

Ospringe Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 10th May 2023 in the Church room, Church of St Peter and St Paul, Water Lane. Due to the small number of people in attendance it was decided that masks would not be worn as precautions against COVID 19. The meeting commenced at 7.02 pm

Present:

- A Keel – Chairman
- Cllr B Flynn
- Cllr C Elworthy – arrived at 7.23 pm
- Cllr A Bowles
- Cllr Rich Lehmann- arrived at 7.30 pm

K Lockwood – Clerk

Apologies were received from Cllr R Simmons other commitments-approved.

The meeting was also attended by members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

065/23

Parish Reports –

Mr Macey gave a report on Lorenden Trust. Sadly, ash dieback has greatly affected many of the trees over the last few years, particularly last winter. Young trees seem to suffer the most. Over 200 trees have been lost in the last 3 years. Many trees have had to be removed for public safety as the disease can make them very unstable. The canopy of many sweet chestnut and black beech trees has been lifted, this work continues to be done to give a better shape and bring forth growth from under the tree. One of the aims of the Trust is nature conservation; some felled trees have been left to encourage wildlife. Signs have been put up to ask dog walkers to keep dogs on leads to protect ground nesting birds during the nesting season. Links with Lorenden Prep School have allowed a forest school to be located on the land to help children learn about nature. There is a public right of way footpath though the land but other permissive paths have been made. Two oak trees which were a few hundred years old had fallen.

The Chairman added that three native oak trees to mark the three royal occasions would be planted later in the year on behalf of the parish council in Lorenden.

PFCA- Pat Younger read out an update written by the Chair of PFCA. The Community Hall project had made excellent progress in the last year, expected completion date is 19th May and the 'grand opening' is on 24th June; all the community are invited. A Lottery funded 'Community Mobiliser' has been recruited to manage and help to get bookings for the Hall. It is hoped that local groups and the parish council will use the facility. The funding gap in the last year has been bridged through fund raising, gifts and grants from Swale BC, the Furley Page Foundation and others. Funding is still being sought. A 'fundraising recognition wall' will be erected to recognise contributors. Income will be key when the Hall opens and it is hoped that the parish council will help to advertise the facility. PFCA and the parish council had been in contact throughout the year about a potential grant through a PWLB loan which would be taken out by the parish council. A voucher scheme has been suggested by PFCA and endorsed by the PC as an incentive for local people to use the hall.

The Chairman explained that a voucher scheme would recognise and reward the contribution being made by council taxpayers in the parish, who would be paying for the proposed grant as a result of the increase in the precept to repay the PWLB loan. There would be further liaison between PFCA and the PC to finalise the terms of the grant agreement, as the grant agreement is part of the legally-required administrative borrowing approval procedure for applying for a PWLB loan.

The following questions were read out by Pat Younger and responded to by the Chairman.

Q: Will the PC still be donating the commemorative oak tree that PFCA were expecting?

A: The PC does not think that PFCA had responded to the email regarding the offer of the tree made by the PC. This would be discussed at the next council meeting.

Q: Will the PC hold meetings in the Community Hall?

A: The PC would consider this further as this was the first approach made by PFCA regarding this. It was the Chairman's personal view that it would be in keeping with the PC's supportive stance towards the hall to do so.

Q: Would the PC help get signage to make it easy for people to find the community hall?

A: Cllr Rich Lehmann would find out if KCC could fund signage.

Q: Would the PC fund the £20 prizemoney for the best cake and crown at the forthcoming event?

A: The PC would consider this request at its next meeting but the Chairman had already assured PFCA that he would fund the prizes himself if the parish council decided not to do so.

The WI – Pat Younger confirmed that it is not active at the moment.

The Head of Lorenden Prep School -The second year as head had gone well. In terms of numbers the school is almost full. The number of extra-curricular activities is being widened. There is potential to use the new community hall for activities. The forest school at Lorenden has proved very popular among the children. A new wellbeing head had been appointed. Academically the school is doing well with good Kent Test results. 2

A request had been put into Swale BC to modify a section 106 arrangement made when the school was opened in 1993 to increase the number of pupils on roll to 140.

The school had also put in another application for a standalone music block to accommodate the various music lessons as currently there is a lack of specific space for specialist teachers to give lessons. The application includes an all-weather sports pitch so that the school can host hockey games.

The Chair asked what had happened to the plan to have an adjunct nursery at Brogdale. The Head replied that the Trustees had reviewed the proposal and it had been found not to be financially viable. The school would not be proceeding with this proposal.

The end of year production is coming up as is the Summer Fayre, to which an invitation to the wider community is extended.

Members of the public left the meeting.

066/23 Signing of Minutes – All were in agreement for the Chairman to sign the Minutes as a true record of the business transacted at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2022.

067/23 Matters Arising
There were no matters arising.

068/23 Chairman's Report
The Chairman thanked councillors and the Clerk for their work for the community.

069/23 Parish Council finances. The Internal Audit had been successfully completed and the Clerk had circulated the Annual Return documents which were due to be signed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting to follow. These provided a comprehensive overview of the financial position of the council.

070/23 AOB
There was no other business.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked all who had attended. The meeting ended at 8.06 pm.