoint a new Chief Executive to carry the changes forward. It should not be assumed that either of the two current Chief Executives will be selected for this.

PLANNING ISSUES

There's clearly a lot of new housing development in the area, partly because, as well as the sites that South Norfolk Council's Local Plan identified for further development, the Council has been effectively compelled by national legislation to

approve other sites because there is not a 5-year supply of land available for building on in the Norwich area.

A recent change to the way that this shortfall is assessed had strengthened the Council's ability to resist some of these extra applications, so it hopes that the worst there may be over.

Resistance will also be assisted by the start of the process for extending the Local Plan another 10 years forward from 2026. Given existing allocations and permissions, the need for more housing sites in this area are relatively small in that further 10-year period. Notwithstanding, a large number of sites have been 'offered' for housing development by local landowners and planning firms. The council will be able to afford to be very selective about which few of these offers are taken up.

There has not been any new movement on development of the Deal Ground and the Kier (formerly May Gurney) sites, which are respectively partly and wholly in Trowse. A few months ago, Norwich City Council was unsuccessful in an application for a government grant to pre-fund the infrastructure requirements for building on the Deal Ground, and it looked for a while as if that might be a fatal blow to that controversial scheme. However, Colmans (Unilever) and Britvic will soon leave the Carrow site, and it is improbable that it will be taken over by one or more firms to operate as it does at present. Redevelopment is likely, and that might afford a new access to the Deal Ground as well if the railway can be bridged. I also hope that redevelopment will enable the improvement of Bracondale, not only for vehicular traffic but also for pedestrians who have a perilous journey at present to walk between Trowse and the city.

Affecting Bixley and Trowse, you will recall that planning permission was given for all the fields on the south side of White Horse Lane to be a solar farm. This project was halted after only a little of the 'solar farm' has been installed, presumably because of the withdrawal of government subsidy for such schemes.

Presumably, such schemes are now viable without government subsidy because costs keep dropping, since work has recommenced on the site.

BUS TRAVEL

Technically, it's not direct a District Council matter, but as a regular bus user myself I take a strong interest in it. We have seen Anglian Bus integrated into its new parent company Konect, and more competition for Konect on the Poringland routes by First Bus. The service from Anglian Bus has deteriorated, buses just didn't turn up, and I took this up with Konect. I had the following frank response back in March from Jeremy Cooper, the MD of Konect's owner Go-Ahead East Anglia:

You are quite right to say that the service on routes 87 and 88 is unacceptable. I have been in charge of this business since July and throughout that time we have struggled to resolve the issues with that operation. You are right to be critical of the service that we provide. Our failure to divert the 88 via the 87 route when there has been a cancelled [87] bus is extremely disappointing and I am asking the Operations Manager to do this as a matter of routine in future.

Our Beccles based operation has in reality been operated as part of the Konect bus business since 2015 when most of the management was merged. The recent deterioration in standards, which has not been helped by the roadworks, is down to a long period of ineffective routine maintenance of the

fleet prior to April 2017, and the gaps in service are mainly due to buses breaking down, much to the frustration of our driving team.

We have undertaken three phases of comprehensive repairs to the fleet operated from our Beccles site and at one point hired in a complete replacement fleet, which frankly did not prove to be much more reliable. Had the business been a successful one we might have considered buying new buses but these routes all lose money and replacements have not been an option. We have now appointed a new Head of Engineering who has brought new skills and experience to bear in the upgrading of the fleet so that we can achieve good standards of reliability.

From today we have invested in additional contract maintenance at our engineering base and will be taking most of the Beccles fleet out of service in turn to undergo an electrical overhaul. The missing buses referred to in the complaints which you have forwarded to me have resulted from buses breaking down with electrical faults exaggerated by the wet winter weather.

We are hopeful that we can achieve good standards of reliability through being fully staffed and having a reliable fleet, and that people will consequently use the buses more so that these routes at least cover their costs, which we have also attempted to keep under control.

I am very sorry that we have let you and your fellow residents down. We have a plan to improve matters and I am grateful for the opportunity to apologise and to promise to do better.

BRITISH BED CO

The former Syfer plant in Arminghall has been reactivated under new ownership by the British Bed Company, a subsidiary of local entrepreneurial success story Mattressman.

We had fears that it would just be a warehousing operation for Mattressman, but I'm delighted to say there are 100+ people on site - making beds! I had the pleasure of a conducted tour recently, seeing the operation right from raw materials to finished products.

GRANTS FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

I can access two funds for helping local projects.

COMMUNITY ACTION FUND

This is district council-wide fund for schemes looking for sums of upward of £1,000. Competition is fierce, and the deadline for applications for the 2018-19 year is near. In the year just ended, I was able to secure money from the Fund for the Norfolk Archaeological Trust for the purchase and installation of new finger posts to guide visitors round Caistor Roman Town – they will be installed shortly.

MEMBERS' WARD GRANTS

I then have a fund from South Norfolk Council for the coming year totalling £1,000 for allocation at my discretion within this Ward – and I'm open to requests for grants of £100 upwards. Please get in touch! Last year, given a dearth of other suitable requests, I was happy to allocate it all to the Whitlingham Charitable Trust for new signs for the orienteering course in Whitlingham Country Park – again, to be installed shortly.

