

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WITTON AND RIDLINGTON

**Witton and Ridlington Annual Parish Meeting
Tuesday, May 23rd 2023, 7:00 pm
Witton and Ridlington Village Hall**

Chairman: Richard Barker

Minute Taker: Denise Revell

Present: Richard Barker, Rebecca Barringer, Stirling Byford, Gillian Owles, Amanda Sands, Jane Simpson and 11 members of the public

MINUTES

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman of Witton and Ridlington Parish Council, Richard Barker**
Richard Barker welcomed those present
- 2. To consider and agree apologies for absence**
None
- 3. To consider and agree the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th May 2022**
Rebecca Barringer proposed the motion, Jane Simpson seconded the motion and the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 24th May 2022 were agreed and signed at the meeting.
- 4. Update on matters arising from the meeting**
None
- 5. Parish Council Reports**
 - a. Parish Council Chairman's report
The year April 2022 to March 2023 was a busy one for the Council, and one which was punctuated by major Royal events.

At the beginning of the year in question, we promoted the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration, in the shape of the Witton and Ridlington 1953 Tea and Quiz which was held in this hall on 4 June. This was a great success, and special thanks must go to Gillian and Charles Owles for the huge amount of work they put into making it so.

Sadly we found ourselves at our September meeting observing a two-minute silence to mark the death of Her Majesty, and placing on record our sincere appreciation and thanks for her unwavering commitment and selfless public service throughout her reign of more than 70 years.

We have kept the development of plans for the Vattenfall Wind Farms under review throughout the year, and at the September meeting a presentation was received from a Vattenfall Representative, who updated the council on the plans for installing the cable

ducting, and the arrangements for the E15m Community Fund which would be available from early 2024.

At our November meeting, we made the difficult decision to withdraw the provision of the playing field on The Street. The plain fact is that this has received only very limited use by the public, perhaps because the area was not appealing enough to attract children to use it. We had looked into the provision of play equipment to the area, but due to insurance and the conditions of the lease this could not progress, We 'reluctantly' took the decision at the current time, that the funds devoted to providing and maintaining the Playing Field was not the best use of Parishioners money.

During the year we progressed plans for the introduction of a traffic speed sign device, which had been bid for in 2021. and this was eventually installed on 18 February this year. It has been operating successfully since then, and our thanks to Henry and Rebecca Barringer for volunteering to move the sign and keep it charged. Thanks to funding from County Councillor Lucy Shires, and the Parish Partnership Fund, the sign was only a small charge to the Parish.

We are concerned to improve our visibility within the parish, and have agreed a community engagement policy for the council, including a Facebook page.

As chairman I have attended the Police Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) meetings in North Waltham, and PC Alex Barnes attended our March meeting and gave a report on security issues.

We have invested in significant training during the year, notably the whole-council training session, jointly with Walcott Parish Council, on 31 January in this hall, run by Parish Training and Support. We have sponsored Denise to undertake professional training, and I have undertaken a chairmanship course run by Parish Training and Support.

Straying just slightly into the current year, and in recognition of the last of the series of Royal events, we organised a litter pick on the Coronation 'Big Help Out day, May 8th'. It was great to see members of the public in addition to parish councillors helping to keep our Norfolk countryside looking beautiful, and there were calls to organise another one later this year.

To conclude, I would like to thank all our councillors for their work over the year, and a special word of thanks to Denise, our clerk, who goes above and beyond the requirements of her job in very many ways.

b. Financial Report Witton and Ridlington Parish Council

The balance of the Council's finances was £9715.91 at the end of 2022, The income for the 2022/23 year was £4777, which included the precept, and the expenditure was £9740. Council holds £1400 in reserves and has assets amounting to £16496

6. Village organisations and Other reports

a. Broadland First Responders demonstration

Broadland First Responders gave their report, as follows, and gave a demonstration on the defibrillator and the Razor Chair

Another tremendous year. As a team of around 8 (it varies) we have attended 263 jobs in the last 12 months and been booked on for a total of 11,488 hours. 24% have

been cardiac arrests and a further 16% chest pains which are very similar. Interestingly we are now attending more falls calls (21%) with about half of us trained to use the razor chair to lift people from the ground.

January – April saw major issues nationally with hand over at the hospitals and we experienced a similar effect with waiting up to 3 hours for a crew to attend an incident. I think that demonstrates the benefit of having the team in that those patients had one of us with them to assess and if necessary raise the job if we are concerned, whereas without us the patient would have been waiting with or without their families for the long periods of time not knowing when the crew were going to arrive.

