

**LIDGATE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
Held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 in Lidgate Village Hall at 8.00p.m.

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**Parish councillors present:** C Wade (Chairman), C Bliss, J Whitefield, C Morley

**Also present:** M Evans (Suffolk County Council), D Redhead (District Councillor), A Gilmour (Village Hall Management Committee), the Safer Neighbourhood Team and 5 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone present. The minutes of last year's Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013 were approved and signed as correct by the Chairman.

**1. Safer Neighbourhood Team**

The Safer Neighbourhood Team reported a slight increase in the crimes from the previous year, mostly thefts from outbuildings. Councillors asked them about the problem of speeding motorists through the village. They reported they were currently prioritising the B1063, but through Stradishall and Clare at the present time. They noted Councillors' concerns.

**2. Mrs M Evans (Suffolk County Council)**

Councillor Evans spoke about the following:

- Her first year as county councillor has been a challenge as it has been a steep learning curve. She has very much enjoyed it not least because it has been such a pleasure to get to know the Clare Division communities better. Thank you to Lidgate Parish Council for being so welcoming.
- It has been a challenging year for the county council too and she feels very strongly that in several key areas SCC must do better in the next 12 months.
- School attainment is improving but not quickly enough to push us back up the league tables yet. Ofsted inspected the county's education service earlier in the year and were critical. It was unfortunate as we were attacked for not having a strategic improvement plan in place yet Ofsted knew the plan was to be finalised within weeks of their inspection. Results are getting better but she is glad to serve on the Education Scrutiny committee so they can keep an eye on our schools performance and call the education team to account.
- Another area of challenge is SCC's new highways contract. It has not been a happy story to date but again performance is improving. Councillors, with the support of the staff working on the ground, have been calling for changes in the way the contract is managed. SCC has recruited more staff to the area offices and has streamlined a bit, but probably not enough yet, the way the contract actually operates.
- The county council is working this year to a budget with savings of £38m. It is not increasing council tax because it doesn't want to penalise council tax payers. However there are more cuts to come. SCC's grant has been cut by Government and SCC will have to look long and hard at what it does and how it does it.
- In her role as assistant cabinet member for roads and transport she is chairing a cross party panel reviewing speed limits. They have issued a report setting the criteria for 20mph schemes and are now looking at the higher speed limits. She is also chairing a group looking at the problems of accessibility to public transport.
- The county council is allowing communities to buy their own vehicle activated signs to control speeding and she is organising a meeting for parish councils with SCC's road safety manager on 25th June.
- Concerns about the speed of broadband and the pace of the roll out of the Better Broadband programme. She is arranging a public meeting in Stansfield Village Hall with the team leading the project - Monday 11 June, 7.30pm.
- From her locality grant she is looking forward to contributing to Lidgate's new play equipment.

**3. Mr D Redhead (District Councillor)**

Councillor Derek Redhead reported briefly on the impact of spending cuts and the pressure on public services. He detailed the issues with the viability of the of the Apex facility in Bury St Edmunds and described how it will need to be continuously subsidised.

**4. A Gilmour (Village Hall Management Committee). Written report attached**

Andy Gilmour reported on the improvements that had recently been made to the village hall, which included new windows and a spruce up of the internal decorations. He thanked members of the village who had participated. He informed everyone of the village fete which will take place on Sunday July 5th.

**5. PCC report**

Janet Mitson was unable to attend the meeting, but Chris Bliss reported on the current situation regarding Lidgate PCC. There is no Church Warden and St Mary's church is still in need of regular funds for its upkeep. The recent interest in the historic graffiti in the church may encourage visitors but no plan is in place to enable this as a fundraising initiative just yet.

Chris Bliss thanked Keith Hogan and Janet Mitson on behalf of the village for all the hard work they have done for the PCC.

**6. Chairman's Annual Report**

Cameron Wade summarised his last year in office, mentioning the playground project as the main focus for

the council's activity. He thanked Tracy Flux in her absence for the work she did specifying the work and selecting appropriate suppliers. He also thanked those in the village who pledged financial support, which enabled the council to apply for further funding. He reported that there was now sufficient funds for the work to go ahead and thanked Chris Bliss and Joanne Ince for their hard work securing grants from outside agencies. He expressed concern that too few residents were getting involved in village affairs and encouraged everyone to take part in community activities.

**7. Playground update**

The Parish Council has managed to acquire all of the funding for the playground in the field behind Orchard Close. Thank you to everyone who has contributed financially to the project. Work is expected to commence within the next two months.

**8. Community Speed Watch scheme**

Speeding is the most concerning issue in Lidgate and has been raised with Police and County Council representatives at every possible opportunity. Now, a number of residents have decided to take some direct action in an attempt to enforce the 30mph speed limit in this village. Linda Gilmour reported that there are 10 volunteers who would like to support Lidgate's Community Speedwatch initiative. This initiative will be supported by Suffolk Police and will enable volunteers to be trained in the use of a radar speed gun. The Council would need to hire the necessary equipment in the first instance while it runs a pilot for one month. Possibilities exist to share equipment with neighbouring villages to reduce costs. It is intended to commence the pilot in the next few months.

**9. Ceremonial locking of the village gate**

The meeting closed at 9.05p.m.

Signed .....

Dated.....