

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 18 April 2007 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mrs Hurst, Mr Hancock - away. Mr Wittey.

Present: Mr Sole, Mr Wheeler, Mrs Straw, Mr Martin, District Councillor Elsby, County Councillor Kindersley and two members of public.

Minutes: of the last Annual Meeting, previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

Reports:

Police: Although invited, did not attend.

County Council Report – Cllr Sebastian Kindersley

We must all be aware how much the proposed house building and development scheme will impact on our locality. Proposed changes to the East of England plan will be far reaching and affect the whole of South Cambs. The 508,000 houses originally planned for the area is now a floor, not a ceiling. There is potential for 11,000 jobs at Stansted when the second runway is built, but no houses being planned in North Essex to cover the workers. They would have to commute from around the area. The planes from Stansted would stack over Croydon, so constant aircraft activity above the village. Cambridge is likely to increase in size, with no assurance that the developments will have the required infrastructure. Some of the promised road schemes have disappeared completely from the revised Strategy. The Government proposes to replace S106 with Planning Gain. This means that money from developers which was originally used to improve roads, build schools, village halls, etc in the area where the development took place, will go straight to the Government. The Government will keep 30% of the money and distribute the other 70% in the area, which is not necessarily where the S106 money would have gone. Despite strenuous efforts to obtain speed cameras or some sort of speed restriction on Lower Road, nothing has been forthcoming. Budget cuts are blamed but a road in Fenland (where fewer deaths have occurred than on Lower Road) has had £30,000 spent on speed reduction schemes.

South Cambs District Council Report – Ann Elsby

There have been big changes. The core strategy of the LDF was accepted, the first in the country, and we are also awaiting the Inspector's report on the other policies. We have put in on the LDF ones like the Northstowe and the Gypsy & Travellers document. Don't ask me why but they are delayed by the election. My hope is that because we have so many unauthorised sites we do not have to take more. Many other counties have fewer sites and may say it is because there is no work for the travelling community in their area. On the environmental side Gambling-Licensing training has taken place although we are still waiting on the final rules and regulations from the government. They did this with the alcohol licence. Recycling is going well. We could do more with plastics because the bins fill up very quickly. With the capping, charges will go up for collecting large items from your doorstep, septic tanks being emptied etc. No recycling credits, which have meant that Parishes have had to put up their share of the council tax. There is less money available for community grants so making it harder to get funding for projects in the villages. There is still a struggle to get a sustainable future for Milton Country Park. Other Country parks are planned for Northstowe so don't ask me how that will be affected. If we can't cope with one it can be argued we won't cope with more. Then we don't need green space. Houses and gardens are smaller and we are taking a huge number of houses. Houses mean people, so where are they going to get out into the countryside?

Housing: Sheltered housing has seen great change with the mobile warden scheme and not all are happy with it. Its difficult to realise that this has been forced on us because of the EU working time directive. If a warden is called out 5am She cannot then work for the next 11 hours so it was easier to have the wardens work 9-5 and have the PCT take the other call outs after 5pm. Most of the calls after 5pm were for medical reasons & she had to call on their services anyway. But some people don't like not having their warden on site.

There will be a new way of being able to access affordable housing. The Points System is going, and in will come Banding.

A) Urgent need, emergency transfer for existing tenant, statutorily homeless but not intentional, overcrowded urgent H&S risk, urgent medical need multiple needs from band B.

- B) Has two categories High need – H&S high medical need victim harassment lacking 2 bedrooms, tenant or partner under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms or 3 or more needs from band.
- C) Medium need insecure accommodation e.g. sleeping rough in a car etc medium medical need under-occupying by one bedroom social needs for employment or give support, poor housing conditions e.g. lacking a bedroom or sharing facilities.
- D) A customer will be assessed as being adequately housed when they do not fall into any other category.
This is a government directive and all housing will come from not only the council, but from registered social landlords i.e. housing associations, private landlords are not yet included.

The one good thing remaining the same is that villages with 106 agreements will still be able to recommend and those wanting to do exchanges must still have village connections or it goes to the PC to recommend.

Buses: With Sebastian's help we have been able to maintain buses to Gamlingay going into Bedfordshire. We have also been able to get the bus pass used over the border into Biggleswade and Sandy

Longstowe: There's not a lot to report for the village but Will has been successful in his Planning application and we wish him well for the future for his new venture.

The speed limit of 40mph from Fox Rd Bourne to School Lane Longstowe will start from 16th April. It may not be all that was wished for but it's a start. Longstowe has a speed reduction from 40 to 30 on High Street. Longstowe I think has also been given a grant towards the village hall.

