

Ospringe Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 1st May 2024 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 7.11 pm

Present: A Keel – Chairman
Cllr C Elworthy
Cllr A Bowles

K Lockwood – Clerk

Apologies were received from Cllr R Simmons other commitments-approved, Cllr B Flynn abroad – approved. Cllr Rich Lehmann. P.C Gary Morris.

The meeting was attended by members of the public.

The Chairman opened the Annual Parish meeting and welcomed everyone.

070/24 Brief update from PC Morris's stand-in. There had been no recent reports of ASB or car crimes. The Chairman commented that PC Morris's involvement in the community was welcome. The Chair of PFCA also praised the drop-in sessions that PC Morris had been running at the community hall. Cllr C Elworthy said that PC Morris had been very supportive with Speed Watch, and carrying out his own speed monitoring sessions. PC Morris's stand-in said that more officers were being trained up to support communities across Swale.

071/24 Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

072/24 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 2023.

073/24 Chairman's report.

The Chairman thanked councillors and the Clerk for their support and work for the parish council and the community. It had been a year of successes and a few failures. A new waste and dogbin had been installed, at the main entrance to Lorenden instead of by Green Leas. Three commemorative trees had been planted in Lorenden and one tree had been donated to PFCA. Ospringe in Bloom had run again. Joyce Field had been registered again with Swale BC as an asset of community value. A litterpick had taken place as part of the 'Big Help Out'. In November, a wreath had been laid on behalf of the parish council to mark 30th anniversary of the M2 motorway crash. Speed Watch sessions were a regular occurrence thanks to Cllr C Elworthy and volunteers. The parish council continues to look after the lighting in the parish. There have been supplier issues that the parish council is seeking to resolve. The D Day 80 event will be taking place in a few weeks jointly arranged with PFCA, which it is hoped will be a success. The parish council Facebook page was active and the Chairman thanked Cllr B Flynn for his role as webmaster, disseminating information via the website. The parish council has resolved to buy a defibrillator for the community and is seeking funding for the project. The parish council is moving forward with the acquisition of Norman's Wood, a facility for the community to enjoy and use. Planning – there had been no big applications however there are outstanding applications; Brogdale Farm – mixed use application and the application for a visitor centre; Syndale Park Care Home; Queen Court Barns for 6 new dwellings; and Judd's Folly. Swale BC had consulted on its draft enforcement strategy and a response had been made by the parish council. The parish council had also commented on the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan. The parish council is disappointed with the performance of Swale planning enforcement and had tried to engage with

the department about enforcement matters particularly in regards to the Elverland Lane and other G & T sites. 2

Highways – the parish council is able to get road defects sorted out quickly via good communication with the local KHS officer. In the course of the year under review there had been a lot of engagement with KHS and a public consultation in the compiling of a Highway Improvement Plan. As a result of working with KHS on the HIP a 30 mph limit has been agreed from the top of Whitehill to the bottom of Bay Hill. It is hoped that width restrictions will be put in place on Plumford and Porters Lane to reduce the amount of traffic.

The Chair of PFCA asked about the traffic-calming measures at the entrance to the village.

The Chairman replied that Porters Lane and Plumford Lanes were the initial focus but that the HIP was a rolling and evolving document.

The Chair of PFCA stated that a communication had been written to the parish council last year suggesting a reprioritisation in favour of traffic calming measures as that would benefit more people.

The Chairman stated that as part of the creation of the HIP the parish council had had a public consultation and had then considered in detail all the points made in the consultation process when prioritising proposed highway improvements. However, the Highway Improvement Plan is a live document and as issues are dealt with, others will take their place. Traffic-calming proposals are still contained within the plan.

074/24 Parish Council finances.

The parish council always takes a prudent approach to finances. A budget had been set in the previous year to guide expenditure and predict income but there had been various deviations for the budget. For example, it had allowed for the possibility of taking a PWLB loan which did not come to conclusion, and there were other examples which left net expenditure less than expected. However there will be significant expenditure in 2024-25 which will erode reserves including the offer to assist PFCA with fencing and car parking expenses..

075/24 Parish Reports

The Chairman of PFCA – the Community Hall was opened in June 2023. A whole range of activities take place at the hall creating a community spirit. Some trustees have stood down but others have stepped in. A PWLB loan via the parish council was not enacted but the parish council are financially supporting PFCA with fencing for the pre-school and materials for the overspill car park. PFCA have worked hard to manage the car parking situation – the weather had not helped. By next winter native trees will be planted. A steady income will be provided by a small pre-school which will be opening in September. An EV charger has been installed. The acoustics remain a challenge, unfortunately an application to the Kent Community Foundation to make improvements had not been successful. Community drop-in sessions have proved popular with 20-30 attending. The police and Swale BC had also made use of the facility. The forthcoming D Day 80 event is being arranged and tickets should be on sale very soon. PFCA are still waiting to hear from the KCC councillor about brown traffic signs for the hall and a dropped kerb to support disabled access. A 'Midsummer Mingle' is planned to celebrate one year since the opening of the Community Hall.

Painters Forstal Gardening Club -The representatives reported that membership had picked up. There had been many events throughout the year including a plant sale in May, which had been well attended and raised a lot of money. There had been a trip in June to Tram Hatch Gardens in Charing. In August a garden picnic had taken place at Churchman's Farm. A Christmas get together in the Alma pub had attracted many attendees from the club. The AGM in February had been attended by new members. There had been an interesting and entertaining talk by Alan Harvey -

biodynamic gardening. This year's spring show had also been a great success with numbers up 3 again from the previous year. A plant sale at Lorenden School would be coming up in a few weeks.

Ospringle in Bloom- The organisers explained that they regularly walk their dog and while out walking take note of how the gardens in the parish are developing over time throughout the growing season. This helps them to make their choice of winning gardens. The gardens really brighten the parish. They were delighted to see some of the winners at the September parish council meeting.

The Chairman thanked the organisers for their efforts in arranging the event and asked if they would consider organising it for 2024. The organisers said that they would be pleased to arrange it again for this year.

Speed Watch – Cllr C Elworthy reported that 22 sessions had taken place, up on last year, 12 of which had taken place since February. This had been possible due to an increase in volunteers. The aspiration is that a session could be held on a weekly basis.

Lorenden Trust – The Chairman had spoken to Mr Macey who had fed back that it is hoped that Lorenden had got over the worst of the Ash dieback.

076/24 AOB

There was no other business.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked all who had attended. The meeting ended at 7.59 pm.