



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ANSTEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016 COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Andrew Marchant (Chairman)  
David Oxley (Vice Chair and Village Hall Committee – Publicity)  
Mandy Parker  
Jan Pledger (Village Hall Committee)  
Simon Bagnall  
Peter Sapsed

Village Hall Committee: Kate Oxley - Chairman of Village Hall Committee  
Rod Hart – Treasurer of Village Hall Committee

Others Present: Alison Cosser (spelling in AM's report)  
Gus Goymour  
Dave Kellett  
John Hamilton  
Tony Pledger

Officers present: Caroline Jones (Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the AGM and Annual Parish Meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence** - none

**2. Declarations of Interest** – none

**3. Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

The Chairman read through the minutes from last year's meeting. He requested any changes or comments, none received. The Chairman duly signed the minutes from the last meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015 as being a true record of the meeting.

The name of one attendee was corrected to Gus Goymour.

**4. Chairman's Report** the Chairman read his Report to those present at the meeting.

*Thank you for attending and welcome to our joint annual Parish Council and Village Hall meeting.*

*As always I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their attendance and input which implemented the smooth running of the Parish Council affairs over the last 12 months. I feel that at present we have some very experienced "locals" who understand the makeup of a small village such as Anstey and share the views of locals on how the village should move forward.*

*I would like to think that us who live in Anstey reside here as we appreciate quiet and undisturbed village life and do not want to push forward too quickly into the 21<sup>st</sup>C....except for broadband that is!*

*As a village we have relatively recently lost much of our agricultural ties and heritage, as when I moved to the village 37 years ago there were some seven working holdings in the village employing between 25 -30 staff who worked the land, lived in the village, drank in The Chequers and attended the village hall bashes as it was their local socialising and entertainment, there are now 3 holdings that farm the land in the village and no farm workers living in the village. I think this highlights the change that the village has gone*



*through and how difficult it is to maintain the rural feel of our village. We now have to work hard to retain that village spirit and cohesion, I hope that as a parish council we do our utmost to influence any decisions that could detract from those principles and with the help from our school, fair committee, refurbished playing fields and especially our newly appointed village hall committee, who are doing a fantastic job in reviving the village hall events, appearance, structure and finances, I feel that we are keeping the rural heart of Anstey ticking and unless there is a major change in planning policy I think we have a secure rural future.*

*I would also like to take time in thanking The Parish Council clerk Caroline Jones again for the superb support that she gives me as Chairman and the rest of the Parish Council in the arranging of meetings, agendas and keeping us informed of all local and district council decisions, changes and opportunities especially over the last few months where she has had to visit her parents in hospital regularly and support them, I wish her and them well and thank her for still keeping on top of PC commitments through these difficult times.*

*Thanks also to our PCSO Amanda Higham who has kept us up to date with all local policing concerns which fortunately are of a very low count at present. Amanda has now moved on to Sawbridgworth and is being replaced by PCSO David Miller.*

*As reported last year the highways department has kept on top of pothole repairs with the exception of the Snow End saga where there is virtual point blank refusal to investigate the water eruption and subsequent flooding due to excessive backlog of work. We have highlighted the dangerous aspect of this, but to no avail to date, thankfully the winter was not too cold with only a few frozen days that made the corner lethal. We now have a date between May and October when the road closure will take place to hopefully remedy the drains.*

*We have had a few village planning applications to consider, we have hopefully considered each application on its merit and responded in what we have thought the village's best interest. There are potential changes to planning policy which we are keeping an eye on which may open up scope for expansion in smaller villages which up until now have been excluded from the threat, if this policy goes forward then as a village we will need to decide in the form of a neighbourhood plan how and where we would accept any expansion within the village, we will keep the village updated on the progress of this as this would involve a great deal of time and work and may require assistance from some residents that are not presently on the Parish council on a project basis. The most recent development in the village has left us with a windfall in the form of the NHB new homes bonus, the first investment we have made was the addition to and upgrade of the playing fields, we at present have around £7,000.00 in our capital reserves and it is likely that we will have more funds available for the investment in the infrastructure of the village, if there are any thoughts on how this could be spent then suggestions should be forwarded to the parish council.*

*We will later discuss the idea put forward of a defibrillator being installed in what now is a virtually redundant phone box, we did put out a request in the newsletter for views on this but had very little support.*

*Again, I hope everyone appreciates that the village is kept in a respectable and tidy condition and would like to thank David Moule for his constant patrols and vigilance.*



*St George's church still receive assistance from the Parish Councils funds to assist with the grass cutting and puts this to good use again with the church yard looking much loved and especially at this time of year when it looks superb.*

