

**WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2016**

**Present:**

Parish Cllr Jenny Oram (Chair)  
Parish Cllr Sue Browne  
Parish Cllr Jenny Bengé  
Parish Cllr Mary Belotti  
County Councillor John Simmonds  
Tracey Block, Clerk to the Council

5 members of the public.

Meeting started at 7.30pm.

**1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

Cllr Oram welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council event, but a meeting where residents and electors of the parish are invited to come along to find out what goes on in the village, to ask questions and to listen to reports from the various organisations active in the parish.

Cllr Oram then welcomed County Councillor John Simmonds.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from CC Cllrs Rosemary Doyle and Robert Thomas who were both attending a Canterbury City Council planning meeting; Elizabeth Pettersen, Executive Head Teacher – Bodsham School.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 April 2015**

Copies of the minutes were distributed, and time given for attendees to read them. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Sue Browne and seconded by Les Leslie. The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed.

**4. INFORMATION OF MATTERS ARISING**

Pot holes remain an issue.

The round-up section of the newspaper still has no contact, if anyone is interested in this role, please contact the Kent Messenger directly.

The Community Warden is present in the village, it was suggested that she might be asked to write an article for the PAW News.

**5. REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016**

**Council Members and Meetings**

Only three people volunteered to serve on the Council at the elections in 2015 so all three were elected unopposed. They were Jenny Oram, Sue Browne and Jenny Bengé. One of the two vacancies left was filled by Sarah Tickner in November 2015 and the second by Mary Belotti in February 2016. The Parish Council continues to benefit from the services of our Parish Clerk, Tracey Block, who deserves our thanks for her ready advice and efficient handling of Council affairs.

Between May 2015 and April 2016 the Council met 10 times. In August and October it could not meet as it was not quorate. During the 2016-2017 year the Council expects to be able to meet on a monthly basis as usual on the first Tuesday evening of each month.

**Finance:**

In 2015-2016 the Parish Council had a budget of £7,100 which was the same as the previous two years. Of this £6661.96 was raised through the precept and £438.04 took the form of a Council Tax Support Grant from Canterbury City Council. The major budget items were grants for community events, Waltham Sports and Recreation Association, the Village Hall and the Church Council (in all representing 52% of the budget-£3,621) The other major budget figure (of £2,284) comprised the Clerk's salary, home allowance and mileage costs (in all representing 32% of the budget.) Other budget heads related to such items as training, subscriptions, office expenses, internal audit fees, insurance and hall hire fees. Inevitably some budget heads were overspent (e.g., the Clerk's salary and home allowance for the year was increased by an overtime

payment; contingencies amounted to more than budgeted) but some heads were underspent. In all at the year end the total budget figure of £7,100 was underspent by £451.

With regard to income and expenditure I would refer you to the Financial Statement that has been distributed. In addition to the precept and Council Tax Support Grant, the Parish Council received what is known as a concurrent function grant from the City Council amounting to £2,172.94 (to be passed on to Waltham Sports and Recreation Association for upkeep of the recreation ground), a grant (of £333.39) from the City Council towards the cost of the village's celebration in June 2016 of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, plus a small amount of other income. The Parish Council's total income for the year amounted to £9,755.23. As regards expenditure, this amounted to £9008.11. (This includes the concurrent function grant from Canterbury City Council of £2,172.94 which was passed on to WSRA.) In all there was a surplus at the end of the year of £747.12. This will be added to the existing general reserve of £8,468.65 (to give £9,215.77). The Council also has a ring-fenced reserve of £1,000 (comprising a grant from our county councillor towards the cost of the village map).

### **Planning and Highway Matters**

During the year, 16 planning applications came before the Council which made what it felt were appropriate comments to the City Council which is, of course, the Planning Authority and decides applications. The Parish Council raised no objections to 11 of the applications; it raised concerns about two applications and objected to three. These three were

- (1) the erection of a barn at Dene Meadow where the Council felt the application and plans were inadequate and any barn will be conspicuous within the AONB. This application has yet to be decided by Canterbury City Council.
- (2) the erection of a mobile phone mast. This application was eventually withdrawn.
- (3) The erection of house on land adjacent to 1 Rose Cottages, Church Lane. The Parish Council objected strongly on the grounds that this represented over-development of the site and would have a detrimental effect on 1 Rose Cottage (which would be left without any garden space). The Council also felt that there was a safety issue with the proposed site being so close to a blind bend in the lane. It was also concerned about parking, particularly the likelihood of cars parking on the access to the recreation ground. The Parish Council was represented by its chairman who spoke against the application at the Canterbury City Council Planning Committee meeting on 10 November when the application came up for consideration. Both Waltham's City Councillors are on the Planning Committee and both objected to the application. However, it was approved although so far the proposed dwelling has not yet been built.