Cllr Prentice read out the annual report from PC Sansbury from Norfolk Police –

Poringland SNT has seen some recent changes this month, including PCSO's Joe PIKE and Marie ALBINAGORTA who have moved on from their role. I am however continuing in my role as the Poringland Beat Manager, and I will be working more closely with PC David REEVE from Loddon SNT for the foreseeable future. Alongside the Beat Managers working across South Norfolk, a newly formed Neighborhood Policing Team will shortly be put into place to actively tackle serious criminal activity, in line with our Response police officers based at Wymondham and Diss.

Talking of serious crime, it has come to my attention that there has been two dwelling burglaries earlier this month on The Street, Trowse. Detectives from Norwich CID are currently investigating these crimes and will be thoroughly examining all investigative enquiries. Dwelling burglaries are fairly rare occurrences in Norfolk, but when it does happen, we take it extremely seriously and will do our utmost to bring those responsible before the Justice of the Law. Can I ask that if anyone has information about suspicious persons or vehicles seen on The Street, Trowse between the hours of darkness on 10th-11th April 2018, or if they believe that they are burglary victims in similar circumstances at these times, then please update DC 1521 FRENCH by calling 101.

I will be continuing my patrols throughout Trowse, but in the meantime, can I ask the Community to double check that their vehicles, and all doors that allow entry into their homes are locked and secured when not in use. Consider what security measures you have at your homes and businesses, including doors chains, security lighting and cctv. Most importantly, challenge any unknown visitors to provide valid ID, and report anything suspicious immediately by calling 999 in an emergency or 101 in a non-emergency. The above is not to cause concern - crime does happen in our communities, but it can be prevented when we all work together. Can I reiterate that if any constituents experience crime or have witnessed it, then please contact Norfolk Constabulary on the above telephone numbers so that colleagues on duty in the control room can deploy Police officers expeditiously. If I am contacted directly, and I happen to be on a rest day, then I might not be able to action it for some considerable time.

Stuart Sansbury MSc BSc (Hons), PC 1200, Poringland Beat Manager

CLlr Prentice read out the annual report from Rev J Scott from St Andrew's Church –

With a number of deaths and people moving into residential care, our church attendance has dropped to average around 35-45 people per week, with considerably more on special occasions.

Messy Church for children and adults on the last Saturday of the month at 12.00 pm continues to be popular, attracting families from outside Trowse as well as from the village. Our coffee morning is on the last Wednesday of the month from 10.30 am onwards, when copies of The Villager are available for distribution and free coffee and cakes served. We are

most grateful to our loyal band of magazine distributors who drop The Villager through your letterbox every month.

We again welcomed the school into church at Christmas for their carol service, this time an afternoon service during school time, and we also held the usual village carol service. Our Christingle service on Christmas Eve was again full to overflowing, and once again we celebrated Midnight in Bethlehem at 9.30 pm on Christmas Eve.

Volunteers continued to clean the church, tidy up the churchyard, carry out running repairs, arrange flowers and donate, bake and serve refreshments after the services and at other events. We continue to be grateful to the parish council for cutting the grass in the churchyard, and this year for employing a tree surgeon to ensure the safety of the trees, some of which were old, large and dangerous.

The Friends continue to raise money to enable much needed repairs to the fabric of the building. The church is financed entirely by voluntary contributions, so money raised by the Friends of St. Andrews is invaluable. We receive no money from government or other sources, and it is costly to keep a medieval building in a state of good repair. We would like to add an indoor toilet to the church, so are also trying raise money for that. Thanks to generous donations and several grants, this last year we were able to restore the huge and important painting of The Resurrection by Heins on the North wall of the church, a treasure for the village.

The Trowse Villager has been superbly edited by Mary Brookes, and printed in-house by Mary and Jim Braby. This is a demanding task, but The Villager is now an attractive magazine available monthly and continues to be free to every household, thanks to the advertisers. Please do send in copy for the magazine, as without copy it can't function. We are continuing to work hard to enable part of Church Meadow to be used as an occasional car park and are most grateful to the parish council for their support in this respect. Whitlingham Lane is increasingly full on Sunday mornings, and it is only through the good graces of the Ski Club that we are able to park at all, but with many elderly people who are unable to walk far, we really do urgently need space nearer to the church. This is a long process which eventually needs permission from the Secretary of State, but we are hoping that maybe next year something will be in place. (I've said this every year for the past five years and we're still waiting! Meanwhile, the parking problem in Trowse gets worse.)

We continue to have fund raising events throughout the year, and thank all of you who support us. Before we even start on our own expenses we have to find £20,000 for the diocese of Norwich, all from voluntary contributions, so it's difficult to raise this plus the expense of a medieval building, and we are most grateful for any help we receive.

2018/6) Any other business

Cllr Prentice made presentations to the former councillors of Trowse with Newton Parish Council, Cllr Fabre and Cllr Steward

The public were invited to join the councillors in the partaking of refreshments

Meeting closed at 7.30 pm