

LITTLE WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7th March 2023 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall

Present: Councillors Antony Kingham (Chairman)
 Richard Allen
 John Burrow
 Lallie Godfrey
 Richard Tinson
 Melanie Williamson
Clerk Suzanne Walker
City Councillors Barry Knight and Wendy Daden
County Councillor Mike Steel

12 members of the public were present

1 To receive any apologies for absence

Received from Councillors Readings and Watson and from representatives of the United Reform Church, the Good Companions and the Poole and Aley charity.

2 Consideration and approval of Minutes of 5th May 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 5th May 2022 were formally **approved** by Councillors as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

3 Chairman's Report

The Chairman had handed out a copy of his report and confirmed that it can also be viewed on the website and in the Parish magazine.

4 Public Forum

A resident raised the issue of problem parking around the Chelmer Avenue car wash and Councillor Knight was able to confirm that the issue had been raised by the Parish Council and is in the hands of the environmental team at Chelmsford City Council.

5 Village Reports

The Clerk read out the written reports received from the United Reform Church and the Good Companions.

A representative from the Memorial Hall confirmed that the hall is in a good financial position and has refurbished its kitchen with plans to upgrade the toilets and the rear entrance in time for the centenary celebration of the hall in 2024. Income is generated from user groups and there is a busy schedule of use with regular groups including drama, Good Companions, bowls, a church and a pre-school. The hall is keen to collaborate with the Parish Council to provide a Coronation celebration.

A representative from the Tom Amos charity reported that they have lost some trustees and are seeking to appoint new Trustees. Since 2009 £870,000 has been distributed to good causes in the area and in the last year £50,000 has been distributed to 13 successful applicants including for village halls, churches, preschools and the foodbank. There were no applications for student grants so the charity is liaising with the local high school.

A representative from the Drama group reported on a successful year with productions of Aladdin, Steel Magnolias and Pinocchio with a production of a Murder Mystery underway. The group is in its 52nd year and welcomes new members.

A representative of the Church of St Martins reported that it is the 800th anniversary of the church this year. The Church has welcomed a new vicar and is looking to set up a new prayer space. There is an intention to have 1-2 services each month. In the churchyard it was necessary to fell a dangerous tree but it has improved the view including that of a very old oak tree in front of the church.

The head teacher of the primary school reported that he was grateful for students being able to take part in the village Remembrance service. The school has been upgraded and there has been an effort to increase the number of clubs at school and participation with groups outside the school including the Wilderness Foundation. The vicar regularly visits the school and children have participated in World book day and an art event organised by the National Gallery. The swimming pool at the school is in disrepair and it appears not to be feasible to continue to maintain it so a working group has been set up to consider future plans. There are also plans for Forest school projects.

A representative of the Gardening club reported that the club has been running for 40 years and enjoys visits and welcoming speakers. The annual show featuring flowers, vegetables and craft will take place on 8th April and entrants are welcome. The club is seeking new and younger members so that it may continue and also it may then be able to engage more with the community as in the past the club had supported the Britain in Bloom event where the village had been highly commended.

A representative from the Channels Residents' Association reported that the group have worked well with the Parish Council over the past four years as around 2/3 of residents are within the boundaries of Little Waltham. The Parish Council had funded a new defibrillator in the park and an associated training event which will be taking part on 22nd March with places still available. Funding had also been provided for the Jubilee beacon. These residents will be moving into a new Parish as the new Parish Council will be established as from 1st April. However, he expressed a wish that the two communities continue to work together.

Meeting concluded at 7.58pm