*As always I would like to thank the village fair committee for their hard work in planning and delivering Anstey Fair and the much needed funds to the different recipients in the village and also Adrian and Alison Cosser for allowing the village to take over their lovely grounds at Anstey Bury.*

*Thanks also go out to John and Patricia Hamilton for the newsletter editing, Simon and Liz Bagnall for the help with Newsletter production, Mike Thompson for his assistance in auditing the PC accounts and finally the weekly diary which is circulated by Ian Jennings which is so very useful. And lastly the newly formed village hall committee who by all accounts are doing a fantastic job...well done it is much appreciated.*

*Thank you, **Andrew Marchant – Chairman of Anstey Parish Council***

## **5. 2015-16 Statement of Accounts**

A copy of the accounts was available to parishioners which were explained, it looked a little different to last year as the accounts showed grants, the purchase of a skateboard ramp and a large VAT refund.

There was a slight excess this year; the working capital was higher as the Parish Council allowed for a village election which didn't occur so there was a little more in the final balance than the council would usually have.

Comments and questions raised over accounts were:

1. *What was the training for?* It was explained that it was training papers for the clerk to ensure she was up to date with new legislation.
2. *What were the VE Day celebrations?* There were celebrations in the heart of the village at The Blind Fiddler.
3. *What was the situation with the Village Clock?* The Village Hall Committee explained that due to the cold weather and holidays, the clock hadn't been placed back on the hall but it would be soon. Unfortunately, the clock can only be removed and replaced from the outside.
4. *John Hamilton thanked the parish council for the £100 donation to the Good Neighbour's Scheme which covered Public Liability Insurance and they had enough money to pay this year's insurance due to the donations made by Brent Pelham, Great Hormead and Anstey Parish Councils. A large amount of local area of trips had been made during the past year, 44 in total and the residents benefited directly from this service. They would be most grateful for a donation again next year.*
5. *Was the Parish Council a member of the CDA?* The council had been a member in previous years but stopped the subscription due to non-use. Information has been ordered from the CDA on a paid-for basis since.

Following these questions, the accounts were accepted.

## **6. Village Hall Committee Report to Annual Parish Meeting April 18<sup>th</sup> 2016** the Chairman read the Report to those present at the meeting explaining that there was a large committee who all undertake the same roles as last year.

### **Events and Fundraising**

*I am very pleased to say that we still have a large (and hardworking) committee of eleven and have had a successful year. We are very grateful to all the many villagers who have supported the events we have staged since the last annual parish meeting. These include*



two village quizzes, in May 2015 and March 2016 (particular thanks to Edward Burton, our wonderful quizmaster); a Summer Music Evening in June, a Meet Your Neighbours pannier market and coffee morning in October and a Christmas Dance in December.

Besides being (we hope) good fun, and keeping up the community spirit of the village, these events have raised a significant sum of money which we have been able to spend on improvements to the hall. In addition, we received a generous grant of £1340 from the Anstey Fair Committee, a grant of £2000 from East Herts District Council and income from lettings. We also had an unexpected windfall – Rod our treasurer and Norman, maintenance, discovered that the hall had for several years been overcharged for electricity, and we received a one-off refund of £3873.

You should have found a statement of accounts prepared by Rod on your seats with more details.

### **Improvements**

We have been able to finance several improvements to the hall during the year: putting in the new heating system; redecorating the main hall, toilets and kitchen (many thanks to Tracey Hayfield); installing a range cooker, a new washbasin and a door curtain to cut draughts; having the existing curtains dry-cleaned; and mending the clock, which will be reinstalled shortly.

### **Use of the Hall**

The hall is used regularly by the school, and also by other groups, such as messy church, toddler group, boot camp, carpet bowls and a local band for rehearsals. Hormead Garden Club were very grateful to be able to use the hall while their own hall was being rebuilt. Occasional uses include wedding anniversary and birthday parties, ramblers' meetings and elections. In April we hosted a meeting of the East Herts Village Halls Network which included some interesting discussions, for example about rural isolation.

### **Future plans – Events**

On May 21<sup>st</sup> we are holding another Summer Music Evening, featuring Tony Pledger and Sky West. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, in a joint venture with St George's Church, we are welcoming the Galliard Trio for a classical concert in the church. Tickets for both these events are available tonight from Dave Oxley or Colin Smith. Looking further forward, the Christmas Dance will be on November 26<sup>th</sup>. We have several ideas for other events, and would be very interested to hear any ideas from tonight's meeting.

The village hall committee is keen to take part in the Forever Active programme recently launched by East Herts District Council and Sports England, which aims to encourage the over 50s to take part in more physical activity. We have recently sent a questionnaire to local villagers, and if there is sufficient demand, we hope to be able to offer some classes soon, with coaches and equipment provided by the programme.

