

St. James South Elmham
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held on 1st June 2021 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Committee Members present: Mr C. Bradley (Chair)
Mrs M. Henry (Clerk)
Mr A. Hadingham, Mr B. Crockford,
Mr R. Hadingham, Mrs A. Dinsdale

11 residents of the village

1. Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting, and briefly explained all the precautions that were in place to comply with Covid regulations. The Clerk was keeping a record of the names of those attending, and face masks could be removed if addressing the meeting, then replaced.

Individuals must take any papers distributed away. The Chairman then explained the difference between a Parish Meeting and a Parish Council and that members of the Parish Meeting are not councillors, but elected committee members who act on behalf of, and as a voice for the residents. Two public meetings are held each year, one in the autumn to set the Precept amount to be raised the following year, and the second an Annual General Meeting when how the Precept raised should be spent for the benefit of the village.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:- Mr D. Ritchie, Mrs L. Bradley, Mrs J. Bastow,
Mr G. McLean, Mrs R. Dewson & Mr D. Dewson

3. Minutes of the Annual general Meeting 2020 & Precept Meetings 2019 & 2020

Alternative arrangements had had to be made for these meetings in line with Covid regulations. The AGM Minutes for 2019 (the last public meeting) had been agreed by the Committee Members and signed by the Chairman; as were the Precept Minutes for 2019.

The AGM and Precept meetings of 2020 had, in line with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government and the National and Suffolk Associations of Local Councils, been conducted by both between the Chairman and Committee Members, and any action that had needed to be taken, had been. Minutes of these discussions had been agreed by the committee, signed by the Chairman, and published on the parish noticeboard. Electronic copies were available from the Clerk.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that would not be covered in later reports.

5. Reports:

Chairman's Report

The Chairman explained the actions that had taken place with regard to the AGM and Precept meetings 2020 being conducted via email and telephone in accordance with the Corona Virus Act 2020 which prevented the holding of public meetings of any size. The Chairman had ensured, with the support of the committee members, that all essential business and papers relating to those meetings were dealt with and the operational needs of the parish and residents were met, as advised by the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government. The 1972 Local Government Act Section 108 enables a parish meeting to set up a committee of electors to discharge its business as described above. The 1972 Act Section 15 (10) also allows for the Chairman, while in office, to be empowered to act on behalf of the Parish Meeting. A notice to this effect had been placed on the Parish notice board. From 7th May 2020 the Government announced that remote meetings were no longer allowed and meetings must be face-to-face. However, this was not allowed under Covid regulations until 17th May.

6. Accounts

The Chairman presented the accounts for 2019 which had been agreed by the Parish Meeting Committee Members, and the Chairman requested that the meeting agree that they had discharged their duties correctly. The meeting so agreed.

Annual Governance & Accountability Return

There had been an internal audit report which had been signed off by the committee's internal auditor.

6a. The Chairman then read out the governance statement which said that like all bodies concerned with local government we are required to demonstrate and confirm we have followed proper governance practices and properly managed our finances. There are particular requirements for Parish Meetings without a Parish Council and an exemption from external audit review in certain circumstances.

Acceptance of the Governance Return by the meeting was required.

proposed by Mr A. Hadingham seconded by Mr R. Hadingham
and agreed by the meeting and all Committee Members

6b. The Accounting Statement (how money was spent and where) was signed by the Chairman on behalf of the committee and presented to the meeting.

Acceptance proposed by Mr A. Hadingham, seconded by Mrs C. Rodbourne, Vote: unanimous.

The Chairman then announced the dates for exercise of Public Rights of inspection of the records.

The dates were:- Monday 14th June 2021 to Friday 23rd July 2021. Signed by the Chairman.

Contact either Mrs B. Crockford 01986 782347 or Mr C. Bradley 01986 782582

The Chairman then announced that as a small Parish Meeting, with receipts and payments below £25,000 we may claim exemption from an Assurance Review by the external auditors.

As St James Parish Meeting met this criteria, the Chairman signed the Certificate of Exemption.

Accounts

The accounts for 2020 were presented, and explained by the Chairman, and thanks extended to Mrs B. Crockford for preparing them.

Adoption of the Accounts:-

proposed by Mr R. Hadingham - seconded by Mr R. Hadingham Vote –
unanimous
Signed by the Chairman.

