

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Beeston with Bittering Parish Council held on **TUESDAY, 20TH APRIL 2004**, in Beeston Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. G. Fowler.

Councillors Present: Mr. P. Burton, Mr. P. Carter, Mrs. G. Fowler, Mr. B Potter, Mr. J. Farrall

Apologies for Absence: Mrs. W. Parnham

Members of the Public. Mr. T. Scott, Mr. R Gussman, Mr. W, White, Mr. C Scutt, Mrs E. Gould, Mr. M. Hyde.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

The Minutes of 29th April 2003 had been read and signed at the May A.G.M., but could be read out if requested. No request made.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mrs Fowler said had been a comparatively quiet year, mainly due to the welcome withdrawal of the application to build and run a large commercial pig-rearing unit close to the village. This Council rigorously opposed this and hope this is a permanent withdrawal as the impact on Beeston would be considerable.

Year started with a shortage of Council members, which has since been addressed with the welcome addition of Julian Farrall and the return of Brian Potter who has served this Council brilliantly over the years.

As usual much of the Council's time has been taken up with planning matters, some of which have been controversial. This Council has consistently opposed applications for buildings outside the existing village guidelines, and where plans have included backland development. Breckland planners have not always supported this policy, but where appropriate on-site meetings have been held with the parties and planners to seek a compromise. The change in Planning Policy means that most applications are dealt with by the Planning Officers, matters only going before the elected Committee when obviously controversial or at the request of the District Councillor. To this end we have been fortunate in securing the support of our district councillor, Chris Holland.

The Council once again voted to continue to support the Playing Field by contributing to the annual cost of grasscutting. In addition new chairs purchased for the Hall which were part of a donation of £1,500 towards the Hall upkeep.

Our independent Audit was approved without comment, although the Clerk was somewhat dismayed by a rather over-zealous report and comments by the internal auditor. A close and detailed inspection by the Chairman resulted in an appropriate response to all points raised, which accompanied the report when it was submitted to the Audit Commissioners. This is of some importance as the cost of The Audit is considerably increased should any queries arise. The cost remained at the minimum fee.

Remembrance Day was commemorated as usual with very generous contributions of food and refreshments from the participants and the event brings together people from Beeston and Litcham, always very enjoyable.

As usual the Clerk keeps a close eye on Highway matters and maintains regular contact with the Highways Department to report potholes, excess water and related issues. There are on-going discussions with Highways and the Police over the difficulties caused by large lorries waiting to enter the industrial area.

Finally, Chairman thanked her fellow councillors and the Clerk for their help and support over the past year.

FUEL CHARITY ACCOUNT

Mr Potter reported that the Fuel Charity had moved Banks. There was £1,200.71 in the account and from this 44 cheques for £25 towards fuel costs had been distributed at Christmas, which left £58.71. The allotments off Dereham Road have been fenced and are let to Mrs. B. Smith, who keeps it tidy and cut.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**BITTERING PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

Mrs. Parnham, churchwarden of Bittering Church was unable to attend and send the following report. Services continue to be held on first Sunday each month except December when a Candlelight Carol Service the week before Christmas and church full and refreshments served afterwards. 28 attended Harvest Festival which raised £72.00, as produce sold afterwards and £40 sent to the Tear Fund, Holy Communion celebrated 4 times a year. Average attendance is 11. PCC meet 4 times and 8 on the Church Electoral Roll. Parish Share is £850 of which £750 has been paid. A Wine and Buffet evening in Longham Village Hall raised £647.

Mrs Jan Sexton decided to train as an Ordained Local Minister. A Ministry Team is needed to assist in running the Parishes who also needs training. Two groups of people requested access to the church and were very appreciative and interested in its history. PCC thanks the Parish Council for its continued support and all are welcome to services and events.

BEESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Mr Scott, churchwarden, gave a report from the Beeston Parochial Church Council. Service held every Sunday, except a 5th Sunday in the month when a group service held, average attendance is 7. Christmas and Easter sees larger congregations. Lent Lunch was well supported and proceeds given to charity. Annual Remembrance Day services at the Church and American Memorial were as always, well attended and Parish Council thanked for funding the reception afterwards. Two Burials this year. The Parish Share rose to over £5,000 and becomes increasingly difficult to pay.

Unfortunately, in November 2003, a large piece of timber fell from above a clerestory window on the north side of the nave of the Church, which has meant the nave is closed. The architect has visited and No progress can be made until English Heritage has made an inspection, which is proving difficult to arrange. Meantime, services are being held in the Chancel.

We are very grateful to our two regular organists Sue Wheeler and Bill White, and to the many people who regularly clean the church, the brasses and do the flower arranging. I also wish to thank John Shakespeare, my other churchwarden and the other member of the Church Council.

Mr. Scott said some concern now about the safety of the gravestones in churchyards and this may involve some work. He hoped that the Parish Council might be able to contribute towards the cost of this.

BEESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr. R. Gussman, Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator said no incidents reported to him but only in the last few days that there had been 2 burglaries in Bates Close. A meeting to be arranged soon with the co-ordinators of Beeston to decide whether the Beeston Homewatch is to continue. The thoughts of the Council would be welcome. Amount in the account is £110. District Homewatch position will be removed unless further funding can be found. The co-ordinators are: Mr R Gussman, Brian Potter, Marion Smith and Harry Ellis. It was suggested that an article be put in the Parish Magazine, which may bring this to people's attention and create more interest.

BEESTON SCHOOL GOVERNORS

No representative of Beeston School Governors was able to attend, but a letter from the Headmistress of Beeston School was read by Mrs. Walthew. There are 75 pupils on the roll, with 77 expected in the summer. The main concern is lack of space and to this end we continue to raise money to restore the School House. We may be eligible for a capital build in the near future.

Mrs Walthew added that the School had had an excellent Ofsted report and that the school had not been affected by the changes in teachers. Another teacher was needed and 2 classrooms. There is a waiting list for the School.

B.R.A.T.S

Written report received from Beeston Renovation and Transformation of School House (BRATS) which is aiming to raise over £55,000 to renovate derelict Schoolhouse. In the last year has raised £9,000 through Christmas and Summer Fetes, Internet Auctions via E-Bay, the establishment and continued running of the 100 Club and 23rd April there will be an Auction of Promises in the Village Hall.

Asks if the Parish Council in planning discussions for Beeston takes into account the capacity of the School and its aspirations. Also asks if the Council can donate the costs of the Village Hall hire on 23rd April.

FRIENDS OF BEESTON SCHOOL

Written report from Mrs. E. Fox, Chairman of the Friends of Beeston School. Held a Halloween Disco and Easter Bingo and a Christmas Social hosted by Mr. & Mrs. Rupp. The Stall at Nelson Place was less profitable this year so probably will not be repeated next year. Fund raising has helped to provide role-play equipment for the infants, a visit from a performing arts theatre company and the cost of coach hire for various outings. A jumble sale is planned for 22nd May and a Summer Solstice (picnic with live music on the school playing field) on 18th June.

BEESTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

No representative from the Village Hall Committee attended so Mr. Potter spoke. A cleaner was appointed for the Hall but unfortunately has now left and the cleaning is currently being done by Mr. Mears, the Chairman. The Hall has been decorated and 3 new rear doors replaced floor done but needs redoing. Stage rebuilt to enable table storage underneath. Mrs. Potter is now taking the bookings. Yoga class held each week and Hall hired regularly by the School. Field used by 2 football teams on Saturday and Sunday and training on a Tuesday. Cost of inspecting the Children's area is £100 per year, so unsure what will happen about this.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Broadband

Clerk wondered what interest there was in the village for Broadband, as this will be raised at the next meeting. Great interest expressed by those attending.

Tree Warden Scheme

Chairman asked if anyone interested in being a Tree Warden for the village as this scheme was being developed again by Breckland. Nobody was forthcoming.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting then closed.