We are also launching a Cinema Club later in the year, showing films once a month or so, as they do in Barkway, and perhaps some live events on TV.

### **Improvements**

We are shortly having a retractable screen, data projector and speakers installed so that we can start the cinema club. We plan to replace the chairs with more comfortable upholstered ones, hopefully financed by a grant from East Herts District Council, though we will keep some of the plastic chairs for children's events. We also want to sort out storage in the hall, especially if we need to store equipment such as table tennis tables for the Forever Active classes. The kitchen facilities need further improvement, for example, a larger fridge and better storage for brooms etc.



*Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the village hall over the past year, and look forward to seeing you at our future events.*

*Are there any questions about the accounts, or any other matters, or any suggestions for the future?*

Comments and questions from the Village Hall Report were:

1. *Do the heaters work in the entrance?* It was explained that they are just ordinary heaters and not cost effective. The main hall heats up quickly and are now generally used.

A survey was distributed to Anstey, Meesden and Brent Pelham asking for feedback on a scheme called Forever Active which was aimed at keeping over 50's active. David Oxley thanked all those that replied. 45 responses had been received. Not everyone declared their age but 67% gave their age as 60-70 which is the target group. There was a lot of support for: Pilates (44%), exercise to music, gentle yoga and table tennis scored highly, carpet bowls (already being run), Nordic walking from the Hall and senior Zumba. Preference for timings were 9-11am and 7-9pm, Tuesdays were proving popular. David Oxley confirmed there was a lot of data to consider but they would be running some activities in the near future and forever active were keen to support this. Other villages were running activities under this scheme.

## **7. Open Forum – Public Session**

### **Defibrillator**

At last year's meeting, it was suggested to the Parish Council that we should install a defibrillator in the phone box. A request for interest was put in the newsletter and there were three responses of which two were from the same family. The cost was investigated and would be £2,500. Three/four people would need to be trained in the use of the machine and ongoing running costs were approx. 30% of the total cost per annum to replace the battery, pads and to cover retraining. The Chairman asked for feedback this evening as to whether this was something the village wanted to invest in. The Parish Council do have funds available. There is a defibrillator in Meesden, four minutes up the road.

One resident had replied to the questionnaire and was not against the defibrillator but had listened to a discussion on Radio 5 Live about what to do in the event of an emergency and the most important thing to do was CPR in conjunction with using a defibrillator. She felt that First Aid Training would be useful.

The Village Hall Committee were considering First Aid training and may apply for a community activities grant to cover the cost. For those that had done previous First Aid Training it would be useful to keep it up to date.

The Chairman explained that they would be happy to continue with the defibrillator idea if it was what the village wanted but there wasn't the support. He asked the Village Hall Committee to keep the village informed on the first aid training.

### **Phone Box**

There was little/no use of the Phone Box and this was discussed. Kelshaw have turned theirs into a second hand book scheme but Anstey First School already run one. It was agreed that it should remain as it is. It is owned by BT and has a preservation order on it.

### **Queen's birthday**

The Chairman informed residents that we have applied for a £300 grant to celebrate the Queen's Official 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Many villages are running events for 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> June.



An informal tea party, children's street parade with events and a BBQ were being considered. The Village Hall was free and the Playing Field may be a good option, weather permitting. A family afternoon going into the early evening was suggested. The Blind Fiddler had offered to provide a Hog Roast. The Chairman said that they would get together and plan an event.

## **NHB Update**

There is currently £7,000 in the capital account and a further £5,079 due in the summer to go towards the infrastructure in the village. The Chairman asked for any ideas of what this could be spent on to be forwarded to him.

## **Broadband**

A question was raised over how improved broadband to the village was progressing.

The Chairman commented that the original upgrade would be by 2017 we would have 2 mega bite download speed as minimum. There was an update three/four months ago that Buntingford and the surrounding areas were in the next band to be improved, so Anstey should be in the next tranche and it looked like it had been brought forward. Barkway is due to be upgraded. According to Broadband Communities news, by next March we should be upgraded to 2 mega bites.

It was agreed that when the high speed is rolled out to the area, we are likely to miss out as we are too rural.

The Chairman circulated information on joining together to get faster broadband but there were only 3 resident responses. That wasn't enough response to group together. If there was enough interest the cost would be around £50 per month.

## **Neighbourhood Plan**

The Chairman reported there were some proposed changes to the policies and he would be keeping a close eye on anything that could affect Anstey.

## **New Homes Bonus**

The Chairman explained that the NHB was given for new homes built in the village and that it was phased and not guaranteed. If this revenue continues to be made to the Parish Council, some £17,000 will be due over the next 5 years.

This has been spent on improvements at the Playing Field which have made a huge improvement to the village.

As there were no further items, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and subsequently closed it at 8.15pm.