

## LITTLE EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016, at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall.**

**Present:** Chris Audritt (Chairman), Doug Wyatt (Vice-Chairman), Jess Rush, Chris Hindley, Simon Walsh (ECC), Martin Foley (UDC), Jackie Deane (Clerk), and 12 members of the public.

1. Chairman's welcome – Plans of potential new housing sites were on display, with information for residents to take away with them. A summary of the progress on the District Council's local plan was included in the Chairman's report.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Andy Dodsley and John Freeman (UDC). There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.
3. Minutes of last Annual Parish Assembly were signed by the Chairman as a true record at the May 2015 meeting and a summary report was given by the Clerk, with no matters arising.
4. Chairman's Report – Chris Audritt's full report is retained on file.
5. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Foley reported on a budget increase which will fund Highways Rangers services and Police Community Support. He also gave an assurance to the public that there are several options for new town proposals, in addition to the site that has been put forward in Little Easton, and each will be evaluated and considered on its own merits. There were no questions from the public.
6. County Councillor's report – Cllr Walsh reported on a council tax increase, mainly to maintain frontline services and social care. Roadworks, particularly on pothole repairs, are currently being carried out in the district.
7. Clerk's report on Finance - A bank balance of £9,933 was carried forward into the year and the closing balance was £9,763. £8,000 is retained in reserve and additional funds were carried over to cover the cost of works to the play area. The Precept was £15,700, which was £1,200 higher than the previous year, to cover a shortfall due to funding a "Rule 6 party" action at a planning appeal public inquiry. Approximately a third of the annual expenditure is spent on running costs such as street lights and grounds maintenance, a third on staff costs and administration, and the remaining third spent on planned improvements. Tree works were carried out on the recreation ground and railings were erected around the war memorial. A grant was awarded by UDC for half the cost of the railings. A new computer was purchased and a government grant was received to cover computer and administration costs. An income and expenditure report is retained on file and financial information can be found on the Council's website.
8. Public forum and questions from residents:  
Mr Blackwell raised a concern, as he has done previously, over the risk from cricket balls hitting the village hall windows and roof and also a risk to children playing in the play area while matches are taking place. Cllr Hindley, who is president of the Eastons Cricket Club, has been discussing the matter with the Memorial Hall Trustees to see if netting can be purchased to reduce the risk and talks are ongoing.

The freeholder of the Stag announced that there would be a small general store inside the pub starting in the next 2 months.

9. The Chairman gave an update on the progress of the Local Plan, with particular reference to the Call for Sites and maps on display.  
A resident asked if there was any way of holding the Secretary of State to account for not making a decision on the public inquiry, after many people in the village had invested their time and money into representing the views of the village.  
A resident asked if the landowner's appeal on the site for 700 houses is dismissed, would it make it more difficult for the same landowner to get permission to build the new settlement of up to 10,000 houses, as the sustainability criteria would be the same for both.
10. Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration – The beacon lighting and gathering afterwards in the Stag was well-attended. It was agreed to liaise with the new pub landlord to consider a community event in June in the pub garden. All agreed that it would be supported by the Parish Council and Cllr Foley would donate £200 from the New Homes Bonus grant towards something for Little Easton children.
11. Resident involvement in the annual litter pick and community events – it was agreed that posters would be placed in the Stag to encourage village participation. Cllr Hindley agreed to organise the litter pick and Cllr Wyatt would welcome helpers to tidy the garden around the war memorial.
12. Superfast Broadband - an update was given by Cllr Audritt on the Essex County Council programme, to start in June.
13. Updates on Speedwatch, speed limit applications and paths to the Almshouses – Speedwatch training has been delayed a couple of times but it is hoped to start using the speed gun in the village later in the year. There is no progress in speed limit reduction but Cllr Walsh is still supportive. A budget has been agreed to lay footpaths in Park Road, leading to the Almshouses.
14. Memorial Hall Restoration – The Chairman congratulated the Memorial Hall Trustees on getting grant funding to carry out major works, which included replacing the roof, updating the lighting and internal decoration.
15. War Memorial Garden Restoration – The Chairman congratulated Cllr Wyatt for taking the lead on getting the railings work completed and a successful grant application. Benches have been purchased and a rededication of the memorial is planned.
16. Date of next Annual Parish Assembly – Wednesday 26th April 2017, 7.30pm
17. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.