

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Peace Memorial Hall, Lakenheath  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm

Present Cllr: Edward Morley (Chairman) 9 Members of the Parish Council Cllr: Colin Noble and 7 members of the Public were present.

Apologies Cllr: John Gentle

The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity for the Parish Council to let Parishioners know all of the work they carry out and to allow the residents an opportunity to air their views.

### **West Suffolk Council**

Cllr Colin Noble reported on West Suffolk Council budget for the coming year was in the order of £550M. He also explained to the meeting the areas of responsibility for the Council. Adult Social Care being the biggest spend, then Children discreet protection services and Schooling. Then came highways with a smaller budget.

He explained that in his role as County Councillor he had an Annual locality budget of about £8,000 for the Row Heath Division with a Highways budget of about the same. As a District councillor he and Cllr Frost both had an annual budget of £3,000 each for the Lakenheath Ward including the villages of Eriswell and Elveden.

He is aware that there are lots of concerns in regards to speeding through the village but feels that extra signage and more speed reduction methods are not always the solution. Cllr Noble feels that everyone should be aware that if you are in a village the speed limit is 30 miles an hour and it is up to motorists to show respect as to why we have lower speed limits in our villages or simply obey the law. He commented that a lot of the traffic volume is due to base personnel despite our roads not be classified as major a point he regularly stresses to Highways officers.

Cllr Noble reminded the meeting that he had helped the Parish Council fund the SIDs machines in the village and as they are moved around regularly this is a speed deterrent in itself. And that he also helped with funding for the Speed Watch Volunteer programme. He commented that he also used his locality funding to support other community projects such as the Good Neighbour's scheme where he provided Locality budget for the insurance premium for the first year of its existence.

At the invitation of the meetings Chairman Cllr. Noble then took questions from the floor to discuss matters of concern with those present at the meeting.

### ***Can you explain why the blue recycling bins do not accept glass or plastic?***

Lakenheath has a recycling plant and if you wish to dispose of glass, you can also do this at the recycling bins in the wing's Road carpark, you can also book a slot to take bigger items to the tip.

### ***Can you explain how the highways team prioritise the workload as it appears that jobs that do not appear urgent are sometime put in place before more important jobs, and example being this week 6 men crew working on white lines in Maids Cross, when the junction of Highlands and cemetery lane is so much more dangerous and this work has not been completed?***

The work is allocated as the need arises and it could be that the work you saw was on the books for sometime and there for has been allocated before something that was reported later.

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***Can you give us an update on Sedge Fen pipeline in regards to white lines and also Farthing Drove which is in a dreadful state?***

I am aware and the work is in progress. In regards to Farthing Drove, unfortunately that is what happens with fen roads

***As speeding is such a big problem in the village is it not possible to have sleeping policemen installed as they are in Wing's Road and Briscoe Way?***

No, this is not an option it is not West Suffolk Council policy to install Sleeping Policemen as it causes issues for the residents living in the road with noise as the traffic pass over them. We live in a village and everyone knows that the speed limit in the village is 30 miles an hour its up to individuals to follow the rules.

***Can you explain why the safety road signage has been allowed to get into such a sorry state and what is West Suffolk doing to ensure that the villagers are safe, particularly as there is such an issue with speeding in the village?***

I am aware of the signage and have already arranged for it to be replaced if you wish to report any other signs please do so to highways and send me the reference number and I will chase the reports up.

***In regards to the Sleeping Policemen mentioned earlier, is this an actual West Suffolk policy to no longer install these? Or is it just your view that they are in effective?***

It is West Suffolk Policy to no longer install Sleeping Policemen due to the noise nuisance created for the residents of the roads.

**Cllr: Noble left the meeting at 7.45pm**

#### **Lakenheath Emergency Action Group**

##### **Report by Cllr: Hastings**

Given the past year with COVID the country and the village have gone through difficult and sad times. You could probably be forgiven for thinking the village Emergency Planning team had been inundated with calls and issues during this time. Thankfully this has not been the case. Apart from the odd short term power failure during lock down we have only been called on at times to keep contact with our vulnerable residents ensuring they are ok and that they had immediate help if required. We have liaised with the other voluntary groups in the village and between us all have come through this.