However, parking is a continuing issue and the entrance to the recreation ground was regularly blocked by contractors' cars while 1 & 2 Rose Cottages were being rebuilt. The Parish Council has agreed to help fund a sign with WSRA stating that the access way is only for users of the recreation ground. Nevertheless, even users sometimes park inconsiderately and there have been complaints from a resident who uses a mobility scooter that he has been prevented from accessing the recreation ground by badly parked cars while on his trips round the village. The Parish Council is looking into this.

Individuals are free to comment on any planning application via Canterbury City Council's website – and this is to be encouraged. The Parish Council's website tries to keep up-to-date with details of the address or reference number of all applications that affect the parish together with links to the City Council's website.

At last year's Annual Parish Meeting a parishioner asked how often the City Council's decisions on planning applications concur with the Parish Council's responses. Of the 16 applications during the past year, 3 have not yet been decided. Of the remaining 13, 2 were withdrawn. The Parish Council raised no objections to 7 applications all of which were granted. Of the remaining 4 the Parish Council raised concerns about 2 both of which were granted. The Parish Council had no objection to 1 that was refused (and which has now gone to appeal) and objected to 1 (relating to the land adjacent to Rose Cottages) which was granted. So, out of the 11 applications that were decided, 7 decisions concurred with the Parish Council's opinion and 2 did not. The 2 about which the Council raised concerns but did not express a specific opinion were both granted.

As always the state of the highways in the parish is a cause for concern. The Parish Council regularly contacts Kent County Council to report damaged road surfaces, potholes, etc. Sometimes the Parish Council meets with success but on other occasions it is told that the particular problems it has highlighted are not a priority.

During the year the Parish Council part funded a new village name sign to replace the broken one in Church Lane. This was organised through the AONB Unit and the sign states that Waltham lies within the AONB.

### **Other activities**

- The Parish Council is informed by the County Council, the City Council and by Kent Association of Local Councils of consultation documents that may be of interest. Most are not really relevant to a small parish

like ours so are noted but no response is submitted. The one occasion the Parish Council did respond this year was to a City Council consultation on a new approach to concurrent funding.

- Councillors also have the opportunity to attend relevant meetings particularly those of City Council committees. As already mentioned, the chair of the Parish Council, together with another councillor and a village resident attended a City Council Planning Committee meeting to present objections to a planning application.
- The Council continues to keep in close contact with Kent Association of Local Councils and with KCC. The parish map which is being largely funded by a KCC grant of £1,000 is in production at this very moment and it is hoped that it will be installed in time for the Queen's birthday celebrations in June. Cllr Browne has overseen this project and councillors are grateful for the enormous amount of time she has spent seeing it to completion.
- The Parish Council continues to try and keep the public informed of its activities and of local news that it comes by (such as the proposed cessation of the mobile library service in Waltham). It uses the Petham and Waltham News (thanks to Mike Thompson), the Waltham Website [www.waltham.org](http://www.waltham.org) (thanks to Tim Streater) and its own website [www.walthampc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.walthampc.kentparishes.gov.uk). The government's new Transparency Code places quite a burden on the parish clerk as it requires a lot of information to be publicised via the Parish Council's website, as explained in my report last year. Various policies and protocols had to be approved and publicised by the Parish Council last year (such as a complaints procedure and a publication scheme) to comply with the Transparency Code. I would recommend that people take a look at the Parish Council's website – its address is included in the summary of Parish Council meetings which appear in the Parish News.
- During the year the Parish Council was invited to initiate events to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Queen. As a result councillors agreed last month to fund the celebratory event held on 21<sup>st</sup> April in the Village Hall. It was a great success and thanks are due to all those who helped organise it. The Parish Council has also agreed to help fund a new village marquee which will be used at the village lunch event in June.
- Finally of course, the Parish Council keeps up to date with its various statutory obligations (e.g., submitting its Annual Return to its external auditor in which it supplies a governance statement, an accounting statement and a report from its internal auditor, Kevin Funnell).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion as I prepare to stand down as chair of the Parish Council and as a councillor I should like to thank my fellow Councillors, our City Councillors Rosemary Doyle and Robert Thomas who regularly attend Parish Council meetings, and our County Councillor John Simmonds. They have in various ways provided much welcome and much needed support, advice and encouragement over the past year and, indeed, throughout the years I have been chair.

Finally, thank you all for attending this evening and for all your hard work in initiating, leading and participating in so many village activities which help promote the vibrancy and identity of Waltham.

## **6. REPORTS FROM CITY AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS FOLLOWED. (See appendix)**

## **7. OPEN FORUM (ELECTOR'S QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS)**

It was suggested that a local discussion could be held on the forthcoming European Referendum. An unbiased speaker could be brought in, should there be enough interest. Perhaps this could combine with other parishes? It was agreed that this would be considered. [NB Subsequently it was discovered that Wye is hosting an EU Referendum breakfast which was advertised in Waltham.](#)

A mini ring by the bell-ringers is to take place in celebration of HM Queen Elizabeth's birthday. It was suggested that this could be advertised in PAW News. Church services could also be published.

**The meeting closed at 9.15pm.**