

**Minutes of Comberton Annual Parish Meeting
on Wednesday 24 April 2019 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: 14 parishioners including Keith Tarring (Comberton Baptist Church), Penny Cook (Village Hall Chair), Caroline Abrahams (Comberton Swimming Club), Brian McCabe (Friends of St Mary's Church) and Parish Council members; Lina Nieto (County Councillor) and Ian Sollom (District Councillor).

In attendance: Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services).

Cllr Hywel Griffiths presided.

The written reports from the meeting are appended in full to the master minutes and are available from the Clerk on request.

Apologies for absence were received from Jason Ablewhite (Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), Gail Stoehr (Clerk) and from District Cllr Ian Sollom for anticipated lateness.

1. Approval & signing of the minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 25 April 2018

The minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman as a true record. (Prop Penny Cook, 2nd Keith Tarring, unopposed)

2. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

3. Report of the Parish Council for the year from Cllr Hywel Griffiths, Chairman¹

Cllr Hywel Griffiths reported on some issues involved in looking after the village, including:

- The village pond, including the search for a long term solution to the problem of drying out, the plans to install a new liner and avoid flooding and disturbance to wildlife.
- The Causeway, which should be maintained by contractors
- The Parish Council's responsibility for trees on its land, with able support from the Tree Warden and team, to whom thanks were expressed.
- The Council's support for sport and play facilities in the village, and the work involved in managing the recreation ground and other assets including play equipment. A new Recreation Ground Co-ordinator and Handyman had recently been appointed.
- Thanks to Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work.
- Comberton was worth looking after, and had a great team. Any residents keen to help look after the village were encouraged to come forward.

4. Report from the Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer and presentation of the last audited accounts²

The report from Gail Stoehr, Responsible Financial Officer, was read out. The Audited Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2018 were available for perusal at the meeting and on the website, and the accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2019 were available for inspection by appointment with the Clerk.

On a proposition by the Chairman, the order of business was varied to defer the reports of the District and County Councillors until later in the meeting.

7. Report on the work and activities of groups and organisations including those who have either received a grant from the Parish Council or which have Parish Council appointees on their charity or organisation including:

- 7.1 Herringland Charity (trustees appointed by the Parish Council)
No report was received.
- 7.2 Comberton Village Institute (Trustee appointed by the Parish Council)³
Mrs Penny Cook reported on a busy and successful year including: details of regular activities held; the biennial arts and crafts exhibition and fundraising events; the history of the Old Village Hall and the preparations for a new lease; the work of the trustees; maintenance; and finances and safety checks. The report is appended in full to these minutes. The Chairman and Trustees were thanked for their efforts.
- 7.3 Comberton Play Equipment Project (Trustee appointed by the Parish Council)
No report was received.
- 7.4 Comberton Bowls Club
Representatives of Comberton Bowls Club thanked the Parish Council for its assistance with the fencing and provided an update on the work carried out. A request to erect a flag will be sent to the Parish Council.
- 7.5 MAGPAS
No report was received.
- 7.6 Cambridgeshire Hearing Help
No report was received.
- 7.7 EDGE Community Youth Club and Comberton Baptist Church⁴
Rev Keith Tarring, minister of Comberton Baptist Church, outlined its role as part of the community. He thanked the Parish Council for its support for the EDGE Community Youth Club, enabling it to employ three sessional youth workers. He described its activities and aims, and the role of the Youth Club in supporting young people with friendship, discussion, and support for social and mental health issues in a safe environment; attendance; and the recruitment of a replacement youth worker. Rev Tarring outlined the activities run by the Baptist Church, promoting friendship and community involvement, including the “Fabric and Yarns” and “Bumps and Babes” groups, the walking group, and Oasis Teas for older residents. It worked in conjunction with the St Mary’s Church and Catholic community in Comberton. Building work will commence towards the end of the year to extend the Centre and provide additional space. Rev Tarring undertook to keep local residents informed. The report is appended in full to these minutes.
County Cllr Lina Nieto arrived during this item at 7.47 pm.
- 7.8 Comberton Swimming Club⁵
Caroline Abrahams on behalf of the Comberton Swimming Club, which is open to Comberton residents and others within a ten mile radius, reported on the need for refurbishment and expressed thanks to the Parish Council for its support. Phase 1, involving a replacement liner and remedial work to the pool edging, would be completed this week, enabling the pool to be opened without extended closures. Phase 2 will involve refurbishment of the changing facilities. The report is appended in full to these minutes.
- 7.9 Comberton Summer Reading Challenge
No report was received.

8. Reports from other village groups and organisations on their activities

8.1 Friends of St Mary's Church Comberton Trust ⁶

Brian McCabe on behalf of the Friends of St Mary's Church Comberton Trust, presented the report which is appended in full to these minutes. This covered the aims of the charity, to involve the public in appreciating the church's architecture and history, and also to raise funds towards the upkeep of the Church's fabric. Tribute was paid to the outgoing Chairman, David Hughes, and thanks were expressed for the support of the Parish Council, Rev David Newton and the Friends, in particular to Malcolm Wright for his efforts with grant applications. There is a financial target to cover loan repayments for the roof and urgent repairs. Restoration work had been carried out and smaller renovation work would be undertaken, including a project to provide a hard standing for disabled parking in the car park. This is in the consultation phase and advice from residents was welcome. The report also covered events held and details of the Committee. More Friends would be welcome. A publicity officer with relevant skills was also needed.

8.2 Comberton Twinning Association

Malcolm Wright provided a verbal report. Founded in 1999, the Group is celebrating its 20th anniversary. A visit from France took place in early April, with 30-40 visitors enjoying a guided tour of Cambridge and a celebratory lunch at Girton College. New members were welcome.

