

# PARISH OF GILLINGHAM

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2022 at 7.00pm and chaired by Cllr Warman.

### **Business Transacted:**

**Minutes of last annual parish meeting** – 2021 minutes were not approved, as not seen by the Councillors.

### **2022 Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting**

Cllr Warman read out the Chairman's report:

This year started off with more COVID restrictions, with virtual meetings. However, we managed to meet face to face from June 2021.

The flooding of the Boundaries is still an issue. We are trying to resolve this, trying to find ownership of the land.

Environment Agency is still working on the rebuilding of the walls of the River Waveney.

Our long-standing Clerk Julia Punt retired in February and the new Clerk Tina Newby started in March. We have moved our meetings from a Wednesday to a Tuesday to accommodate the new Clerk.

During the year there was correspondence by South Norfolk about more houses being built using the Village Cluster scheme. So far, we have not had any feedback from the comments submitted by the Parish Council.

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October a small group of volunteers met to take part in the twice-yearly litter pick in Gillingham. The team recovered a large amount of rubbish, including... 4 large bags from the A146 (bypass), mostly drink and food containers, many from Costa coffee and McDonalds. McDonalds have now setup their own litter pickers on a regular basis, for Gillingham, Geldeston and Aldeby.

Marsh Line footpath has now been adopted as a footpath. We as the Parish Council now have some legal obligations with upkeep of the footpath and the respective gates/styles. The Clerk and Cllr Warman has walked the footpath and are looking into ownership of the footpath, the marshes at the sides and funding for the gates/styles. This footpath could join to Beccles and Geldeston, and will be a great project to be involved with.

Throughout the year we have had two councillors leave. One place has been filled and one is being advertised. If this does not go through the bi-election route, we will then be able to co-opt at the June meeting.

At the end of last year our grass cutting contractor Clinks Farm, stated their contract will be terminated. This resulted in obtaining 3 quotes. This is an issue as all the quotes obtained were very much higher than what was previously paid.

Business has continued pretty much as usual with ongoing village issues being solved as best as they can be.

This year and last year the parish council have been awarded CiL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money with a promise of more to come. The Parish Council are still open to ideas on how to spend the money. We are currently pursuing the idea revamping the Gillingham playground. Renaming this to Gillingham Jubilee Playground.

Any ideas on what we could spend the CiL monies on, would be gratefully received. We

do have guidelines on how we spend this money and we have a due date of five years, before the money will have to be refunded back to South Norfolk Council. Of course the Parish Council, does not want this to happen.

Thank you to the rest of the councillors and the parish clerk new and old, for their help and support this year.

Cllr Rae Massingham

Chairman

### **Reports from local organisations:**

#### **Gillingham Early Years report for Annual Parish Meeting**

This year has seen a lot of changes at Gillingham Early Years. We have a new manager and 2 new staff, still overseen by me, all making for a brilliant team. We still strive to be the best we can at providing individual, quality care and education to all the children that attend our setting while supporting the families too and are looking forward to our next Ofsted inspection.

We currently have 40 children on roll and have been full since Christmas '21. We are sending 13 children off to Primary school in September but already have 10 children on the waiting list to start, so September 2022 looks to be a busy one too.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bramley decided that he no longer wanted to let us use the forest area to the back of the preschool so we no longer have access to this natural area, we have tried to incorporate some more planting and natural resources in our fenced play area and continue to go on walks in the village when we can. We also try to have as many visits as we can from the wider community, for instance we have had Saaf bees visit, regular visits from the Norfolk library and Happy smiles have visited to teach the children about dental hygiene.

We have had a couple of visits up to Gillingham primary school this year, which has been lovely and something we look to increasing where we can.

I would like to say a thank you to the village hall committee. The change in the committee has been welcome and made life for Gillingham Early Years a lot less stressful. All hall users and committee work in harmony, making it a much nicer space to be in.

Many thanks

Tonia Luckham

#### **Gillingham Village Hall Report for Annual Parish Meeting**

Yearly Report for Gillingham Parish Council 2022 This year has been less eventful for the village hall and we seem to have everything in place since the change in the committee.

The commitment from a very small committee has continued for which I am personally very grateful, but we are in need of new members if we are to continue to run smoothly and would welcome any interest.