7. Locality Budget

The Chairman briefly explained the purpose of the Locality Budget, and expressed thanks to Councillor Ritchie who had always generously supported St James, and continued to do so.

Donations

The Chairman explained that the donations agreed at this meeting would be taken from the Precept and who, or what historically had received donations. This did not however mean that all donations should always remain the same.

Mr B. Crockford suggested that a levelling out of the donations to the Church and the Village Hall could be considered. There then followed a short discussion. The Chairman proposed that in the continuing financial uncertainty all donations remain the same this year as last year

Mr R. Hadingham seconded and the vote was in favour.

Accordingly:- The Community News – would receive £150
 St James Parish Church - £300
 St James & St Nicholas Community Hall - £500
 St James Village Orchard - £200

9. Elections

The Parish Meeting Committee Members serve for a period of 6 years. This year there was one committee member due to retire, Mr A. Hadingham, who was willing to stand for re-election.

Mrs L. Faux proposed Mr A. Hadingham be re-elected, Mr R. Hadingham seconded and the vote was unanimous.

The Parish Meeting had co-opted Mrs A. Dinsdale to the committee. With her agreement the Chairman proposed Mrs A. Dinsdale be elected to the Committee, Mr M. Graham seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Mrs J. Chappell, who had been a committee member had recently left the village and the Chairman

acknowledged her valuable contribution to meetings and expressed thanks to her.

10. Any Other Business

The Chairman informed the meeting of the offer from East Suffolk Council to transfer free of charge the area of land currently known as Sheet Field Wood together with the adjoining grassed area. The only expense incurred would be legal fees, for which the Chairman had negotiated a very fair deal with Mears Hobbs Durrant of Beccles. This would provide the village with a very useful recreational space. He was now seeking the meetings approval to proceed. The village would become liable for the up-keep of the land, which should not be too onerous. Mr R. Hadingham proposed, Mrs R. Ritchie seconded and the vote was unanimous. After a short discussion a new name for the area, St James Village Green, was favoured by the majority.

The single biggest issue in the village over the past couple of years had been that of the waste operation [REDACTED] Deadlines for clearing of the waste at both sites had not been met, and there were fears that the burning and burying of toxic waste etc would have an adverse affect on the water courses and the adjoining SSSI. The Chairman on behalf of the Parish Meeting and local residents had constantly raised concerns with East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency supplying them with photographic and documented evidence of the scale of the problem. Suffolk County Council issued Enforcement Orders on both sites at the beginning of March. [REDACTED] had appealed as a corporate entity against the orders at both sites. Residents and the Parish Meeting have until 28th June to respond to these appeals. The Chairman encouraged those affected in the village to respond to the appeal notices, and suggested that a meeting to discuss the way forward may be of value. This was proposed by Mr A. Hadingham, seconded by Mrs T. McLean and voted unanimously by the meeting.

Mrs C. Rodbourne enquired if there was anybody currently looking after Sheet Field Wood and the fence that was in need of repair. The Chairman responded that the parish was paying for the grass area to be cut and kept tidy; but having been let down by the intended contractor work in the wood, work here will be actioned in due course.

Mr B. Crockford wished for it to be minuted that thanks from the committee members and the residents go to the Chairman for all his hard work throughout the past very difficult year. The whole meeting agreed.

Mr M. Graham as well as adding his thanks to those of Mr B. Crockford, also added thanks for the work done by the Chairman in respect of the on-going problems at The Cottage and Laurel Farm. Plus thanks were also due to Mr R. Hadingham for clearing all the snow last winter thus allowing the village to stay open.

Finally, the Chairman extended his own thanks, and that of the village, to all the people who had supplied help and support to the Community during the Covid lockdown.

Thanks to all those who cared for and maintained the verges, hedges and ditches in and around the village, their efforts were much appreciated in keeping the village neat and tidy.

Thanks to the support and help given by the Committee Members, Mrs B. Crockford and Mrs M. Henry.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm

ADDENDUM

Greshaw Green Enclosure Trustees Charity

Mr C. Bradley reminded the meeting of the purpose of the Greshaw Green Trust and how the funds were used. The fund currently stood at approx. £1980.00

Two donations had been made during the past two years.

The Trustees would welcome any recommendations for people who are thought to be in need.