As we now return to normal and restrictions ease completely, we will be reviewing our procedures on handling incidents in the future. If anything, this year has taught us it is now to prepare for the unexpected and look more closely at how we can help one another. The friendship and community spirit shown by everyone in the village has built a better bond between families, friends and neighbours. But now we look forward to a lovely warm summer where we can all relax a while and try to regain our normal lives.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact the Parish Clerk.

#### **Lakenheath Parish Football Club**

##### **Report by Ben Cowling for Lakenheath Football Club**

The past year has been very challenging for all of us, on every level. With particular regards to the club multiple lockdowns have affected income and the ability to compete, finding our second consecutive season curtailed. The club has been very proactive in seeking funding support and grants at both a national and local scale to help us overcome these challenges and allow the club to continue to grow.

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We have continued to improve the facilities at the club and the projects completed or underway at this stage include the following:

- i. Purchase of a new tractor and tools to improve the maintenance of the playing surface at the ground.
- ii. Renovation of the main stand, to include rendering and instillation of seats.
- iii. Completion of our kitchen area
- iv. Significant investment in improving the playing surface at the club.
- v. Purchase of a Veo Camera to enable us to film all our matches to help our social media presence and training of players.

The club would like to thank the local community for their support and in particular The Parish Council and The Christian Enterprise Foundation, without whom we could not achieve what we are setting out to do.

The club intends on fielding an U16 side on the main pitch next season, this has been made possible due to the improvements we have been able to make to the playing surface. This side will support our U18 side and continue the pathway of players into our Reserves and first team.

We have forged a link with West Suffolk College and have been giving work experience to 7 students in the field of Social Media, Commercial and Website design, indeed our new website should be ready to launch by the end of the month.

Most exciting of all is that the FA have decide to continue with the planned re-structure of non-league football at our level. Due to our on-field efforts over the past 2 curtailed seasons we look set to be elevated to 'Step 5' of the pyramid this summer. This will mean the club will be competing against market towns such as Newmarket, Mildenhall, Thetford, Haverhill and Swaffham amongst other. Indeed, Lakenheath will be one of the smallest conurbations playing at this level in East Anglia next season so it is a wonderful achievement.

The promotion will then set in play our next stage of stadium improvements which will include a new covered accommodation for 100 people and hard standing installed all around the pitch. A summer of hard works looks to be ahead of us as we look forward to competitive football returning in late July.

### **Lakenheath Good Neighbours**

#### **Report by Cllr P Gyte**

During the past year Lakenheath Good Neighbours, like so many village organisations, has been quite severely restricted by Covid 19. Most of our work involves transport to hospitals, Drs, etc and this was not possible for many weeks in 2020 because of lockdown. However, we kept the phonenumber open and collected prescriptions and did shopping within the village when asked.

Many of our volunteers were isolating as they were over 70yrs old, but those who were able, joined the Parish Council Action group and helped out there.

As things eased in the summer the PC helpline was phased out and requests directed to Good Neighbours. We were able to do transport requests again following strict Covid safe guidelines, and so our service was able to function more or less normally for the rest of the year.

So far this year we have continued to help the village community throughout the recent lockdown and look forward to having our first face to face meeting in over a year now that restrictions have eased again. In closing I should like to thank The Christian Enterprise Trust who kindly gave us a donation to help with our running costs, and also put on record my thanks to all the Good Neighbours' volunteers who work so tirelessly and cheerfully for those who need us. It is 15 years this year since Good Neighbours began and we look forward to hopefully an uninterrupted year of continuing to help those in our community who needs it.

### **RAF Commander Lakenheath**

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It was reported the RAF Commander Jamie Turnbull was leaving Lakenheath on behalf of the Council Chairman thanked him for his support in the local community and looked forward to meeting and working with his replacement.

### **Suffolk Constabulary**

#### **Clerk Reported**

Parking and speeding are still issues in the village. The Clerk reported that she had been in touch with Mildenhall police in regards to a possible mobile presence in the village. The parish council are piloting speed stickers for the wheelie bins at both ends of the village and we have SIDs in place the information is currently downloaded fortnightly.

