

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Beeston with Bittering Parish Council held on **TUESDAY, 26TH APRIL 2005**, 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: Mr. R. Sharpin

Members of the Public. Mrs L Beasley. Mrs D Walthew, Mrs W Parnham, Mr. C Holland (district councillor).

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Minutes would be taken by Mrs Laws due to the Clerk's illness.

MINUTES

The Minutes of 20th April 2004 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, the Chairman reported that it had been a relatively quiet year with only 9 Council meetings, less than usual. Amount of paperwork from both central and local government continues to increase, much requiring response by way of comments or the completion of questionnaires. It is important that these matters are given careful consideration as much of it deals with proposed new legislation and thereafter, amendments, which will be likely to impact on how the Council continues to do its job. She was conscious that some people feel that Parish Council's are toothless and ineffectual, and there are indeed times when we become very frustrated at decisions taken at a higher level which appear to disregard our wishes and opinions. However, there are times when the system appears to work in our favour and in any event, without a Parish Council, the village would have no voice at all.

As usual much time was spent in considering planning applications, of which there were 25 this year, slightly down on previous years. Mostly uncontroversial, but one application to start up a sheep-rearing business at the Herne Lane end of the village raised a number of objection and the parish council arranged an on-site meeting with members of the Planning Committee, Planning Officers, local district councillor, and the Applicants. Local residents were given the opportunity to raise questions and express their concerns. This proved to be one of the instances when planning members, by a small majority went against local wishes and allowed the application, but with conditions and a time limit to prove the commercial viability of the venture.

During the coming year, it is anticipated that a lot of work will be undertaken to prepare for the new Local Development Framework, which will replace the existing Local Plan and Village Guidelines. The Council decided this was a good opportunity to involve the entire village in working to ensure that our environment developed in the best possible way, and therefore, invited Tony Needham, Breckland's Community Development Officer to come and talk at an Open Meeting about carrying out a Village Appraisal. The Council was very gratified at the good response from the village to this proposal and at the time of reporting, a Committee has been formed, Grant Funding for the Project has been sought (50% of which has already been approved) and the work begun. It is hoped to complete the Project by the Autumn. She explained that the Appraisal would be used to influence planners when drawing up the Local Development Plan for this village and in other issues. Questionnaires are being drafted to be completed by residents.

As Chairman she wished to thank her fellow councillors for their hard work and continuing support. She also wished to record her thanks and appreciation of the work of the Clerk and to wish her a speedy recovery after her heart attack.

FUEL CHARITY ACCOUNT

Mr Potter, Chairman of the Fuel Charity Trustees reported that there are 2 other trustees, Mr. N. Middleton and Mr. R Gussman. 46 households at Christmas received £26.00 towards heating costs. Mrs B. Smith continues to hire the allotment for dog training purposes. As at 22nd December 2004 there was £61 in the Bank.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**BEESTON PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE**

A report from Beeston Playing Field Committee from Mrs. Potter, Booking Clerk, was read out. The past year has seen the loss of a few bookings due to vandalism to the Hall, but over the winter and spring months the bookings have been very good. During the last two weeks a window has been broken, again, the front keyhole blocked up and yesterday the electricity box on the outside wall broken.

The Committee has been approached by both Litcham and Longham football clubs about hiring next year but it was decided to hold off for a year to have a rethink, as there are many things against letting the field at the moment. These are that there is no-one to mark out the field, nobody wants to clean up after the footballers, work needs to be done to the showers and the changing room floor, costs for heating, paint and marking out the field and extra cuts of the field grass hardly makes hiring out viable.

Last year the Hall had new chairs and this year wishes to acquire new lighter tables and a trolley for them, which will make handling much easier. The Hall is also being varnished inside and out and plans afoot to reseal the floor. Bookings are good and Committee has been busy fundraising.

BITTERING PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Mrs. Parnham, churchwarden of Bittering Church, reported that there were 9 on the Electoral Roll and the Church Council had met 4 times. The Churchyard has been kept in good order with the help of a grant from the Parish Council. The entire electrical system has to be replaced and fund raising for this has been ongoing with some generous donations and more than usual contributions and effort put into the annual Wine and Supper Party, which raised the total needed by over £1,000. Work on this will be done in May if the Archdeacon can push through the granting of a Faculty. There were 50 at the Carol Service.

BEESTON SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Mrs Beasley was present from the Beeston School Governors, no one from B.R.A.T.S attended, but a letter from the Headmistress of Beeston School was read out. There are 79 pupils on the roll arranged in three classes -Robins, reception, Years 1 and 2, Owls, Years 3 and 4 and Eagles, Year 5 and 6.

Building work is well underway to provide a new class base, which will be in operation in September. Two existing classrooms in the main building will be knocked into one, with an enclosed area at the back of the room for small group work. The school offices are also being amalgamated and re-situated within the main building, to provide a healthier working environment for the secretary and the head teacher. The building project will provide extra space that is so urgently needed, as well as more storage and cloakroom space.

Later in the year, we hope to be able to begin renovation work on the School House and have raised enough money to begin remodelling the ground floor, which will have food technology and library areas. Upstairs will eventually provide a head teacher's office and staff room, as well as further storage. It is hope that the ground floor will also be suitable for other uses to the benefit of the local community.

The Head is already providing teachers with PPA time (10% non-contract time for planning, preparation and assessment), although not mandatory until September.

FRIENDS OF BEESTON SCHOOL

No report from the Friends of Beeston School.

BEESTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Mrs Walthew, Secretary of Beeston Parochial Church Council reported that due to the structural state, the Nave is still considered to be unsafe for public use and services continue to be held in the Chancel. Unfortunately this has meant that two weddings that would normally be at Beeston have had to take place in other parishes. Services weekly and Communion on the fourth Sunday each month. On the fifth Sunday, parishes take it in turns to host a joint Communion for all the parishes in the group. Although the number attending Beeston Church

is small, it is extremely fortunate in having two excellent organists in the village. There have been no Christenings, no weddings.

The quinquennial report found that a considerable amount of work needs completing in order for the building to meet a good state of repair. The estimated cost to do this is £250,000. A Faculty has been obtained for Phase One, which will enable detailed exploratory work to proceed. A fuller report regarding this will be available at the PCC AGM.

The PCC wishes to thank the Parish Council and other members of the community for their support by donations and through fundraising activities.

BEESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

No one present to report on the Neighbourhood Watch.

ANY OTHER MATTERS PARISHIONERS WISH TO RAISE INESS

Mr Holland recapped on things happening during the year and said that the Parish had triumphed by resisting the GKN application for noisy nightshift working.

Mrs Walthew enquired about the security at the village hall following the spat of vandalism.

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