I am pleased to say that the hall is being hired regularly by Gillingham Early Years and Champion Martial Arts. We have weekly classes of Yoga, Pilates, Dance Fit and a photographer using the hall as a studio for family photo shoots. We are also pleased to say that the Bridge Club has also returned and we are seeing an increasing amount of parties and events being booked too.

We are supporting Gillingham Primary Academy with their fundraising by providing a venue for them.

The Sunday coffee mornings are very successful, with people supporting us from across the Waveney Valley. We have reduced these to 2 a month as the hall is booked regularly

on a Sunday. If anyone would like to volunteer at the coffee mornings or bake a cake now and again we would love to hear from you.

We have applied to become a Terracycle point, which will enable us to recycle many of the household items currently not available to recycle at home. By doing this we are helping the environment, improving our carbon footprint and supporting local charities with the money raised. If the Parish Council would like to be involved with this project it would be great.

We have been investing in the hall again this year, the foyer and cloakrooms have all been decorated. We have replaced the windows and installed patio doors which enhances the hall no end. The blinds have also been replaced. We have had cavity wall insulation fitted in the main hall to try and reduce our heating costs.

We are currently looking at having solar panels fitted, our electricity has increased tremendously, on average £620 a month and we hope to be able to secure a grant to do this project to help with the increasing costs.

We are also looking to have sound proofing boards fitted in the near future.

I am glad to say that Gillingham Village Hall has had a much better year and hopefully has survived Covid-19. We do have our concerns about the huge increase on electricity and with further increases expected in October we will have to run carefully.

Lesley Porter, Chair Gillingham Village Hall

### **District Councillor Knight Annual report**

Ward Member's Annual report – April 2022

With recent world and national events at the forefront of our minds, it's easy to get caught in the moment and forget what has been achieved in our district over the past 12 months.

This time last year, we were starting to emerge from a lengthy lockdown, during which we had distributed millions of pounds in targeted support to local people and businesses, and had become accustomed to working in different ways – particularly conducting meetings and making decisions online.

Although we hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, it turns out that some of the temporary changes had positive benefits and are likely to be incorporated into our normal working lives. Home working reduces commuting – saving time, energy, money and carbon – and it may be that some council roles (as well as many jobs in the wider business community) can be carried out remotely rather than from the office, at least some of the time.

On a similar theme, the rising cost of energy is concentrating all of our minds and, in addition to “smarter working”, we are – along with our colleagues at Broadland - considering moving from our existing offices to a more modern and energy-efficient building in the near future.

As chairman of South Norfolk's Economy & Environment Policy Committee, I am proud to have been involved in the development and implementation of our Environmental Policy – supported by the Environmental Motion agreed by Council at the end of 2021, which commits us to “take urgent action to protect our local environment, by preparing positively for and delivering a zero-carbon future.” Actions will include:

- Helping residents and businesses to recycle more effectively
- Encouraging and enabling the adoption of electric vehicles across the district
- Helping residents and businesses to adopt energy efficiency measures in their homes and premises
- Enhancing our local natural environment

- Maintaining clean streets, clean air and clean water
- Cracking down on environmental crime such as fly-tipping

Actions being more important than words, I'm delighted to report that the financial performance of South Norfolk Council during the past year has enabled us to allocate an additional £1.8M of funding specifically to support our environmental and economic growth plans during 2022/23 – over and above the previously agreed budget. Proposals include:

- A faster roll out of electric vehicle charging points at council car parks, leisure centres and community locations such as village halls
- Solar panels on the roofs of our leisure centres
- Solar-powered EV car ports at our leisure centres
- A joint project with Broadland District Council to improve recycling and reduce contamination through targeted communication and education

Finally, I want to highlight two specific initiatives which should be of interest to the parish:

1. The additional funding for EV charging points is targeted towards parish facilities, and I urge the council to engage with South Norfolk officers to determine suitable locations and the type of chargers required (standard, for overnight charging, or fast/rapid for quick turnaround).
2. The one-off tripling of the Community Action Fund (reported last month) will help to support community initiatives, with funding available of up to £15,000 to deliver new projects to enhance the lives of local people. I will do my best to support any project which meets the funding criteria.

I look forward to working with you all during the coming year.

James Knight  
Member for Thurlton Ward