

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting

Thursday 23rd May 2019 at 7pm

Held at the Edgar Sewter School

Present: Councillors;

Peter Dutton, Rosemary Lewis, Karen Prime, Jill Reece, David Thomas, Maureen Took, David Wollweber (Chair).

In Attendance: N J Rees (Clerk), Cllr Tony Goldson (ESC & SCC), Alison Cackett (ESC)

Apologies: Cllrs; T Allen, B Chadwick, A Fleming, A Dunning & J Wagner,

Members of the Public: A register was kept on the door, 28 members of the public attended the meeting.

The Chair explained that this meeting was the Annual Parish Meeting and not a Council meeting, there was no formal agenda but instead it would follow the usual format of a question and answer session. The Council had provided a list of possible subjects for discussion but it was entirely up to those present. The Chair also explained that the ancient rules of the Annual parish meeting prevented residents from other parishes taking part however the Chair recognised that there were residents of Holton and other parishes that were interested in the welfare of their nearest town. The Chair asked all those present if they would allow residents from out of the parish to speak and there were no objections.

Proposed new Community Centre: A resident asked what parking would be available at the site if a community centre was built. Cllr Dutton explained that the area designated for community use was .44 Hectares and so there would be some parking on site.

However, the majority of parking would be on the two Angel Link car parks which would shortly have free one hour parking and would be free anyway after 6pm.

The Chair asked for a show of hands as to how many of those present were in favour of a new Community Centre, virtually all residents at the meeting indicated that they were in favour.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): A resident asked how the CIL was distributed and how much was spent in Halesworth. District Councillor Alison Cackett, explained that Halesworth currently received 15% automatically and 85% went to the East Suffolk Council (ESC). However the Town Council could apply to ESC for CIL monies to fund other projects such as the Community Centre (listed as essential in the Local Plan) as long as it was for infrastructure purposes.

A resident asked whether it could be used to fund new doctors as more doctors were urgently needed. District & County Cllr Tony Goldson explained that doctors were only funded by the NHS. In the case of the Cutlers Hill Surgery, they were having difficulties attracting new doctors to the area and this may partly be because young doctors may not necessarily wish to buy into the business as a partner.

Recreational Facilities: A resident asked about the lack of recreational facilities in the town in comparison to other towns. Cllr Thomas, on behalf of the Halesworth Community Sport & Leisure (HCSL), explained what their plans entailed regarding improvements for facilities at the playing fields and Cllr Goldson explained what the plans were at Campus with the sports, gym and health facilities. A resident asked about the Basley ground, Cllr Thomas explained that the Football Association had condemned the ground as unsuitable for sports. Another resident asked about the recent planning application by HCSL and was this a loss of recreation grounds. Cllr Thomas explained that the area in question was earmarked for development not recreation and HCSL needed to raise funds to make improvements to the existing sports and leisure facilities.

Free Parking: A resident expressed concerns over the proposed change of free parking from the Thoroughfare to the other car parks as it would be longer to walk to town. Cllr Dutton explained that there was very little option as the Council could not afford to pay the £34k needed to maintain the free parking in the Thoroughfare. The Council could not ask businesses, residents and neighbouring parishes to pay anymore so this change offered an affordable alternative at £15k. Cllr Took reported that she had received favourable feedback from businesses who were less centrally located. It was noted that it was further to walk from the other car parks assuming you were only visiting the very centre of town but there would be more free parking spaces available and options to park at either end of the town.

Patrick Stead Hospital (PSH): A resident was under the impression that the League of Friends of the PSH had a substantial amount of money which could be spent on the building but was instead earmarked for the new Pear Tree facility. The Council could not comment on this speculation and as Cllr Thomas pointed out the League of Friends of the PSH were governed by their charter as a charitable organisation. They supported the health care facilities rather than the building itself, which would no longer provide health services. It was noted that the PSH had been registered as an 'asset of community value' but would require a team of volunteers and professionals to explore the potential community use for the building. It was noted that the London Rd Building had also been registered as an 'asset of community value'.

Halesworth Area Community Transport (HACT): Mr Doug Gray made a presentation about the history of the voluntary organisation, how it operated without any subsidies and the benefits that the bus services provided to the town and surrounding villages. HACT faced many financial challenges ahead which included replacement of the 'Golf' bus and the necessity for an additional disabled access, 16 passenger bus and the associated training and running costs. Mr Gray provided figures of the many different types of passenger journeys that the service provided throughout 2018 which amounted to 16,925 in total. HACT needed more volunteer drivers to cover the increased demands from the local area and residents needing transport to health and welfare centres further afield would only increase due to the withdrawal of health care services in Halesworth.

CCTV: Cllr Dutton explained that CCTV was intended to deter low level antisocial behaviour and provide some security to the businesses and residents in the town. The project would be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy and permissions were being sought to locate the equipment where necessary. The video recordings would only be accessed by the Police following an incident.

Barrow Crossing: It was noted that additional CCTV cameras had been installed and Cllr Dutton appealed to everyone to be aware that the crossing was being continuously monitored and not to cross when the trains were in the station or approaching the station.

Community Work, a new Charity in Halesworth: A resident and her associate announced that they had set up a new charity to support those in need of assistance with a variety of different issues. The Clerk would arrange for them to meet with the Chair.

A representative of the Ink Festival wished to thank the Council for their support with the recent event.

Other questions were raised and answered by the District and County Councillors, these included parking enforcement and road closures.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming; the meeting was closed at 8.35pm