

Minutes of the 121st MEOPHAM Annual Parish Meeting

held on Tuesday 19th May 2015, at 6.00 pm

at the St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham.

In the Chair:

Cllr D Powell, Chairman, Meopham Parish Council.

Also Present:

Mr A Rowe (Cobham Parish Council), Mr K Dare (Footpath Warden), 10 members of Meopham Parish Council, Assistant Police Inspector S Tyler, PCSO J Hartley, Community Warden M Cason, representatives of local organisations, other invited guests, electors and members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Borough Cllrs Mrs L Boycott, Mrs J Burgoyne, J Cubitt and D Shelbrooke, County Cllr B Sweetland, Cllr Papadopulos (Chairman Higham Parish Council), Cllr J Ogden (Meopham Parish Council), Mrs E Bugg (Hasler Bursary & Meopham Art Group), Mrs G Wiltshire (Meopham Footpaths Group), Fr Gilbert (St Paul's Catholic Church, Mr & Mrs Barnes, Mr P Kettle, Mr D Fairweather, Mrs R Blake, Dr J Trethewey

2. Chairman's Welcome to guests, electors, members of the public and the Press

The Chairman welcomed guests, electors, members of the public and the press.

3. Minutes of the previous (120th) Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the 120th Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th May 2014 were confirmed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Address and Annual Report

The Chairman opened his address by stating that due to the elections, it was unfortunate this Annual Parish Meeting clashed with the Mayor making at Gravesham Borough Council and also organised events of local societies.

The Chairman stated:-

- That the final year for the Parish council prior to all the elections had been a very busy one particularly with losing the former parish clerk Ms Sarah Steven in August.
- the Council had engaged Mrs Jan Grigg as Clerical Officer who had proved exceptional in helping to run the Parish Office over the past seven months.
- Mrs Jan Grigg was now leaving and the Council were in the process of recruiting a Parish Clerk who would take over the full duties including those of Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer.
- The Council have lost Cllr Alison Aitken, Cllr Ken Kemsley and Cllr Harry Rayner who decided not to seek re-election . All these three councillors made valuable contributions above their statutory duties with Alison updating the Emergency Plan, Ken taking a lead role in planning, particularly in putting forward the council's views whilst working with Gravesham Borough Council on the Local Plan Core Strategy and Harry taking on the roles of Treasurer and Responsible Financial Officer.
- that the village assets had been maintained to a high standard and following a request from one of the residents, Mr Dave Berry, the Council had arranged a number of litter picking parties to help keep the Parish clean and free from litter.
- the Council would continue to organise future litter picking days, and would encourage residents to help keep clear the areas where they reside.
- that the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) was once again of great importance over the last year highlighting the need to protect the green belt for future generations. The decision on site allocations and the decision of the new Conservative Gravesham Borough Council on the Green belt Review were still awaited.
- that there were three ongoing projects, the Lower Thames Crossing, Ebbsfleet Garden City and Paramount London that will have a major impact on our area in the near future.

The Chairman thanked:-

- Gravesham Rural County Cllr Bryan Sweetland and Borough Councillors Mrs Lesley Boycott, Mrs Julia Burgoyne, John Cubitt and Derek Shelbrooke for all their support over the past year.
- PCSO Jo Hartley and Community Wardens for all their work, and particularly for their determination to secure the building of the Skate Park at Culverstone Recreation Ground.

- fellow councillors for all their hard work during the past year and for the support they have given him, especially the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Barbara Wade and the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of our Standing Committees.

Finally the Chairman expressed the Parish Council's gratitude to all the various local organisations within the parish for all their work and effort over the past year.

6 Address by a representative from Kent Police

Assistant Police Inspector (API) Sarah Tyler produced the latest crime statistics in the Meopham area and broke these down into groups and dates. A general discussion was had on the figures and a number of ways that the public could help with prevention of crime. API Tyler outlined the present Neighbourhood team and the support units that they could access. The Chairman thanked API Tyler for her very well received presentation.

7 Questions from the Public

The Chairman invited questions from parishioners and asked that they declare their names and which wards they reside in. He reminded parishioners that they were not permitted to make statements and that some questions may require a written response if the information was not readily available.

One resident raised the issue about a repair to a manhole cover on the A227 nearly opposite to Steeles Lane.

Another resident asked for an explanation about the roles of the Clerk, the Proper Officer and the Responsible Financial Officer.

The Chairman thanked distinguished guests and parishioners, for attending the 121st Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 06.55 pm.