

Annual Meeting of the Parish for Hasketon Parish
on Thursday 9th May 2024 at 6.00 pm
FINAL Minutes

Present: Stuart Dack Chairman (SD), Iain Whyte (IW) (Vice Chairman), Parish Councillors (PCllrs), Ann Turner (AT), William HELM (BH) Chris Everson (CE) and Steve LECKIE (SL), (Hasketon Parish Clerk).

There were three members of the public (MOTP) in attendance.

1. The meeting was opened at 6.00pm by the Chairperson who welcomed everyone to the Annual meeting of the Parish.

2. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Councillor Niki Field (NF) and Beccy Batley (RB).

3. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting of the Parish:

Minutes from the 2023 meeting had been previously circulated. SL indicated chairperson had endorsed the minutes last year, however SL gave an overview, and they were accepted by the meeting on the night.

4. Chairman's Report and Finance:

In Summary SD welcomed the Parish to hear his second report as Chair of Hasketon Parish Council.

He gave an overview of the meetings through the year and mentioned the 14 planning applications considered during this time in which he felt the Council had given consistent views.

He expressed that probably the largest task during the last 12 months had been our focus on improving the overall amenity of our village. Beginning the year by rewilding areas of the car park, planting a few spring bulbs (150) and introducing a Queen's jubilee bench and tree along with a picnic table. It continued by planting a further 1500 spring bulbs, in addition 3 trees in front of the Victory Hall, further trees to one end of the car park and replacing some of the native hedging around the play area. This has been managed by Councillor Niki Field with other councillors helping with planting the bulbs and trees. He gave his grateful thanks to all for their help.

Pretty much all of this was funded by grants from our District Councillors Dan Clery and Colin Hedgley along with help from County Councillor Elaine Bryce. He expressed sincere thanks to them all for continuing to support the village.

He went on to say through work by Councillor Bill Helm the Council had managed to get some long-awaited fixes made to parts of the footpath network. Most notably steps and a handrail have now been installed on a Blacksmiths Lane path making it much safer.

He expressed the need to use the Suffolk Highways their reporting tool when issues are spotted.

He stated that a criticism from the auditor for several years was that the Council had been holding too much money in reserve. This year the Council had taken the decision to address this and spent a sizeable part of our bank balance on improving the driveway in front of The Victory Hall. The crumbling tarmac has been replaced with a lovely new block paved driveway. Posts have been placed to stop visitors parking on the grass and there is now space for disabled parking. A picnic bench will also be placed on the grass to one side for visitors to use and a grass verge will be seeded along the play area fence. Spring bulbs will be planted in the grass to brighten the area too.

He highlighted that the Council had finally taken our banking online. He hoped the days of writing out cheques and recipients having to wait weeks have gone. He thanked the Clerk for this work.

He reported that 2 charities had received small donations: Citizens Advice £100 Headway Suffolk £100.

He stated that looking ahead to the next 12 months, he personally felt the need to get more community engagement. The Council have thoughts and ideas of where the focus needs to be, but it would be good to get a wider opinion. He expressed a desire for more villagers to come to meetings, which would give a much better idea on where the Council should put the focus and money.

The thoughts currently for the coming 12 months are:

Continue with the rewilding and planting programme.

Play area- Improve accessibility for all. Begin to replace sections of fencing with something more durable. Review the play equipment and action repairs.

Stay close to and represent village concerns/opinions around:

Various energy projects such as Sizewell C / National Grids proposals to connect windfarms to the grid with additional pylons / Potential impacts on the village from development traffic.

Put in place an emergency contingency plan.

Encourage direct reporting of road defects and other issues to East Suffolk Council through their reporting tool to hopefully get repairs done more quickly.

Footpaths: How do we maintain 40+ of them? Perhaps adopt a footpath scheme?

He concluded that the Council would welcome thoughts and opinions.

Dates of meetings are published on the website; www.hasketonparishcouncil.gov.uk.

The next full meeting will be on 11th July at 6.30pm.

He finished by thanking his fellow Councillors who had given up their time and continue to commit to improving the village for all.

SL gave an overview of the End of Year Accounts (period 01/4/2023 to 31/03/2024)

Clerk reported an overall balance of £9880.07; being £6304.32 Savings account and £3575.75 current account. The £2500 CIL monies were allocated and spent on the new access paving project.

VAT to be claimed for year is £4170.84. Total spend £33609.71.

5. Comments/Questions from Residents:

Two members of the public in attendance gave their concerns regarding the lack of bus service for Hasketon parishioners. They spoke about the service between Woodbridge and Grundisburgh. They would like a bus stop at Willow Farm Cottages. They stated that the timetable was not conducive to genuine travel to Woodbridge as you could get a bus to Woodbridge but in theory have to return the following day. They felt there was no consultation by First Bus. They were aware of the subsidised taxi service for the blind but if the taxi voucher scheme was used for £100 residents had to forfeit their bus pass. You also had to book a week in advance for a community taxi. There was no 'Hail service' ie no pickup but acknowledged you could get off by request.

SD offered to write to Suffolk County Council and highlight their concerns and request some solutions.

The MOP stated that buses missed Hasketon and went straight to Grundisburgh which could be seen as they could be tracked.

There were concerns about the exit of footpath 28 onto Blacksmiths Lane at the edge of the new development and a request for new steps if possible.

Advice was given concerning the new driveway added outside the Victory Hall by IW who assured the MOP that flooding was not an issue.

There was discussion concerning the limitations of this new area for disabled parking and both SD and IW indicated it was sufficient for emergency vehicles.

There was discussion about the idea by SD about adoption of footpaths. SD stated it was more to keep a local overview on the considerable numbers of paths so reporting would identify issues early.

The closure of the Turks Head PH was discussed, and AT indicated there may be interest from a commercial group buyer.

Finally concerns over water consumption by use of new hoses purchased were dismissed by IW who stated it would have minimal impact on the Victory Hall.

6. Close of Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairperson SD declared the annual meeting of the Parish closed at 6.40 pm

Signed:CHAIRMAN

Date.....