Fund raising at the moment is to pay for the new generation of radio / phones some of the team carry called NMAs. They provide us with a better level of contact with control and a better sat nav capability. I should be getting one shortly for this area.

b. North Norfolk District Council

Cllr Pauline Porter introduced herself as the new District Councillor for the area. She is currently undertaking training in her new role and was very keen to support Witton and Ridlington in the future.

c. Norfolk County Council

Cllr Shires was unable to attend the meeting and sent her apologies, she did however report that *The extended waiting times for Social Services referrals continues*

Norfolk County Council now has a new Female Leader and 50% of all members are now female.

The Mobile Library service for Witton and Ridlington has been withdrawn

d. Witton and Ridlington Village Hall

The hall is in good condition - currently no maintenance planned though looking forward the Hall will always require maintenance down the road.

Regular uses include Quizzes, Fitness Classes, Parish Council Meetings, WI Meetings and as a Polling Station for local and National Elections.

Finances are in good shape.

Additional plans for this year will include the Village Show in a new format and Christmas Lunch.

We have a need for more hirers, volunteers and committee members - we have ideas for more events and uses but with a very small nucleus of active 'doers' these can't blossom without more helpers (Bingo, Movie Night, Games Night)

The current electricity costs are hurting the Hall hampered by the fact that the meter was inoperative - we are now working with the ombudsman after disputing a rather large account.

The committee remain positive as they see their challenge in providing a place of 'entertainment' for the residents and whilst the possibility of closure is always in the equation the team are dedicated enough to ensure that this does not happen.

We have a dedicated website which we hope will reach potential buyers searching the web for suitable locations.

<https://wittonandridlingtonvillagehall.co.uk>

e. Witton Church

There is no vicar at present, and the church are not sure that the post will be filled as there is a shortage of Vicars who would like to work in Norfolk. The church is hopefully installing some toilets, the plans and money is in place but they need a project manager to oversee the project.

26 people attended the Coronation service and 80 people attended the Easter service.

f. Ridlington Church

As you may know, our former Rector Catherine Dobson left last year on a well-deserved promotion as Archdeacon of Lynn. Her last service with us in Ridlington was in August, and the last united benefice service in September. We have been in vacancy since then, and the remaining ministry team have worked wonders in maintaining services in the benefice.

During vacancy we are under the care of the Rural Dean, David Chamberlin, who has recently been given additional time to help him support the Coastal Group. David is closely involved in the recruitment strategy, and advertisement for the post continues. There is however a shortage of clergy, and many other benefices are advertising. There are regular meetings of the churchwardens of the eight parishes in the coastal group.

The churchyard conservation scheme at Ridlington continued successfully in operation under the arrangements in the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Management

Scheme. The churchyard has been maintained by contractors funded privately by PCC members, with supplementary support by Ray Allcoat.

Following the quinquennial review in 2021, the fabric of the church continues to be in good order, and the organ has been serviced and tuned.

Bidding for funding for adaptations to provide an accessible toilet and servery have been delayed because the agreed contractor became bankrupt, and we are now in discussion with an alternative, local contractor. A quote is expected once a specialist joinery sub-contractor has been identified.

The importance of safeguarding in church settings has been highlighted nationally in recent years, I am pleased to say that all PCC members have now completed the Basic, Foundation and Domestic Abuse Courses via the C of E Safeguarding Website.

g. Witton Charities

The last year had its challenges for the Charity with our Bank, Barclays, misplacing all the documents signed by the two new Trustees during Covid.

They also misplaced a security envelope with Government Bonds in and only instigated searches once an official complaint was made

The absence of a local Barclays branch highlights the difficulties in problems being solved quickly for its customers

New H M Government Money Laundering laws resulted in all Trustees have to provide identity etc in order for the Charity to receive dividends for our two ethical investments as well as statements from Barclays.

That is all behind us now and it didn't hinder our efforts to fulfil our duties in providing financial assistance to residents who find themselves in "conditions of need, hardship or distress"

Disheartening is an appropriate adjective to describe our lack of success, despite letters written to catchment area schools, the Salvation Army and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Coupled with this was a Social Media advertising, a dedicated website with an online application form, poster campaigns and a half page advert in 'The Village News'.

Given this we have decided to approach The Charity Commission to broaden our

terms of reference.

We would, going forward, initiate projects that are deemed to benefit the many and not the few in our Parish.

This would be a two pronged approach.

Firstly we would by door to door drops, social media and posters ask for qualifying suggestions.

Secondly we would again approach the residents to vote on the projects that we feel qualify on a preference basis ranking suggestions first, second and third.

Hopefully this would bring forth the desired result and the project(s) could begin.

What these projects may be we have no idea and it is possibly best that we don't offer suggestions and leave the residents to think about the idea.

h. Norfolk Police

No report received

7. Parishioners Open Forum

Parishioners were able to ask questions and receive answers from the Parish Council and other local organisations

8. Any other business

None

9. Date of the Next Meeting - To be arranged