### **Heritage Group**

#### **Clerk read a report on behalf of the heritage group ( David Jones)**

The Village Heritage Trail was ready only a few weeks before the first lock-down. Despite this a good number of Trail Booklets were distributed at several places in the village and were very well received. The trail is also available on the Parish web site. Progress has continued on the Heritage Pages of the village web site with more photographs being added to the Historic Photographs section and the Timeline has now reached 1948, with two stories already included in addition to the time line detail. Both stories have had significant contributions from resident's past and present. The inclusion of the Timeline in The Lakenheath Times has also been appreciated. Hermione Brown continues her work as Village Recorder for the Suffolk Local History Council. No doubt the magnificent effort of the village volunteers during the pandemic will find its way into the county archives. A story from Timeline 5, 'Tom Rolph. Mechanical engineer and shop keeper', led to a donation of a very old scrapbook, begun well before WW1. (It contained a newspaper report announcing the relief of Mafeking in the Boer War). The scrap book contained a very damaged early photo of a house which appeared to be unlike any other in the village. After some work on the photograph, what was quite a large timber framed wattle and daub building was identifiable and this could be accurately positioned in the village. Matthew Champion, a well known expert on ancient buildings, was consulted, and from our map and photographic evidence, together with his own further checking, suggested a date between 1450-1580, (the late medieval period); making this by some distance the earliest domestic building, had it survived, in the village. We think the building was demolished shortly before WW1. The site is now registered by Suffolk County Archaeology. More about this later we hope. I have been asked a few times, "What was it like here before?"

**Information Panels.** Some time ago we decided to look into the possibility of positioning information panels at various points in the village to show the development of that particular place through time. ("What was the Green like in before WW1"?). Getting the various permissions necessary for the location of the panels is proving to be rather more complicated than we envisaged and will take some time. Many thanks to the steadily increasing number of local contributors to our work.

### **Lakenheath Cemetery**

#### **Report from Cllr Hastings**

The Parish Council and residents of Lakenheath take a pride in our cemetery and we do our utmost to keep it in good appearance and repair. However, this year we have experienced a number of issues with regards to maintenance and upkeep.

#### Sunken Graves

Over the past six months we have had in the region of 45 graves that have sunk down due to dry summer then wet winter. We have managed to level these graves and re-turf where necessary.

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However, there are still a few outstanding and we hope to have these all addressed in the coming weeks.

### **Floral Tributes**

For those of you that regularly visit the cemetery you will have noticed that at times some of the floral tributes seem in disarray. Whilst of course sometimes this is due to windy weather we are also aware that we have been visited by a number of deer's which take a delight in eating the tops off the fresh flowers and then to leave just the stalks behind.

Unfortunately, we could do little about this but they now seem to have moved on to another area. I can only add that it is the fresh flowers that they seem to love because they do not touch the silk flowers.

### **Moles**

This winter the moles proved a serious issue for us and anyone visiting in January will have seen more than 50 Mounds across the cemetery. Apart from looking unsightly, caused distress and upset to families. Since employing a local retired mole catcher this all now seems to be under control.

We are keen to keep our cemetery to the best possible standard and with this in mind we are undertaking the re-painting of the boundary gates and railings as well as decorating the inside of the Chapel which will then be opened daily for visitors. We are also decorating the public toilet in the cemetery.

We have planted the flower beds at the entrance to the cemetery and also currently cutting the boundary hedges.

### **Benches**

There are a number of benches in the cemetery which over many years have been gifted to the village and we are in the process of inspecting them, checking condition and painting where possible.

We would like to assure all residents that the Cemetery Committee work tirelessly on this work and if any residents have issues or concerns in this connection please contact the parish clerk .

### **Undley Road Play Area**

#### **Report given by Cllr : P Gyte**

The play park in Undley Rd.re-opened for business on Friday April 2nd and the children in the village were quick to try out the new equipment. The Parish Council hope that it will be well used and enjoyed for many years to come. The refurbishment did take longer than anticipated so thank you for your patience. As soon as Covid restrictions are lifted the two missing swings will be fitted. Please, may we politely remind you that dogs are not allowed in the park and children should be supervised at all times.