Gamlingay: There have been grants for the bike park, Parish Plan, Digital storytelling Community Centre to make it weather tight. Discussions and planning for further fundraising for a multi use games area to be used at the school with a refurbishment for the fitness suite. The youth have also been given money to help start a youth café on a Monday and Thursday evening when they come from school.

Arrington has a speed reduction on the A1198 from 40 to 30.

Little Gransden has been given a grant towards the village hall.

Unfortunately at Croydon, we haven't been able to get very much done with the Lower Road.

Can I thank you again for all your support and I hope I can continue to serve you.

Orwell School Governor's report – Margaret Tomkys

This year the school has 150 pupils 7 of whom come from Croydon. We have 6 full time teaching staff and 8 learning support assistants. This year it was decided to employ a Deputy Head Teacher Mrs. Laura Penrose who has settled well into the strong and successful teaching team and is now the Year 1 teacher. Unfortunately the Head Teacher Mr. Ken Millar is leaving at Easter and the governors are now recruiting an Acting Head for next term and a permanent replacement to be in place in September.

The progress of the children during their time in the school (the value added data) is exceptionally good, within the top 2% of schools in the country and for attainment the Key Stage 2 results put us in the top 8% nationally. The teaching staff's skill in using the assessment procedures tracking each child mentioned in last year's report has contributed to these results as has the use of Individual Educational Plans for those with special educational needs. A recent encouraging LEA inspector's visit noted high standards, good behaviour, a good environment, dedicated support staff and effective leadership and management.

Each classroom now has an interactive white board with internet access and they are well used but we recognise the need to improve the ICT provision and this is being investigated. We also want to raise our standards in music and especially singing.

The School Council with pupils from all years continues to contribute to school life and the Parents Support Association raises much needed funds with Christmas and Summer Bazaars and other events which we would like to encourage everyone not just parents to support.

Visits this year have included a residential trip for years 5 and 6 to Kingswood Educational Activity Centre. Visits to Ely Cathedral help to maintain the links to the Diocese which supports the teaching of Religious Education and the collective Act of Worship each day but also our maintenance of the school buildings and our planned renovations to the school playground.

There are vacancies for Foundation Governors for Whaddon, Tadlow and Wimpole at present and also for an LEA Governor as we sadly lose Paul Haskell, who has served for many years and whose input will be much missed.

Please keep your eyes open as the school is looking at ways to publish more in local community magazines to encourage continued interest in its work.

Reading Room Report – Janet Wheeler

This year has seen major refurbishment and improvement to the fabric of the Reading Rooms and my annual report is much more upbeat as a result.

Crucially we now have effective heating which has enabled us to attract and maintain bookings especially during the winter months. As a result of the new disabled facilities, a resident was able to participate in a village social evening after being unable to visit the hall for over sixteen years. Most recently the carpet, which I believe had been in service for at least twenty years, has been replaced and during the summer a dedicated group of volunteers decorated the inside of the hall almost for the first time in living memory. All of the improvements have met with positive and encouraging responses. Indeed, various clubs are now springing up and the hall is being used more and more to the extent that dismay is expressed when, for instance the hall is unavailable.

We have welcomed three new Trustees this year; Colin Friend, Di Walters and Liz Jenkins who is also the Caretaker for the Reading Rooms, and Nicky Hurst retired after serving many years as a Trustee.

Until now we have been almost exclusively self funding and most of our hard earned reserves have been spent on the many improvements which have taken place within the last year. However, the Parish Council generously awarded a grant of £1000 in recognition of the unexpected expense of a new front door which is very much appreciated.

This year's accounts are in the process of being audited but we currently have a total of £2320.46 in our Community Account and £1281.59 in our Premium Business Account. Our yearly insurance premium is due to be paid and obviously day to day running costs have to be taken into account. These figures do not yet reflect the reclaimed VAT which I mentioned earlier. Once I receive the audited accounts these will be available to interested parties on request and of course they will be published on the village website.

I have just received notification from the VAT office that we are able to reclaim the VAT element of the recent disabled facility improvements which amounts to approximately £1000. An appeal was made to residents to sponsor a tin of paint in the summer. It was gratifying to receive a very positive response and a sum of over £400 was raised in this way. Further fundraising events are currently being planned such as Open Gardens day as well as social evenings/events in the coming months. Looking ahead, another 'Pampered Chef' evening has been booked for November following the success of the previous one which raised almost £200. Now that use of the hall has increased we are in a position to investigate and apply for grants and this avenue will be explored during the coming year. Further improvements are being planned in the meantime with the new front door at the top of the list and I am confident that the kitchen will be refurbished possibly towards the end of the summer.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody who has given their time and support to the Reading Rooms in whatever capacity, the achievements of the last year are incredible and due to a real community effort.

