**ALBY WITH THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 15 May 2019 at 7.00 pm at Alby Horse Shoes Inn, Cromer Road, Erpingham, NR11 7QE**

**Present:** Chairman Barry Fitzpatrick, Vice Chairman Will Cutts,

Councillor’s Stephen Jordan, Sheila Goodly, Angus Mackenzie

Clerk Rosalyn Dawson

Members of the public

**1. Apologies for absence:** Councillor Clare McNamara

**2.** **The Minutes of last year’s** **Annual Parish Meeting on 29th May 2018 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.**

**3. Chairman's Annual Report 2019**

2018/19 was an active year for the parish.

To highlight one of the Parish Council’s main achievements, we have stabilised our finances even though we do not have the percentage reserve funds that many parishes hold. To change this we would need to increase the precept which in the current climate would be hard to justify.

A Parishioner has reported that the bus stops could be improved with some lighting which would help with access especially during winter months and have suggested installing solar lighting. This is an affordable project the Parish Council could consider.

Also under review is exploring speed control measures in the Parish. This is a growing problem throughout rural Norfolk. I have often reported the issues caused by internet deliveries. Delivery schedules mean that drivers are required to achieve excessive targets and whilst the majority of drivers are polite and take care there are exceptions. We have requested improvements to the road painted speed warning signs from Town Green to the A140.

Thwaite Common continues to require much Parish Council time and as usual can be controversial. It is disappointing that the Management Committee have still been unable to introduce a grazing regime that will apply to the whole of the common. We were alarmed that last year nearly all of the Common grant funding was spent on tree cutting with no apparent quotations obtained before authorising the work to be carried out.

I remain dissatisfied with the level of service that we receive from Norfolk County Council Highways who do not deliver on pot hole repairs which can take weeks to be attended to and in some cases are left in a dangerous condition. This also takes much time by the Parish Clerk which is then paid for by the Parish.

The Parish Council received notice from James Buchan that he did not wish to stand for re-election after more than 15 years as a parish councillor. James will be missed as he has made a significant contribution to the work of the Parish and his knowledge was extensive.

Recently a complaint was apparently made to the police regarding some remedial work that a Councillor was carrying out on the Old School pond. With any complaint of this nature, the Parish Council should be approached in the first instance, and given time to resolve the matter. Whilst the appropriate initial approach was made, in this case to the Vice Chairman, it is unclear why the police became involved.

In conclusion I have benefitted from the support given to me by the Parish Councillors, especially Will Cutts, the Vice Chair. Will has played a significant role supporting the management of Thwaite Common.

Thank you also to the Parish Clerk, Rosalyn Dawson for her continuing hard work.

**Barry Fitzpatrick**

**Parish Council Chair**

**4. Open Forum**

On behalf of absent parishioners, it was considered that an item in last year’s Open Forum had not been addressed. The matter was regarding the allocation of funding for improvements in the Parish and that it was minuted to be raised at a forthcoming meeting. The Council considered that it had been actively pursuing ideas such as ‘Village Gateways’ at 11th December 2018 meeting; ‘Flashing Speed Lights’ at 19th March meeting because speeding vehicles had been identified as a particular problem in the Parish but also recognising expense that could result from The Thwaite Common Cattle Grid Consultation. Councillor’s agreed that they wanted to be proactive with ideas whilst being mindful that differing initiatives may cause conflict. **It was agreed that the idea continue to be actively pursued in advance of public presentation**. **The Clerk said she would write to the parishioners who expressed concern.**

A parishioner asked about bank balances and the funds available to spend. The clerk advised that the total balances were just under £4,000 and that there would be available funds for a small project.

The poor condition of the notice board sited near Town Green was identified as needing refurbishment and as it was erected on the perimeter fence of The Old Billiards Hall, it may have to be removed now that the site was sold. The lack of space on the main notice board sited on the Common was highlighted. There had recently been insufficient space for notices. A member of the public suggested the purchase of a new notice board and siting it near the bus stop on the Norwich bound side of the A140. **It was agreed that this idea could be presented as one of the options for funding as a project**.

The Chairman raised a matter with regard to the ponds. He acknowledged that Councillor Stephen Jordan had for many years assisted with the maintenance of the ponds in isolation of other parties. Councillor Jordan expressed concerns that the ponds needed constant attention to prevent them from drying out and he felt they were being neglected. The Chairman made a proposal that the Thwaite Common Advisory Group be approached with a view that Councillor Jordan sits in on the Group’s meetings. **This was unanimously agreed by Councillors.**

The cutting of grass verges was once again raised as a matter that requires urgent attention and one that continues to pose serious safety issues. Verges are so overgrown motorists cannot see the gullies and there had been a recent incident whereby a motorist had got stuck in a gully when it pulled off the road to make room for a family with a pram. **This matter is to be reported to Highways as urgent**.

No other matter was raised.

**Close of Meeting:** 7.40pm