

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7th April 2011
At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 8pm

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Peter Moore - Chairman
Andrew Bull - Vice Chairman
Fran Laskowski
Steve Amerio
Shaun Sheldrake

Also in attendance:

Dave Dyson
Kaaren Berry - Clerk to the Parish Council
7 Members of the public

Apologies were received from:

John Levick
Fraser Croft

2. Open Session for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council:

- Brian Hammond asked what was being done with the play equipment in the playing field as it is now dangerous. A health and safety report carried out by Shaun has made several recommendations and it is being looked at as part of the village plan. Brian pointed out that swing seats are splitting and the matter needs attention quickly. Peter and Andrew will assess the play area and then put together a quick action plan.
- Paul Thompson reported that he has received quotes for the allotments which range between £7,000 and £10,000. 12 people have an interest in the allotments at the moment and a water supply is needed or interest may dwindle. Alternatives will need to be looked at. Peter said that it would be difficult for the Parish Council to justify that amount of money at present. Peter asked if a nearby resident could have a metered supply to the allotments taken off their own supply. Paul said this would not be viable due to the length of pipes required only a 'drip' would come out the other end. Peter then asked if someone could approach the water board direct for alternatives. Paul and Fran will liaise regarding this. Malcolm Braithwaite asked if the farming community could help out with this.
- Paul asked about 'Toppesfield in Bloom' and planting bulbs. He stated that a pallet of daffodil bulbs would cost approximately £5.00 each and suggested a working party be formed in October to plant the bulbs. The bulbs could be kept at the allotments until needed.
- Paul asked about progress on the 30mph speed limit. Peter reported this is still progressing and he has to write again to the Council as we have permission to go ahead but it now has to go to a board to get the funds agreed to be put in place. The funds need to be agreed before it can be agreed which scheme can be put in place. Claire Thompson asked if speed bumps would be put up - Peter will question this with Essex County Council.
- Brian Hammond asked about the recent hedge cutting/thrashing. Peter reported that he has spoken to the local farmer and viewed his concerns over the cut and debris it has left. The road debris has been cleared but as the hedges are privately owned they can be cut in anyway. Fran stated that this method of cutting is not just here but it is widespread across many villages.

- Paul asked what the position was of unsolicited timber buildings being put up. The general feeling was that the shelter at the front of the pub was unsightly and Peter will speak to Tony to ask him to move it around the corner.
- Sheila Braithwaite asked about the sign for St. Margaret's Primary School and whether a cheaper alternative was found. Steve has looked into this with a company he has previously used and they do not do a sign equivalent to the one Sheila was looking at. It was suggested the sign would be positioned on the post next to the pump, as the school feel they are not easily found, however it would need to be positioned at a reasonable level to avoid being a pedestrian hazard.
- Malcolm Braithwaite commented that the school want to be involved in the village but feel they are not and would like to be recognised, and the sign may help with this.
- Malcolm asked if there was any progress with broadband. Peter has had a response and it was suggested a microwave transmitter could possibly be placed on the church tower, this would give 10 Mb service, and 25 people would be needed for this. Peter stated that more questions need to be asked regarding this matter.
- Malcolm stated the hole at the entrance to Mallows Lane has been repaired and asked if there was any progress on the repairs to the rest of the lane. Andrew has contacted Essex County Council and they were non committal with their answers. Malcolm and Andrew will call them again.
- Malcolm reported that there was a case of fly-tipping where 48 tyres were dumped across Mallows Lane, these were moved off the lane by Malcolm and Sheila, and then reported to Braintree District Council and they removed them today. Malcolm stated that Braintree District Council dealt with the matter very well.
- Malcolm gave an update on the village plan:- The questionnaire has been compiled, it has 100 questions in it. This has gone to the steering groups for comment and will be back by tomorrow. The final questionnaires will go out in May. The next Village Plan meeting is 10 May at 7pm and will explain the questionnaire and organise dispensers and collectors of the forms. The questionnaires will be collected by mid July. The village plan group are trying to engage with different groups in the village i.e. the school, farming community, PCC, Village Hall committee, the village shop, the Green Man, etc. Progress is steady and ongoing.

Before the open session was closed Peter Moore stated that Steve Amerio was stepping down as Councillor at the end of this term and thanked Steve for the last 4 years of service to the Parish Council.

3.Approval of previous minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed.

4.Matters Arising from last minutes:

1. Broadband.

Peter will liaise with Alan Collard in relation to community business broadband and the possibility of 'Microwave Broadband' for the village.

2. School Sign.

It was agreed to consult with the school as to whether they need a sign. Andrew will consult with them in his role of school governor.

3. Publication of Annual Accounts.

No progress at present as John has not had the time and he possibly has not had the more recent accounts as they are still with the previous clerk. Dave Dyson and Andrew Bull will arrange a date to visit and collect all paperwork held by Steve Marshall.

5. Planning Issues:

None received.

Steve will look at Braintree District Council website to see if any planning applications are coming up.

6. Previous Actions progress:

Andrew contacted BDC re the overflowing dog waste bins - these have been emptied - no further action required.

John Levick to publish accounts when information available.

Steve Amerio has followed up the possibility of replacement salt bins for Gainsford End and Harrow Hill with the area Highways team - they have reported back that there are no monies available to replace the bins. No further action required.

Peter has chased Jonathan Birchall regarding broadband and Peter will now liaise with Alan Collard.

7. Any Other Business:

- *Bulbs / working party* - it was agreed that daffodil bulbs be purchased to the value of £40 and planted. Peter will speak to Mr Clarke as some of the area to be planted is his land. It was also suggested bulbs are planted sooner rather than later as existing daffodils are in flower now which would make it easier to pin point areas in need of planting.
- The wooden structure at the front of Green Man - Peter will approach Tony with regard to moving it around the corner of the pub.
- Royal Wedding events - Steve passed over invoices to the parish council for expenses incurred so far together with a letter of further costs which will need to be paid. Andrew will do a spread sheet of costs. Peter signed off the costing so far as the parish council has agreed to pay £1500 towards the event. The schedule of events have been published in the next newsletter.
- The monies due following the John Hegley evening have been paid.
- The meeting on the 12th May 2011 is the parish council AGM and this will be an election meeting.
- The meeting on the 19th May 2011 will be the Annual Parish meeting and the organisations in the village will be formally invited to attend. Both meetings will start at 7.30pm and there will be cheese and wine available following the meeting on the 19th.
- St. Margaret's school has asked the parish council for a donation towards the rebuilding of part of the school wall on the playing field side. The wall has been broken down due to the damaged caused by tree roots. The bill for the rebuilding of the wall is around £11,000 as it has to be in keeping with the rest of the wall. Peter will take a look at the position of the tree as to whether it is on school or parish land before a decision is made.
- Dave has suggested that a full copy of the electoral register be obtained for reference as only out of date copies are held. Kaaren to contact BDC to obtain this.

8. Date of Next Meeting and Close:

The next parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 12th May 2011 at 7.30pm, at the Village Hall. The meeting was closed at 9.15pm.

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Chairman

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Date

Action Summary:

Peter Moore and Andrew Bull to assess play area and quick action plan in place to made the area safe.

Fran Laskowski and Paul Thompson to liaise with water board re allotment water supply.

Peter Moore to speak with ECC regarding speed bumps.

Andrew Bull to contact ECC re Mallows Lane road repairs.

Peter Moore to liaise with Alan Collard re broadband.

Andrew Bull to consult the school regarding the sign.

Andrew Bull and Dave Dyson to arrange a visit to Steve Marshall.

Steve Amerio to check BDC website re planning applications.

Andrew Bull to do spread sheet of cost for the Royal Wedding Event.

Peter Moore to assess position of tree which has caused damage to the school wall.

Kaaren Berry to contact BDC to obtain full electoral register.

John Levick to publish balance sheets on the website.