

PARISH OF GILLINGHAM

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Wednesday, 5th May, 2021 at 7.30pm and chaired by Rae Massingham. The meeting was held on Zoom due to the Covid distancing rules.

Business Transacted:

Minutes of last annual parish meeting – No minutes were available from 2020 as the meeting was cancelled due to Covid restrictions. The 2019 minutes were revisited and approved by the members present, signed by Mr Massingham.

2021 Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting

This year, due to the Covid restrictions, has seen most of the Parish Council meetings held on Zoom over the internet. Our County and District Councillors have continued to stay in touch with us at these meetings along with the Waterloo representative. There are still conflicting reports of when we may get back to face to face meetings. Not all of our councillors are able to attend on Zoom but they are continually consulted and brought up to date with what is happening and are all able to give their input when needs be.

Business has continued pretty much as usual with ongoing village issues being solved as best as they can be. With council workers working from home and unable to meet outside in the early days progress has been slow at times.

Thanks are sent to the Romanian Church who have been cutting St Mary's church graveyard.

This year was particularly bad with flooding, even though a lot of the local ditches and drains had been cleared.

Unfortunately, the 2020 Remembrance Day service had to be cancelled due to Covid but the parish council would like to thank the Rev David Smith who had kindly agreed to officiate. The wreath was still laid in private.

The battle to control the litter and anti social behaviour on Church Road continues. The Highways department have agreed to put better signage in place to highlight the restrictions on this road.

Thanks again to Trevor who continues his war against litter.

This year the parish council have been awarded CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money with a promise of more to come. The council are still open to ideas on how to spend the money. We are currently pursuing the idea of illuminating signs near The Boundaries on Geldeston Road alerting motorists to the proximity of the school.

Marsh Lane footpath has at last been decided and affected parties have now received letters. Final decision should be announced shortly.

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

Cllr Rae Massingham
Chairman

Reports from local organisations:

Gillingham Early Years report for Annual Parish Meeting

Last year on the 23rd of March we were told to close for the lockdown due to the Corona virus Pandemic. We did not open again until we allowed to open to all children in June, as we only had two parents at the time who were classed as key workers, and both had a partner at home.

We kept in touch with parents weekly via phone calls, checking they were all ok, sharing learning ideas and the activities we would have been doing with the children via the children online learning journeys. I read 3 stories a week and shared them online also. We sent resources to children who

needed them.

When we re-opened in June, only 14 out of 40 families decided to return their children, which meant we ran at reduced hours and reduced staff. Due to social distancing rules, the children were dropped off and collected at the bottom of the ramp and still at this point, parents are not allowed in the building. We were unable to have our usual school trip and we were unable to hold our family sports day. We did still do a sports morning for the children in attendance. Usually at the end of the school year we have a party and leaving ceremony for the children going to school, we could not do this either, but the children still were either given their capes, masks and certificates or we sent them to them. We were also unable to have reception teachers visit from the primary schools, so we did all transitions via phone and post. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we will be able to resume usual service this year!!

In September we opened again, after the summer holidays and all children came back, this was a pretty normal 4 months, although parents remained outside, and we were unable to hold our Christmas party.

Again, in January of this year we were faced with another lockdown, but this time were told to stay open to all. A lot of families decided to keep their preschool children at home as their older siblings were off school, so again we went down to reduced hours and staff.

We are totally back to normal now and have a full roll of children all in attendance and a full timetable. Throughout the pandemic the new village hall committee have been so supportive and the staff, although, very worried at times have been exemplary, we have so many new routines and rules to get used to and implement and at the heart of that has always been the children's welfare. The county council continued to pay for the government funded children whether they were attending or not, which meant we were able to keep staff, not making any redundancies and keep the preschool up and running in to the future.

Recently we have employed two new staff, one of which is now the day-to-day manager of the setting, leaving me to the business side of things.

Usually, we have a plan in mind for future projects but as things are now, we are not adding anything else to our already overflowing plate. Things are running very smoothly, we are hoping as everyone else, that it remains that way.

Tonia Luckham
Gillingham Early Years
12/4/21

Gillingham Village Hall Report for Annual Parish Meeting

Well what a year it has been! As you are aware we have had a complete change with the committee during the first lockdown and due to the many restrictions that followed we have been unable to hold a full AGM. We are hoping to be able to do so in July this year and if any members of the council would like to join the committee they would be most welcome.

The new committee have all pulled together and are working very hard to bring the hall up to date and open for events for the local community.

We have not been able to open much during the last year but Gillingham Early Years have continued throughout which has been a lifeline to the village hall. We were also very lucky to receive a grant from SNDC which enabled us to continue with the works we had planned. We have been able to replace the floor in the main hall which was much needed and long over- due and redecorated the main room too.

The rear courtyard has been refenced and now offers a lovely secure area which we hope to incorporate more with the hall this year, making it a perfect venue to hire.

We have been so pleased with the support the weekly Sunday coffee mornings have had, alongside the local support we have regular people from Kessingland, to Long Stratton and many places in between. It has been lovely to see the hall full of life.

We have a new Yoga instructor who holds classes twice a week, a Pilates instructor and our Karate group, Champion Martial Art twice a week too. Unfortunately the Bridge Club have not been able to return as yet due to close contact restrictions.

We look forward to June when we can fully reopen the hall and hopefully it will become the heart of the village once more.

I would like to thank Julia Parish Clerk for the help and guidance she has given me on taking on my new role as acting Chair.

Kind regards
Lesley Porter
Chairperson

Ladies group

Unfortunately, due to Covid the Ladies Group were unable to meet this year. Once social distancing makes it possible the Group will resume their meetings. As always anybody is welcome. Contact details for this group can be obtained from the parish clerk.

Any other business.

Before closing the meeting, Mr Massingham said that he would like to give special thanks to the Early Years Pre-school for keeping their young students learning during the lockdowns and the village hall for managing the situation. Also to the parish clerk for keeping the councillors in touch during the lack of face-to-face meetings.

There being no other business Mr Massingham closed the meeting.

Annual reports from our District & County Councillors can be found on the parish website.