### **Coronavirus Action Group**

#### **Report by Clerk**

Three organisations in Lakenheath who came together in 2020 to support anyone needing help have been recognised by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk. Lakenheath Parish Council, Lakenheath Foodbank and Lakenheath Good Neighbours have each received a certificate and a letter commending them for their work throughout last year.

When the first lockdown was announced in March 2020, these three organisations joined together to form The Coronavirus Action Group to support anyone who needed assistance with shopping,

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errands, prescriptions etc. 2,300 leaflets were distributed offering support and 35 volunteers worked tirelessly to answer requests for help. Between 26<sup>th</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> July 190 calls were received, 105 prescriptions collected and 26 households shopped for on a regular basis.

The Foodbank was also working hard, increasing its service to 12 weekly clients. They received donations from local organisations and individuals and delivered to anywhere between Methwold and Newmarket. They also provided Xmas presents for 78 households in the Lakenheath area. The Action Group met fortnightly via Zoom to monitor how the scheme was working and high light any concerns. As things eased in the Summer the Helpline was phased out and the requests returned to Good Neighbours. They were by then able to resume transport requests following Covid safe guidelines.

All three organisations were surprised and delighted to receive recognition for the way the village was supported throughout most of 2020. To quote the letter from the Lord lieutenant 'we are a shining example of all that is best in this county.' I'm sure all the organisations concerned would say we did it because we wanted to help and were grateful, we were in a position to do so.

### **Great British Litter Pick 2021**

#### **Cllr Judy Cahill reported**

I joined the Parish Council last year and is proud to be a member. I have been asked to organise the 'Great British Spring Clean' for our village. This is a national initiative scheduled to run between May 28<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> 2021. This is going to take place in our village on June 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> June. We will be starting at 10.00 and will stop at about 12.00. Meeting initially at the Village Green (opposite the Parish Office) so that volunteers can be delegated to places that are in the most need of clearing up. Please let either me or the Parish Clerk if are aware of anywhere in the village that you think needs attention so it can be added to the 'list'. Where possible we will try and delegate you to near to your home. The more people we have the better our village is going to look so please come along if you can. There will be 'High Vis' jackets available, 'litter picking sticks' and refuse bags available, and these will need to be returned to the Parish Office at the end of each pick. All are welcome. Current COVID rules will be in place. Thank you in advance for your help.

### **The Precept**

This year's Parish Council Precept maintained a 0% increase and the Parish Council received £150,320. This money will be used throughout the year to Maintain services and support the local community.

#### **S.137 Grants**

This is money granted by the Parish Council to organisations which are considered to directly benefit at least some of the inhabitants of the Parish. Generally, to Community and Voluntary organisations for which the Council has no specific authority. The beneficiaries this year were:

Suffolk Accident Rescue	£225
Lakenheath Methodist Church	£360.
Lakenheath Football Club	£300
EACH	£225
RBLI	£250
East Anglian Air Ambulance	£225
Marie Curie	£225

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If your Organisation or Charity would like to apply for a grant, please put your request in writing giving full details of your activities and the amount requested to Maggie, Clerk to the Council. You can also support your request face to face with the Council, by participating in monthly meetings, where a section is given to representations from the public.

S19 Grants

Lakenheath Methodist Church	£360.
Lakenheath Playing Fields Association	£4000
Lakenheath Football Club	£9000
Lakenheath Playing Field	£3000
Lakenheath Cricket Club	£3000

**Lakenheath Library**

**Report by Jean Reynolds**

Lakenheath Library is open for browsing. We currently have limited opening hours and have limits on the number of people who can be in the library at any time.

Suffolk Libraries has a plan for reintroducing all services by the end of June 2021. We will be returning to the 27 hours per week that the library was open before Covid changes, but we are happy to consider any changes to opening hours in light of the changes to other services in the village. If there are no changes to the Government's plans, we hope to welcome groups (reading group, knit and natter etc) back by the end of June but there will be reduced numbers of people in the library at any time.

We are hopeful that the easing of restrictions will allow us to run this year's Summer Reading Challenge for young people with face-to-face contacts and we look forward to seeing young people back in the library.

In the meantime, we have Lateral Flow Testing kits available from the library during opening hours

There were no Parishioner's issues other than those expressed to Councillor Noble.

The Chairman thanked all organisations and councillors that had taken the time to attend the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm