

Minutes of Copythorne Annual Parish Meeting which was held on March 26th 2019 in Copythorne Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Simon Lucas – Chairman of Copythorne Parish Council

In attendance: Mrs. Christine Howe – Locum Clerk to Copythorne Parish Council;

By invitation: Cllr. Mrs. Diane Andrews and Cllr. Derek Tipp

46 members of the public attended the meeting

Apologies were received from Cllr. Edward Heron

1. Minutes of the previous APM – March 28th 2018

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman, Cllr. Simon Lucas

2. Chairman's Report

The Chairman opened the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30 p.m. and welcomed the public, District Councillors and introduced the Locum Clerk. Thanks were given to previous Clerks who had helped to organise and attend previous Annual Parish Meetings and looked after the Parish Council affairs also, the District Councillors for their unstinting support. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Andrews for supplying Copythorne with the waste bins, including replacing the stolen bin and Cllr. Heron in his absence, for the generous grant he awarded Copythorne P.C. for a new parish seat which has been a tremendous success.

The Copythorne Speed Watch team were praised for all the hard work they put in trying to curb speeding traffic in the parish.

The Chairman then explained to the public that although the exact design has not yet been decided there is a plan to replace the old notice boards with new enclosed glazed notice boards which would protect the notices put up and keep out the rain. More on this will follow in due course as investigations into possible suppliers and designs are undertaken and costings obtained.

Tribute was then paid to the outgoing chairman, Cllr. Joseph Reilly whose experience and knowledge of the Parish and council matters would be sorely missed.

At the moment, council had managed to keep the precept increase to a minimum and it was one of the lowest in the county. However, new facilities in the Parish, including the new playground and providing new facilities, would require council to look at the precept more closely in the coming years if the Parish was to realise a sustained development and playground maintenance programme.

The Chairman then thanked all the current councillors for their hard work that they put in for the Parish and extended an invitation to the public to put their names forward if they wish to become a councillor in the next election in May.

3. Flooding Update

Cllr. John Goodwin gave an update on the flooding report, explained where the worst flooding had occurred and asked if anyone had any expertise in flooding and would like to get involved, would they let him know. The Chairman requested that any questions should be emailed to the Clerk parishclerk@copythorne.org.uk and they would be dealt with as soon as possible.

4. District Councillor Feedback

Cllr. Mrs. Andrews thanked the Copythorne W.I. for their part in making the Annual Parish Meeting a success and that everybody really appreciated it. Cllr. Mrs. Andrews explained as their District Councillor for North Copythorne what her job entailed, to act in the best interests of her constituents. When Cllr. Andrews was voted in 10 years ago, she suggested that all the monies which were being held in reserve should be invested in property and rent them out. The suggestion was not met with enthusiasm and Cllr. Andrews was told 'Council didn't do that sort of thing'. However, 10 years on, Cllr. Andrews is pleased to report that NFDC was now buying up properties with the monies being held on deposit and renting them out very successfully. They are continuing to add to their list of properties and a Council Member has just been appointed with responsibility for the property portfolio.

Cllr. Mr. Tipp reported that the Government continued to reduce the amount of money being given to County/District councils so it was inevitable that there would be some streamlining in the services offered by councils; visitor information centres have been abolished as most people seek information online, H.C.C. would be going paperless and other streamlining would follow. N.F.D.C., has been involved in a review of ward boundaries which will result in wards becoming bigger and less councillors to represent them. Councillor Tipp reported that when he first became a councillor the leisure centres were making a huge loss, they are now breaking even and in this happy situation, they are looking for a partner stakeholder within the leisure/health centre industry to bring more expertise and, hopefully, increase the efficiency to return a profit. As pointed out by Cllr. Andrews, the purchases of property was now realising a good return on investment of the public's money held on deposit by H.C.C. The government has ordered that 900 houses to be built in Netley Marsh which is going to put a tremendous strain on the infrastructure, but there is nothing that H.C.C. can do to avoid this. The spring litter pick which took place all over Hampshire has been successful. In conclusion, Cllr. Tipp thanked fellow councillor Les Puttock who is standing down from the next election.

5. Annual Parish Award

The annual parish award is awarded to a member or members of the community for outstanding service to the Parish. This year it was awarded to the two founder members of the Friends of Copythorne Playground (FOCP), Ms. Holly Green and Ms. Laurie Gibbs for their immense contribution to the Parish, who initiated the process which led to the raising of £56,000 to install a playground for Copythorne.

6. First Responder Report

Mr. Geoff Thomas, the speaker on behalf of Copythorne First Responders explained they came under the South Central Ambulance area. The remit of First Responders is not to attend the scene of traffic accidents or serious crime scenes as in the case of a stabbing. It is primarily to assist if anyone is having a heart attack or similar trauma event in the immediate community – usually when at home. They are there to provide support to the patient and family and they provide care under the direction of the ambulance crew. Their training is a two day course and they are required to assist for 20 hours over a month. Volunteers are always needed and age is no barrier so Mr. Thomas asked that if anyone was interested in becoming a First Responder, they should contact him. This can be done via the Parish Clerk.

7. Methodist Church Hall

Ms. Francois Barrett spoke on behalf of 'Soup and Chat' which is run at the Methodist Church. It was formed two years ago and the purpose is to reach out to people who might be lonely, on their own or who just like to come along and enjoy good company and good soup. The Soup and Chat club is open from 12.30 p.m. – 2.00 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month. Any profit made goes to charity and Ms. Barrett extended a warm invitation to all to come along and sample good soup and chat!

8. Neighbourhood Watch

Copythorne Parish is home to several Neighbourhood Watch teams. They are all volunteers and although not sponsored in any way by the police they do have a very good relationship with them. Being a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is beneficial not only from a protection point of view but also, by receiving discounts on household insurance and security features. Currently, shed burglaries are common; one member had their electric bicycle stolen and reported it to the police. The information was relayed to the local neighbourhood watch team, as a result of this, the owner had his stolen cycle returned to him within a few hours! Mr. Mike Hutton suggested that if anyone wished to become a member of a local scheme to contact the national website for details. <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/>

P.C.S.O. Williams asked Mr. Hutton to pass on the following report as he was unable to attend.

Burglaries – 30 have occurred in the last year, mostly sheds and other buildings being broken into with petrol driven tools being the most frequently stolen items.

Theft – theft from cars are still regular occurrences, cars parked on driveways, in car parks or on the side of the road are vulnerable so keep all valuable items hidden. Theft of bicycles is increasing as they are becoming more specialised and expensive, keep them inside if possible.

Fraud – P.C.S.O. Williams is concerned about the increase in victims of fraud/scams and would like the public to inform him of anyone they think might be a potential victim.

P.C.S.O. Williams asked that any questions be emailed to him at:-

richard.williams@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

9. Copythorne Playground Presentation

The playground is now 6 months old and it is providing a welcoming place for children and parents to meet, relax, have fun and chat to each other. This form of play provides not only educational stimulation, it also teaches children to socialise, a very important lesson to learn for quality of life and for growing into a well-balanced adult.

The Playground team began as two mums, Holly and Laurie, who recognised the need for a local playground for the children of the Parish. They quickly recruited an excellent team who were able between them to raise the necessary funding to provide the playground. The process of funding, finding a suitable site, sourcing the best play equipment was lengthy and required tenacity, resilience, energy and enthusiasm to achieve such a successful outcome. The playground team were cognisant of the need for the future expense of maintaining the playground and the insurance to be provided and asked the Parish Council to be responsible for the long-term management of the playground. The Parish Council were very happy to take this over.

The success of the playground has proved to be a catalyst for the need to improve facilities in general in the Parish, another benefit for which the Chairman thanked the Ms. Holly Green and Ms. Laurie Gibbs. A testament to how well regarded the playground is in the Parish is the fact that, thankfully, there has been no major vandalism and no graffiti and it is enjoyed by a wide age range. The whole process from inception to the children opening the playground took just 2 years, a wonderful achievement, the Chairman thanked them for improving the quality of life for so many parishioners of Copythorne.

10. Community Speed Watch

The Chairman delivered this report on behalf of the CSW organisers. Copythorne Speedwatch was set up in 2017. Over the past year and a half, there have been a large number of speeding cars and other vehicles recorded. The highest recorded speed this year was 77 m.p.h. in a 40 m.p.h. area!

For safety reasons, the Speedwatch volunteers are not allowed to stand on the side of the road, they are instructed to stand in a safe area i.e. a layby. For every one and a half hours which the volunteers spend monitoring the vehicles, another one hour is spent on paperwork which is so necessary to evidence the need for further measures to curb speed. The Speedwatch team in Copythorne appears to be having a particularly good effect in slowing down the traffic in and around the Parish and the volunteers who set up the local scheme do excellent work. Speedwatch have now been given permission to monitor 40 m.p.h. roads and more volunteers are needed. If you would like to join them in making your parish safer contact parishclerk@copythorne.org.uk and your details will be passed on to the co-ordinators.

11. Parish Hall Presentation

The Parish Hall Committee are working on plans for the future refurbishment / possible extension / facility improvement of the building (and trying to predict how the Parish Hall usage might be developed in the future). A Sub-Committee has been formed to undertake the development work on behalf of the main Committee. The Committee started the project to create an extension to the front of the building. Since then, however, it was agreed that there was a need to understand more about the needs / wishes / uses of the Parish Hall by the community.

As a result, an open day for the public to come and discuss the future of the Parish Hall was held. 14 user groups were in attendance and over 150 people attended. The public feedback from the open day was overwhelmingly in favour of rejecting the totality of the plans in their current form, but did acknowledge that upgrades to facilities (toilets / kitchen) would be welcomed to maintain what is already there, to update it and preserve what works well.

The results of the feedback indicated several things which needed to be taken onto account, such as for community facilities, including a community hub / café. From this it was decided to ensure the venue was flexible enough for a range of users to benefit the whole community; providing places for meetings, lectures, clubs to meet in a safe environment with the objective of improving the quality of life for the widest number of Parishioners possible. Research has been done on various village halls across the county to establish what could be achieved and a detailed business plan is being drawn up. It is hoped that the Sub Committee will be able to complete the drafting of the Plan by the end of the current year, in order that the main Committee can undertake another consultation with the community before moving to a new Plan for development.

More thinking about the Parish Hall development will be forthcoming in due course.

12. 5 Year Plan for Copythorne

The Chairman presented the concept of a 5 Year Local Plan for the Parish. Copythorne does not have a Local Plan at present and it is proposed that this would be essential into the future to justify how Parishioners money is spent and identify what the community wishes to see happen in and around the Parish into the future. The Chairman stressed that it was not the 'Parish Council's' plan, it is the Copythorne plan and it is for the Parishioners to have a significant input into what they would like to see introduced into the Parish. The role of the Parish Council was to act as the Plan Custodian and where appropriate lead the process the develop resources to enact aspects of the Plan.

The Plan should enable the Council to identify what the priorities are for the community in the short, medium and long term. This will then help the Parish Council to plan its finances for more than one year ahead and enable Council to make realistic decisions for the longer term and as a result, identify how much precept is needed to make the Plan priorities a reality.

The Parish Council will draft the 5 Year Plan and invite the community to help finalise the aims and objectives and the priorities within the Plan. In the first instance the Plan will be very much a local designed version. In the future, the Parish might wish to adopt a more formally regulated structure for the Plan and submit it to the NFNPA and NFDC for reference within their Local Plans.

The Chairman stated this was an excellent time to commence a Plan preparation as this was an election year and a new Parish Council starts in May for a 4 year term. The Plan once drafted, will aid budget setting for 2020-2021 and onwards and enable timings to be set for longer term projects.

Some ideas have already been raised but the Parish Council would like to hear more suggestions from the whole community so it has put the documents and questionnaire on the website to be downloaded. Parishioners were invited to contact their local councillor with any feedback and suggestions or contact the Clerk by emailing: parishclerk@copythorne.org.uk It is hoped that the plan can be in a working draft by September 2019 or soon thereafter and certainly by the year end.

With nothing further to report, the Chairman of Copythorne Parish Council closed the meeting at 9.30 p.m.

Signed by the Chairman.....SIGNATURE REDACTED (Graham Chillcott)..... Dated.....May 5th 2021.....