6. County Councillor report ⁷

County Cllr Lina Nieto apologised for late arrival and spoke on:

- Highways investment of £80M on road maintenance this year, and a reduction in Government grants.
- Broadband coverage of 97% for superfast broadband and investment in the introduction of full fibre broadband
- The plastic reduction strategy
- The Local Nature Partnership and cross sector projects
- Children's services, early intervention and fostering
- The Innovate and Cultivate fund for sustainable community projects, and investment in renewables such as solar farms
- Transport, now covered by the Combined Authority
- The Summer Reading Challenge, with over 50 children participating.

Cllr Nieto's written report is appended to these minutes.

9. Questions on any of the above reports

A resident queried the Council's administration costs which she thought were too high. Cllr Griffiths explained that the Council, which was made up of volunteers, employed a Clerk and Recreation Ground Co-ordinator and Handyman; without paid support matters would grind to a halt. He explained that the budget setting process was an open one and encouraged the resident to attend meetings or join the Council if she wished to become involved.

Cllr Sollom arrived at 8.15 pm.

5. District Councillor report ⁸

District Cllr Ian Sollom introduced himself as one of three District Councillors for the Comberton ward and paid tribute to the work of his predecessor, Cllr Scott. He reported on:

- The Comberton Greenway. The consultation results were now available on the Greater Cambridge Partnership website and will be analysed.

- The Cambourne to Cambridge busway and park and ride sites consultation. A decision on the project is due in the autumn.
- East West Rail. Following consultation on six routes an announcement on the choice of routes is expected in mid 2019. The District Council had favoured a station at Cambourne to link to other routes but the route alignment will need to be studied closely.
- A planning application on the edge of the Conservation Area had caused concern but had been rejected by the Planning Committee.
- Cllr Sollom's report, which is appended in full to these minutes, also covered District wide matters including governance and a new business plan.

A resident asked whether the applicant could appeal against the planning refusal. Cllr Sollom replied that they could but the Planning Inspector had always rejected previous applications on that site. The District Council had also rejected a planning application near the Church.

A question was asked about the timescale for the next Local Plan. The process was explained. The call for sites had been issued and the draft plan could be ready early next year. Cllr Sollom undertook to find out when the public would know what sites had been put forward.

The Chairman confirmed that the Local Plan would come to the Parish Council for consultation in due course.

10. To consider resolutions of which advance notice has been given

None.

11. Pond Management (Cllr L Tatnell) ⁹

Cllr Tatnell provided an update on the plans for the pond, which is a historic and highly valued feature of the village. A Pond Management Working Group had been formed and a plan drawn up with the aim of preventing flooding, encouraging biodiversity and preserving the pond as a valuable asset for the village. In 2018 a very dry year had seen the pond dry up and there had been concerns about the ducks. As it was a naturally fed pond, the water levels fluctuated, so the pond could flood over the road or experience dry years. One idea was to line the pond but create smaller areas of deeper lined pond to retain water in very dry periods. Quotations were being obtained and a grant may be needed. Advice had been received from a fresh water ecologist and the County Council flood and biodiversity teams. Cllr Nieto was thanked for providing their contact details. Thanks were expressed to the Community Payback group for clearing the brambles on the north bank, making it possible to manage this and provide a habitat by encouraging the grass back and possibly planting a few small shrubs. There were ducklings and moorhens in the pond. Some self set willow saplings were to be removed. The pond was to be included in a national survey by Froglife. If any residents wished to join the group they should contact Cllr Tatnell. The aims were to preserve the pond as an attractive feature of the village, protect wildlife, retain water and maintain this naturally fed pond as a historic part of the village. Cllr Tatnell's written report is appended in full to these minutes.

12. Report from the Police on Anti-social Behaviour

Apologies had been received from Jason Ablewhite, the Police and Crime Commissioner. This matter will be taken forward at a future Parish Council meeting.

13. Any other Parish Matters

A resident complimented the work of the pond management group. He suggested that the village enter the Village of the Year competition, which it had won in 2002. The Chairman observed that with sufficient people able to play an active part such projects could be undertaken. The resident was also pleased at the maintenance of the beds at the crossroads, which looked very attractive and asked whether residents could become involved with Britain in Bloom.

Another resident asked about the status of The Drift, commenting that it was a bridleway but appeared to be used by cyclists and some motorised users, and had on occasion been obstructed. It was explained that The Drift was a byway with a right of access, and although people took vehicles and bikes along it, the Parish Council could not block it or restrict access. The Council had looked into applying for an order to restrict access in certain months as the byway got badly churned up, but CCC had said permission was unlikely to be granted. Residents commented that four wheel drive vehicles and motorbikes had been witnessed on The Drift and it was dangerous for dog walkers and riders to encounter them. It was reiterated that there existed a right of access, and that any obstruction placed without CCC permission would have to be removed. CCC had indicated that permission would not be forthcoming for a temporary Order. County Cllr Nieto offered to take a look along with County officers. Residents asked why the County Council supported the behaviour of inconsiderate users and Cllr Nieto explained that officers would abide by the legislation and policy. The Chairman asked Cllr Nieto to look into this matter and return to the Parish Council so that it could understand the reasons for the CCC position.

14. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

Signed

(Chairman)

(date)

¹ Report from Cllr Hywel Griffiths, Parish Council Chairman

² Report from Gail Stoehr, the Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer

³ Report from Penny Cook, Chair, Comberton Village Institute Trustees

⁴ Report from Keith Tarring, Comberton Baptist Church and EDGE Youth Club

⁵ Report from Caroline Abraham, Comberton Swimming Club

⁶ Report from Friends of St Mary's Church Comberton Trust

⁷ Report from County Cllr Lina Nieto

⁸ Report from District Cllr Ian Sollom

⁹ Report from Cllr Lynn Tatnell on Pond Management