

LITTLE EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday, 24th April 2013, at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall.

Present: Sue Gilbert (Chairman), Janina Jones (Vice-Chairman), Steve Oakey, John Willson, Rob Boulton, Cllr Simon Walsh (ECC), Cllr L Smith (UDC), Mr Navin Sankersingh (ECC Broadband Programme Manager), Jackie Deane (Clerk), and 25 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Roger Board. There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.
2. **Welcome from the Chairman:** Members of the public were welcomed and she explained that those only interested in the broadband item were welcome to leave after that item.
3. **Superfast Broadband** presentation by Mr Navin Sankersingh, Essex County Council (ECC) Programme Manager - NGA Programme (BDUK Project).

Three Broxted residents were representing 34 households already expressing a strong interest and they would report back to Broxted Parish Council. Representatives from Thaxted and Great Easton Parish Councils were also in attendance.

The Essex BDUK project, also a gap-funded investment project, is currently commencing procurement and gathering information. Responses from the demand registration activity – ‘Make the Connection’ campaign is on the www.superfastessex.org website. Works in areas with the highest demand and higher employment use (subject to ease of delivery) can commence in early 2014.

All residents wishing to benefit from the faster speeds are asked to register their interest at this time and parish councils would also be encouraged to write on behalf of their residents, to make a stronger case for priority. ECC have commenced dialogue with BT subject to agreed terms and conditions in the DCMS Call-Off Framework agreement. The intention is to provide 90% of premises across greater Essex with access to superfast broadband (minimum 24mbps) infrastructure by 2015 with the remaining premises having access to basic broadband (at least 2mbps). Superfast connectivity will seek to maximise the use of fibre-optic cables and street cabinets. Combined with the new infrastructure, the existing copper cables to individual homes will enable faster speeds than currently available but replacement fibre-optic cables will enable higher speeds. Once this infrastructure is

in place, by 2015-16, residents will be able to apply to BT and other service providers and pay individually for a faster broadband service for their home.

Planning issues, highways works and easements in specific locations might require community support. Further funding and in those circumstances parish councils or other parties could consider providing extra funding to improve the type of infrastructure and connectivity in their area.

In addition to this scheme, there is a Next Generation Access Programme, also known as Superfast Essex, which will work on improved mobile phone connection, business support for SMEs (small and medium employers), additional funding and stakeholder engagement.

4. **Minutes of last Annual Parish Assembly** were signed by the Chairman as a true record.
5. **Chairman's Report** – Sue Gilbert's full report is retained on file.
6. **Clerk's Report on Finance** – The Precept was £500 lower than the previous year and approximately 1/3 of the annual expenditure is spent on street lights and grounds maintenance. Grants of just under £11,000 were received to cover Jubilee and sporting events and the new playground equipment. A deposit has been paid for a new website and funds set aside for set-up costs. £11,500 has been carried over into the current financial year, which includes an allocation for tree works and other approved expenses and general reserves of £6,000.
7. i) **County Councillor's Report** – S Walsh gave an update on potholes and asked that any byways that suffered from significant winter damage could be considered for winter closure. A change to the household waste system will use a processing plant in Basildon to replace the need for the majority of landfill with financial and environmental benefits. As a legacy of the Olympics, the cycling venue at Hadleigh is to continue as a permanent venue. (Full report on file)
Cllr Walsh agreed to look into an issue on behalf of an elderly resident.
- ii) **District Councillor's Report** – L Smith reported on the District Council's consistently low level of Council Tax and an increase in funding to the voluntary sector and community groups in the district. The Council continues to rebuild the reserves from 2007 levels. Considerable savings have been made in many areas, such as the change in the refuse collection service so that all areas are covered in 4 days rather than 5. (Full report on file)
8. **Land Securities Proposal** – The District Council is in receipt of the planning application, for 600-700 homes adjacent to Ravens Farm, including various

community facilities, with access points from the A120 Highwood Quarry road and to Park Road, with an option for an access to the proposed GD1 site allocated in the draft LDF. The public consultation is due to start shortly and a date will be set for decision at the UDC Planning Committee.

Questions and comments from residents:

- 1 Concern was expressed that the Parish Council should totally oppose the plan and a buffer zone would not be enough to stop the coalescence with Great Dunmow.
- 2 The new development would be an isolated new settlement.
- 3 The proposed road access would create a new Gt Dunmow by-pass from the A120 to Thaxted and beyond.
- 4 Does the developer have to show a housing need for Gt Dunmow? Woodlands Park and other sites were mentioned.
- 5 The website www.WeAreResidents.org was suggested as a useful site for updated information on this and other major plans in the district.

9. **Public forum** and questions from residents on any other matter:

A resident asked about the criteria for granting donations. The Chairman responded that the local charities, who received donations in previous years, have been awarded £25 each.

Mike Smith expressed, on behalf of the parishioners, sincere thanks to councillors for their hard work over the past year. He commented that the village is blessed with a very active and sound parish council and villagers owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

10. **Date of next Annual Parish Assembly** – Wednesday 23rd April 2014, 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall.

11. Meeting closed at 9.20pm