

Newton Flotman Annual Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2011 at the Village Hall, Newton Flotman at 7.30pm.

Present: D Gibbs (Parish Council Chairman), R McKelvey (Parish Council V Chairman), R Kelf, J Peterson, A Eke (Parish Clerk), B Adams (Parish Councillor & Village Centre Management Committee), Cllr Jon Herbert (County Cllr), Cllr Laura Webster (District Cllr), A Pownall (Allotments), W Adams (Newton Flotman & District WI) and 6 members of the public.

To consider apologies for absence: J Wilson (Parish Councillor & Church) – Report Submitted
G Holmes (Pre-School) – Report Submitted
J Johns (Primary School) – Report Submitted
E Domeyer (Parish Councillor)
PCSO Foreman
R Smith (Tree Warden)
Dr A Gibson

To confirm minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 12th May 2011: It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Mr D Gibbs, Chairman of the Parish Council, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

a. Cllr Jon Herbert – County Councillor Report

He reported that there had been a comprehensive spending review of a 25% cut in services at Norfolk County Council.

The Big Conversation carried out earlier in the year had resulted in changes. Lollipop ladies and Libraries had been retained but, the level of entry to get care from substantial to critical to access day care services.

The budget was approved in February. It was feared that there would be big cuts, but this was not the case. Council Tax revenue pays for 60% of services and 40% by Government grants so the overall effect is 10%. It has been budgeted that Council Tax will be frozen for the next 2 years.

He is currently involved in the Waste and Mineral Strategy, which will impact on communities where he is responsible.

Cllr Herbert reported on the Joint Core Strategy effecting Mulbarton, Hethersett and Wymondham directly. Developments are proposed for these areas, which will cause traffic flow issues for surrounding areas. The Mulbarton Parish Council have had a meeting with an Architect from London. The community is against this development.

b. J Johns - Headteacher – Newton Flotman C of E (VC) Primary School Report

The school is very proud to have been judged as Outstanding by Ofsted during our July 2010 inspection. Mr David Robinson left at the end of the Summer 2010 term to take up the post of Principle of the Academy of Hope School in Dar-es-Salaam. During the Spring term a County Headteacher, Mrs Dawe, was in the post and we were very pleased to be able to welcome Mr Jeremy Johns as our Headteacher in January 2011.

We currently have 118 pupils on roll.

Christian Values – NF Primary School has been very busy. A term of discussions with children, parents, and governors had yielded a new statement of Christian values to match the School's ethos: love, enjoy, accept, respect, nurture. The initials spell LEARN. We feel this accurately sums up our school. We are having a competition to adapt our School badge and show more of what our School is about.

Food for Life – The School has been working with the Food for Life Partnership, an organisation started up through the work of Jamie Oliver's 'dinner lady' Jeannette Orrey.

We are on the brink of achieving a bronze award for using fresh ingredients and farm assured meat in the kitchen, teaching cookery, making lunchtimes happy mealtimes, taking children to see farming and showing our commitment to positive food culture. We will continue to plan and work for this.

b. J Johns - Headteacher – Newton Flotman C of E (VC) Primary School Report continued

Sport – We continue to place a high priority on sport, competing against Schools in our cluster and other neighbours in cricket, basketball and cross country. We have an active link with Mulbarton Junior School for football and cricket. This year's sports day has become Healthy School Day and Rachael and Jeremy from Relish are joining in to teach the children about healthy local food, alongside the usual races and fun.

Visitors – We have hosted groups of Headteachers from Hong Kong keen to find out how UK schools operate. They loved our confident, articulate, helpful, enthusiastic children and the warmth and community feel of the School. We enjoy being able to host PGCE students, City College Student and have again hosted a French student teacher.

Families – The pupils and their families continue to be a huge part of what the School is about. Parents are regularly invited into the School for Maths Mornings, Family art workshops, class assemblies and parent lunches.

c. B Adams – Chairman – Newton Flotman Village Centre & Alan King Playing Field Report

Over the past 12 months we have made significant changes to the exterior of the Hall. The major improvement has been the resurfacing of the approach road and the introduction of speed bumps as excessive speeds have been reported on several occasions. This appears to be working although it has been noticed that cars have been driven off the edge of the road to try and avoid bumps.

A kick wall has been installed at the edge of the football practice pitch to use instead of using the end of the hall as a goal. This has enabled us to create a new shrubbery at this end which is looking very good.

Finally, a new toddler slide has been installed to replace the one stolen from the play area.

Regular working parties were held most months to keep up with the general maintenance of the Hall and playing field.

The hall continues to be well supported by regular and individual bookings.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support for the grass cutting and a generous contribution to the surfacing of the access road. The Hall committee should be thanked for all their hard work throughout the year, which sometimes seems an uphill struggle. Finally, a special thanks to Sandra Gibbs for many years dedication as Chairman of the Village Hall. Sandra has stepped down as Chairman, but continues to provide essential support on the Committee.

d. G Holmes – Leading Childcare Practitioner - Pre-School Report

We have almost completed another very successful academic year. Numbers have hit an all-time high this year with 82 children on the register. We now employ 7 staff, all of which hold an early years qualification.

We continue to provide a variety of sessions throughout the week so that we can offer flexible childcare arrangements to parent.

During the year we have had some successful fundraising events. The latest at Easter was a sponsored event when we raised over £900. This money will be spent on new equipment for the children, including two small benches which will be permanently fixed underneath the canopy.

e. A Pownall – Newton Flotman Allotments Report

As last year, all of the allotments have been let and are kept in reasonable condition and to reduce the waiting list, as allotments have become available they have been split in half. There are now 15 full allotments of the original size of approximately 30m x 7m and 14 half allotments of 13.5m x 7 (3m being taken off the area furthest from the track to accommodate sheds for both allotment holders). This seems to work reasonably well.

Despite the creation of half allotments there are still 7 names on the waiting list of people wanting an allotment. At the start of the year I had 4 names on the list, but is now slowly creeping up again; this is in keeping with a national demand for allotments.

There is still a problem with 'horse tail' growing on the land at the top of the site despite repeated application of weedkiller; it is getting under control, but I fear it will never be eradicated.

e. A Pownall – Newton Flotman Allotments Report continued

There have been not reported incidents of theft from the allotments this year, however a lock and chain for the gate was purchased by the Allotment Society and it is hoped that we will have not more trouble as previous years.

The grass on the access path is kept cut and weedkiller applied to uncultivated areas.

All allotment holders are member so the Newton Flotman Allotment Society, affiliated to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. The membership fee was set at £2.50 of which £2.00 is passed to the National Society. The fee is collection at the same time as the rent. There are now 24 members.

A barbecue was again held on the allotments last year that proved to be successful and will probably be repeated this year. I have been unable to attend quarterly meetings of the Norfolk Federation of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, but hope to attend some this next year. This year's AGM, as previous years, will be held in the Church meeting room.

f. J Wilson – Church Report

The pattern of our services, catering for the interests of all ages is now well established. The first Sunday in the month now is quite distinct, starting with 8am Holy Communion followed by a free breakfast in the Church room and then a modern service with our Youth Band providing all the music. Our Sunday school (Special agents) is thriving as are the other youth groups held on Sunday and Monday evenings.

Our Harvest Festival featured a successful Wedding and Christening Gown display that attracted considerable press attention. We also had a good Harvest Supper in the Village Hall with musical entertainment.

We have plans to repair the flint work on the exterior of the tower and hopefully we shall obtain grants to also improve the interior. We have registered with WISPIRE and if we are successful in our application we would be able to improve Broadband reception, quite safely, and also surveillance monitoring the interior and exterior of the church.

Our Church Room continues to be a great asset, with our regular Coffee Stop every Saturday morning, quarterly "Give and Take", Church Mice, Baby Mice, small birthday parties and various meetings. The donations from Coffee Stop help with our expenses and also on the money side, we continue to give to our regular charities and the collection on First Sunday goes to support David Robinson and his wife in their school in Tanzania.

The porch has been re-vitalised with new gates, new notice boards and has been re-decorated. All necessary because of vandalism and paid for by insurance and a diocesan grant.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for their continued support to offset the costs of Partnership and churchyard maintenance. Thanks are due also to all those who help behind the scenes, with the delivery of Partnership, supplying cakes to Coffee Stop, helping with the flower rota as well as all the necessary things to keep our mediaeval church as a vital part of our community life.

g. W Adams - President – Newton Flotman & District Women's Institute

Newton Flotman & District WI had another busy and enjoyable year.

We have over 30 members and a varied programme of meetings and events. At the AGM last November, Jean Wilson stepped down as President after 5 years and I was elected to the post. We also have several new committee members.

We have had our usual varied selection of speakers on topics ranging from gardening, photography, The Isles of Scilly and the Norwich Archive Centre. Our Summer Party was very well attended with lots of visitors from the other Institutes. We have also made chocolates and decorated boxes. Once again members went to the Playhouse, Cinema City and the annual visit to the Theatre Royal for the Norfolk & Norwich Operatic Society production. The pub lunches are still going strong.

Teams entered the inter WI darts and 10 pin bowling competitions and the Col Cator Cup, which is the team event involving various crafts and cookery items, held in conjunction with the Norfolk Horticultural Society Spring Show.

Members supported other events in both Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe.

g. W Adams - President – Newton Flotman & District Women’s Institute

In December the Christmas Market was again a great success and donations from the proceeds were given to the local branch of the Big C and funded the purchase of a chair for the members room in the Norfolk Federation headquarters.

Members continue to be involved with the Norfolk Federation of WI’s, 1 members is on the Board of Trustees and 2 are on sub-committees, some act as volunteers in the shop and at the Royal Norfolk Show. Several members attended the Federation AGM in St Andrews Hall and the Autumn Meetings held around the Country.

We have a full programme for the rest of this year and look forward to continued success.

h. L Webster – District Councillor

She confirmed that she is the new DC for Newton Flotman and Cringleford. She is currently studying Politics at the UEA, which involves studying 2 hours per week. She will be here for the next 4 years.

In the recent elections 38 Conservative and 8 Liberal Democrats were elected, this is 1 less Conservative than the last term. This result meant no overall change.

She is on the Committee for Loans and Grants and a Champion for young people aged between 14 and 18.

South Norfolk are currently looking to merge overheads with Great Yarmouth, there are currently no issues in this process.

The Localism Bill will make a big difference at a local level. The District Council could receive a challenge to buy services and demands for referendums.

i. D Gibbs – Chairman – Parish Council

This year we have seen a number of changes. Following the retirement of Mrs Dawn Davidson, we welcome Mrs Andrea Eke as our new Parish Clerk. We also welcome Mr Jeremy Johns as the new head teacher of our school and Miss Laura Webster as the newly elected district councillor.

The main expenditure of the Parish Council is ground care maintenance – the Village Green and the Playing Field. We also made a contribution to the resurfacing of the Village centre access road. At the request of residents, additional grit bins and ‘dog’ bins have been purchased and installed. The Parish Council has however managed to reduce the required precept for this year by approximately 3%.

We are waiting to hear whether our request that the school bus route (St Mary’s Close, Brighton’s Road and Church Road) is to be included in the winter gritting programme.

The footpath from Alan Avenue to Exchange Road has now been surfaced to improve pedestrian access to the School and the shop.

Unfortunately the small affordable housing development proposed for local people cannot go ahead as the local landowner is not prepared to sell and no other sites were deemed suitable.

We are continuing to press for a review of the Flordon Road/A140 junction to improve vehicle access which is now even more relevant bearing in mind the proposed Long Stratton bypass and major housing development. We also made representations to this effect regarding the A140 in relation to the Transport Strategy Consultation document. Graham Plant the cabinet member for Planning and Transportation will be at the next Parish Council Meeting to provide more information and this will also give us the opportunity to press our case.

We are currently arranging for Parish Council land which has not already recorded to be placed on the Land Registry.

The Parish Council has a new website which contains useful information about Newton Flotman and to which the Clerk and I have been adding to. The address was published in a recent Partnership but can also be ‘Googled’. We would encourage as many local residents as possible to sign up to enable them to be notified by email when we add new information – it’s free!

i. D Gibbs – Chairman – Parish Council continued

We are still looking for a volunteer to act as Emergency Coordinator who would be required to maintain details of available facilities in the village that could be called upon in an emergency. Bob McGibbin has suggested the possibility of the 'Lions' donating a defibrillator to the village to enable volunteers to provide 'first response'.

The donation of daffodil bulbs for the village green was also suggested. If you are interested in volunteering or anyone comes to mind, please ask them to contact the Parish Clerk.

Newton Flotman Charities

Formed from three charities; John Pye (1647), Thomas Clabburn (1815) and John Sewell (1931). Assets are shares held by COIF from which income is derived.

The charity has approximately £1,400 available to assist with the cost of extra school activities for local children of less well-off parents. No requests have been received during the last financial year.

Thank You.

Thanks must go to all the Parish Councillors who have been re-elected unopposed and to those who undertake activities on the council's behalf namely, Andy Pownall (Allotments) and, Richard Smith (Tree Warden and 'litter picker').

Congratulations and thanks also to Parish Councillor Eve Domeyer who has taken on the responsibility for recruiting volunteers and organising Speed Watch. A recent reorganisation of the police has resulted in a delay in training but it is hoped that this will take place shortly.

In addition, thank you to all those who organise activities for the benefit of Newton Flotman, it really is appreciated. Finally on your behalf, thank you to the ladies for the refreshments and of course to you for attending the Parish Meeting.

You are of course welcome to attend the next Parish Council meeting a week today on Tuesday, 31 May at 7.30 when Graham Plant (Cabinet Minister for Planning and Transportation) will attend.

j. R McKelvey – Vice Chairman – Parish Council

R McK thanked DG on behalf of the Parish Council. When he went away to India, he came back and still carried on. All work is prepared beforehand and he always gets to the point and finishes early.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Andrea Eke
Parish Clerk