

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE PARISH OF ALPHETON
HELD AT ALPHETON VILLAGE HALL ON 23rd MAY 2017 AT 7.00 PM

Present; Ken Watkins, (Chairman), Maureen Lankester, Richard Barraclough, Richard Kemp, Graham Maskell, Trevor Rix, John Nunn (District Councillor), one member of the public and Julie Rix the Clerk.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then spoke a few words about Alpheton Parish Councillor Alan Ariss whose funeral several members of the Council had attended this day. He became a councillor in 2003 and served as Vice Chairman for many years and Acting Chairman for 2009/10. Alan and his wife Christine were major contributors to village life for more than 40 years, and Alan had also served as a Trustee on the Village Hall, and helped with Coffee Pot, village shows and the Flower Shows. Sadly his health in recent years had not been good, but we will remember a lovely man who devoted a great deal of his time to the community of Alpheton, and be glad that we knew him. The Council stood for a moment of silence in tribute to him.

Apologies; There were none.

There were no declarations of interest.

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting of 24th May 2016 were signed as correct. Proposed by Maureen Lankester and seconded by Richard Barraclough.

Reports – read out in full, all on file
Annual parish meeting chairman's report 2017

A major issue of the last 12 months was the safety of schoolchildren at Bridge Street. Parents were concerned about the dropping off point in the afternoon, which left some children having to cross the busy main road. Maureen, Julie and the Chairman met with David Daw from County Council, who felt the concern was justified. However, his recommendation that buses go into Bridge Street from the main road before dropping children off did not get support higher up. The problem, unfortunately, remains.

Speeding, as always, was almost permanently on the agenda. The police carried out a speed check at Bridge Street at our request, but didn't catch anyone on that particular day. The main road through Alpheton also remains a concern, particularly to the residents of Fir Tree Cottage, which is very close to the road.

Work on the bus stops at the Old Bury Road junction was completed. The northbound stop hard standing was increased in size to make it safer.

Flooding has not been such a big issue in the last 12 months. But we haven't experienced the torrential downpours of the last couple of years, yet. An additional hole has been dug outside Doone House, as County Council continues to monitor the situation.

The budget. Once again we had to increase the precept. No financial support from Babergh, and some of our regular and necessary costs going up. The increase was 80p per annum on a Band D property.

Grass cutting at Bridge Street. Ean Stowe had to give up because of health problems, but fortunately Brian Lankester took over. Sadly Maureen and Brian are moving, so we'll need to find a replacement in due course.

And the parish council year ended on a sad note with the loss of Councillor Alan Ariss.

Finally the Chairman offered his thanks to everyone on the parish council, and our district councillors, for their help, support and advice. He also thanked Julie for all the work she does, which made his job so much easier.

Alpheton Village Hall Report

It has been a challenging year with repairs required to floor and roof. The cost of repairs and a lower income has led to the hall making a loss. All income sources are down. A four step plan has been initiated to improve communication; have new low cost events; ensure commitment before finalising costly bookings and a newsletter for information to the community.

W.I. Report

This continues to thrive with 20 members, a full committee and meetings alternately at Alpheton and Shimpling. A hefty subscription to London and West Suffolk HQ necessitates fundraising like the recently well attended quiz. Visiting speakers comment on the friendly atmosphere.

Parochial Church Council Report.

There are fortnightly services in Alpheton, with Shimpling and Alpheton being one parish. The PCC is made up from people of both villages who also support and worship in each. Congregations average 15 during the year with 85 at the Alpheton Carol Service. There are several children's services and events across the Benefice and a regular programme of social events. All are welcome.

County Councillor's Report from Mr Kemp

Mr Kemp spoke about the £100m of savings made by SCC over the past 3 years and the necessity to make another £120m in the next three years, unfortunately some of this has been achieved by cuts to services. He has supported local parishes in the Melford Ward with donations from the Locality Budget Fund to the tune of over £17,000. Unfortunately this budget has been cut by 20% for this year. Campaigns at SCC for this year are 'Safe and Seen' road safety for children, and a Suicide Prevention Strategy where in Suffolk 8.7 people per 100,000 have died by suicide each year compared with 8.9 in England as a whole. SCC has taken the lead on a new joint plan with all services involved.

District Councillors' Report from Mr Nunn and Mr Kemp

Mr Nunn commented that after several years of a zero tax increase just over 3% has been applied this year. To boost income for the future Babergh has borrowed over 20 million pounds from PWLB at 2% interest to invest in Commercial Property (as an example Borehamgate Precinct Sudbury giving a yield on capital of just over 7%.) By October 2017 Babergh will have moved to Endeavour House in Ipswich. Council offices in Hadleigh will be sold or leased. A new Cabinet was formed today; council houses will be obtained for renting out and the number of councillors will be reduced from 43 to 31 for 2019.

All reports may be viewed on the village website - www.alpheton.onesuffolk.net

Finance

The Finances for 2016/17 were presented to the council for adoption. The accounts were presented, agreed by the council and were signed by the clerk and Chairman.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2016/17 was signed and also Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2016/17 .

The books have been audited internally by Ms Lynne Holt (who sent a report in the form of a letter) and will be sent to the external auditors BDO LLP.

The Risk Assessment for the period 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 was also reviewed and adopted at this meeting.(Signed and dated by Chairman and Clerk)

There was no further business. This meeting closed at 7.25pm.