Chairman of the Parish Council – Garth Wheeler

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen – welcome to this year's Annual Parish Meeting. As you may be aware I took over from Paul Martin as Chairman of the Parish Council last year. I would like to thank Paul for his efforts and time in this role on behalf of the village.

Looking back over the last year there have been a number of issues that we have been working on that have been running for a while:-

Lower Road

There has been a concern over the high number of accidents on the Lower Road with some 19 accidents recorded between 2001 and 2005 with 5 fatalities and 8 seriously injured. I attended a meeting on June 19th regarding this and can report that we have been put on list of 4 projects put on the outline / design plan for next year (2008). We had hoped that we could simply put double white lines down the middle of the road when the road was resurfaced. However this was not possible as the laws on this form of road marking are very strict.

Cemetery

The ongoing work with the cemetery is nearing completion with just the piping of the ditch, as consent under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 has been obtained, and the installation of post and rail fencing for which quotes have been obtained.

Planning

There have been several planning applications over the past year which have either been approved or rejected by the Council on their merit. It has transpired that our voice is not heard in all instances. There is one planning approval that was granted which still causes concern, mainly over the choice and timing of the application of the finish to the buildings. The Council has been seeking advice on the use of the Ombudsman and is awaiting an update on this.

Thanks

I would like to thank Will Jenkins who offered to monitor the footpaths in Croydon and report any problems that need attention. I would also like to thank Janet Wheeler for the work her and her team have done in making the Reading Rooms a far more usable facility, especially in the winter now that the new heating has been installed.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who has helped with village matters over the past year, the councillors who give up their spare time and patience and especially to Marian for her unfailing enthusiasm and dedication that she puts into her position as Clerk.

Parish Council Finance:

The Clerk gave a brief interpretation of the accounts and invited questions from the floor. VAT has been reclaimed but not received. The unadopted accounts were offered to the meeting for inspection.

Income		Expenditure	
Precept	1675 - 00	Insurance	441 - 39
Interest		Reading Room hire	165 - 75
Stocks	6 - 48	Churchyard Maintenance	225 - 00
NSB	295 - 11	Churchyard extension costs	100 - 00
Recycling credits	53 - 82	Audit	50 - 00
		Internal Auditor	30 - 00
		Subs to Associations	139 - 94
		British Legion wreath	16 - 50
		VAT	8 - 75
		Clerk (Salary, Sundry exp)	1143 - 52
		Website costs	73 - 58
		Grants to Reading Room	1973 - 41
Totals	2030 - 41		4367 - 84

Balances

31 March 2005	10802 - 90	31 March 2006	
Add receipts	2030 - 41	National Savings	7347 - 87
Less payments	(4367 - 84)	Bank Account	936 - 10
		Stocks	181 - 57
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	8465 - 47		8465 - 47
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Village Matters

Church Restoration - Malcolm Ralph

Believe it or not it is just about one year ago that All Saints re-opened its doors for business after a huge effort by a large number of villagers to get the building ready for the first service led by Bishop John Inge .

I hope, understandably, this year we have not been in a rush to begin work on the long list of things to do; for everyone's benefit we have been taking a bit of a breather. Also it has been a year when the Quinquennial Inspection Report has been required to be produced and this has been another good reason for holding fire – but more of this anon.

That is not to say that nothing has been going on. The key focus for continuing progressive improvement has been the Last Saturday Group which meets on the last Saturday of each month to continue with upgrading works particularly those with something of either a visual or comfort impact. This group has been gradually oiling the floor tiles both to lay the dust as well as highlighting their natural colour, has continued to repair cracks and plaster in the north aisle, and recently has further pollarded the trees closest to the building. Plans for the future include finishing the floor tiles, reinstating the north aisle, repairs and finish to pews, and assembling a worthy restoration display. Thanks must be given to those involved and I would single out Paul Wittey, Steph, and Tim Fane. The work of this group is important and we have just about managed to keep going but we could do with a couple more volunteers for this one morning a month so as to try to have at least three people at each session. If anyone is interested in joining it would be great if they would let me know for planning purposes and beyond that just turn up!

Returning now to the already mentioned Quinquennial Inspection. Every five years we are required (as for all parishes) to have prepared for us by an approved architect a Quinquennial (5 yearly) Inspection Report on the fabric of the building. We have just received the latest one dated 6th December 2006 prepared by Oliver Caroe of Purcell Miller Tritton. Oliver knows the building well having been the architect leading the recent major works. Over the years, unless of an unusually calm disposition, one has needed to take large doses of tranquilizer before reading such a report as we have been faced with pretty challenging reading. This year it is a much better read! Of course there is the usual list of works needed under the categories - Urgent, Within Two Years, Within Five Years, Beyond Five Years, Desirable, and finally Maintenance and Monitoring. As anyone can imagine these add up to a long list of items but this time there are two noticeable differences. Firstly, there are very positive comments on what has been achieved, for example, **'In general, however, the condition of the building is vastly different from that 5 years ago and it is a credit to the Parish and their efforts'**. Secondly, even though we do not have the resources to begin virtually any of the tasks, thankfully there is a noticeable absence this time of the huge almost overwhelming six-figure items; so, a huge communal pat on the back is justified. If I had to pick a couple of items under Urgent then these would be the windows which have previously been described as in danger of loss and which were meant to be part of the previous package of works but dropped due to cost, and the monitoring of movement cracks.

