

SPARHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of a meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 7th May 2019 in the Old School Room.

Present: Cllr Tony Bolderston
Cllr David Sayer
Cllr Leona McConnell (arrived late)

D/Cllr Gordon Bambridge
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)
Two members of the public

In the absence of Cllr Pryke, Cllr Bolderston took the Chair.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, it was particularly good to see two members of the public present. Apologies were received from Cllr Pryke and Cllr Charles Sayer.

2. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2018.

Cllr Bolderston proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record, this was seconded by Cllr Sayer and agreed by the meeting.

3. Chairman's Report.

On behalf of Cllr Pryke, Cllr Bolderston reported that a much-improved year had been had. Staffing matters had been resolved with the appointment of a new Clerk and the Council had been pleased to welcome a new Councillor, Leona McConnell, who would bring a fresh new input to the Council.

Improvements continue to take place in the Old School Room, a lottery grant has recently been awarded for the provision of a new, environmentally friendly, heating system and projection equipment for the village cinema. It is hoped that the improved facilities will result in an increase in the use of the Old School Room which is the hub of the community.

4. Reports from District & County Councillors.

Cllr Bambridge reported that Breckland had spent £1.7M on grants, including one for Sparham, and this will be on-going in the current year with £1.4M available.

Breckland are focusing on market town initiatives for the regeneration of town centres, particularly Dereham initially. A new hand-sweeper has been purchased to clean the town during the day and this has been a welcome addition. £100,000 is available for new and innovative start-up businesses, with a maximum of £25,000 available to each business.

The Shop Appy phone app was also launched, together with the Breck World app.

The Breckland lottery is ongoing, which raises money for local causes.

The Kick-Start Scheme, which supplies transport to young people in rural areas, continues to thrive and is going to be upgraded in the near future.

Breckland are also trying to attract better standards of secondary education to the area, particularly IT and engineering skills, which are highly sought after in the local employment sector.

The Local Plan is due to be finalised by July/August. A long-anticipated housing scheme has recently commenced in Thetford.

At this point in the meeting Cllr McConnell arrived.

A question was raised regarding possible funding sources to repair the village wall and D/Cllr Bambridge was confident that a suitable Breckland grant could be found as the wall was a heritage asset for the village.

A question was raised regarding Section 106 monies, raised from new planning developments, being available to Sparham. Again, D/Cllr Bambridge was confident that funds were available as the benefits should be for local communities.

A question was raised regarding industrial units in Breckland and the income raised from such units. D/Cllr Bambridge confirmed that Breckland continued to receive a considerable rental income which allowed it to have such a low rate of council tax, compared to other authorities.

The Chairman thanked D/Cllr Bambridge for his report.

5. Old School Room Report.

This had been previously mentioned in the Chairman's Report but, in addition, Cllr Bolderston reported that the committee now had eight members and he thanked the volunteers who had recently worked hard to submit the lottery grant.

6. Parish Council Financial Report.

The financial report was circulated (copy attached), there were no questions.

7. Open Forum – an opportunity for residents to express their views on matters of interest or concern relating to the village and to suggest ideas for the future.

There were no matters raised.

8. To note the date of the next Annual Parish Meeting - Tuesday 12th May 2020.

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____