What happens next? The Fabric Committee of the PCC (Neil, Percy, Tim, James and I) will need time to fully digest the Report's contents and will then meet to draw up a recommended strategy leading to an achievable list of target items given the expected costs and our funds plus hoped for grants. This strategy and list will then need to be put to the PCC for approval with the Parish being kept informed

through the magazine or special notification. So, watch for more information once these plans begin to emerge.

I just want to mention two other work items:-

1. Heating.

Some of you will have noticed that four portable electric radiant fires have been purchased. These are not seen as a long term solution but were needed to immediately improve things given that we now have power available and for when we need to heat for eg the side Chapel. In the longer term we have a heating circuit available at eaves level but as yet have not had the funds to make use of this so this is one area where the Fabric Committee will focus – but as always funds permitting.

2. Lighting:

Just to say that it is our intention to change to low energy lighting where practicable. e.g not where immediate lighting is needed (e.g doorways).

In the backs of our minds there are still thoughts about possibly launching a Friends of All Saints as a way of more closely involving those sympathetic to the building and its history though not necessarily to using the building for worship. This will continue to be chewed over so any responses favourable or otherwise please pass on. Clearly there is absolutely no point in going down this road if there is insufficient interest and as a result it would make no difference.

Finally I wanted to say something on finances and fund raising. In general the financial situation for All Saints is not strong. We have failed to pay more than half our Parish Share probably for the third year running. In the longer term this is potentially a dangerous situation. Attendances at major festivals remains strong, for example, at least 70 at Christmas and around 50 at Easter but regular giving needs to be improved especially from those 30 or so members on the electoral roll and others sympathetic to All Saints continuing. It remains astonishing that there are literally less than a handful of tax efficient deeds of covenant in operation given that the Chancellor is prepared to top these up with an additional 23%! Anyone interested in helping in this way see me or speak to Tim Walters. Thinking more of restoration funds, planning for the Open Gardens event on the 10th June is going well. Lots of attractions are being worked up. As you no doubt know the proceeds are to be shared equally between the Reading Room and All Saints. While it is true that in history both the Fete and Open Gardens were started exclusively for All Saints funds, today I would endorse this shared approach for the main summer event as a practical, pragmatic and enjoyable solution and we are enjoying the fruits of recent works to both buildings. I would exhort that this arrangement continues without, what I find to be, strength sapping debate. Other All Saints events may well include an Autumn Art Sale and we would encourage music events in the building. Anyone with musical contacts or aspirations please help to make some events happen. So any ideas/opportunities please come forward.

Thank you

Churchyard Maintenance: It was proposed by th Chairman that the Parish Council continues to help towards the maintenance of the churchyard with a payment of £225 to the PCC. All in favour.

Croydon Website: From the results of the village survey, a website for the village was very popular. Now that there is one, it is getting very little use. Mr Wheeler asked the meeting if they felt he should continue updating the site. The meeting felt that the website should continue and that as the Webmaster, Mr Wheeler should make a small charge for his time (starting April 2007) in looking after it.

Public Session:

The Parish Councillors were thanked for all their hard work by Mr Ralph.

Parish Council Matters:

Cemetery: Mr Martin has received a written quotation from Cobbs at Barrington for £4897-00 + VAT. An alternative quote from Websters at Impington had been received for £6000-00 + VAT. No third quote was obtained as there are no Approved Contractors nearby, and it was felt that the further a contractor had to travel, the greater the cost would be. It was proposed by Mrs Straw and seconded by Mr Martin that the Cobbs quotation for works to the churchyard extension, as agreed with Mr Martin and Mr Sole, should be accepted. All in favour. Mr Martin to action.

Grass Cutting: A map of the grass areas in the village to be cut by SCDC this year was received. Only the grass around Clopton Close is due to be cut.

Regional Spatial Strategy Revision: The EERA is holding a meeting about the provision of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. No-one available to attend.

Date of next meeting - Wednesday 16 May 2007 at 8.00pm – Annual Parish Council Meeting

Date of next Annual Meeting - Wednesday 16 April 2008 at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Signed

Date