

Meeting of Oxborough Electors, 19 April 2023 starting at 7.30pm.

Held at Oxborough Village Hall

Simon Willies welcomed everyone to the annual meeting, pointing out first that this is not a Parish Council Meeting, but rather a meeting for all electors to have their say and think of topics they would like to take forward. He thanked Susan Hernandez for volunteering to take the minutes. He asked that for the interests of true and accurate record of the meeting, residents should state their name when they speak. In a change this year, the village reports would be presented, and any questions raised at the end of each report.

Present: Graham Allison, Martyn Cockerill, Michael Craig & Cathy Warnock, Jo Edgington, Janet Freeman, Susan Hernandez (minute taker), Jackie Lambert, Andrew Le Clercq, Susan & Denis Madden, Jackie Norton, Bar Pritchard, David & Eileen Stapleton, Cate & Tristan Tomlinson, Frankie Watkins, Elaine Willies and Simon Willies (chairing the meeting).

1. Agreement of minutes of 2022 meeting

These had been published and everyone agreed that the minutes could be signed as a true record.

2. Update on issues from 2022

None

3. Reports

3.1 Parish Council Chair's Report prepared and presented by Simon Willies (see Appendix A).

Concerning the swift tower, what would be the criteria for siting it effectively. A source of power for a device which 'calls' the swifts would be useful, but more important to choose a location near buildings. Would the tower require maintenance - it was thought not. Unfortunately, when the PC agreed to offer the swift tower to the National Trust Oxburgh Hall, they selected a location within woodland (far from existing buildings), and Cllr Fabian Eagle had (via email) turned this down, suggesting either the Pound or somewhere in the grounds of the Bedingfield Arms. Residents suggested the churchyard, the Pound or maybe on the village hall land. In the meantime, the swift tower has been delivered to Bernie Chapman's farm for safekeeping.

3.2 District Councillor's Report -None.

3.3 County Councillor's Report -None.

3.4 Village Hall Report prepared and presented by Cathy Warnock (see Appendix B).

Simon Willies noted that both Cathy Warnock and Julie Wood are both retiring from the VH Committee, applauding them for having served the village so well over the years; he thanked Cathy for her report.

3.5 St. John's Church PCC Report prepared by Churchwarden Julie Wood and presented by Simon Willies (see Appendix C).

3.6 SAM2 sign Report prepared by David Hotchkin (see Appendix D).

The data suggests that the number of speeding vehicles has been increasing. The equipment is now over 6 years old (life limited between 6-8 years) and showing signs of wear and tear as it has never been serviced (quote just received from Westcotec for £85 plus VAT). A replacement unit will cost in excess of £3000. Various traffic calming solutions were discussed - including chicanes (difficult to install in a village surrounded with farms, which has very large farm machinery passing through all times of the day). Frankie Watkins advised that such traffic calming installations would only be allowed by Norfolk County Council Highways on 20mph roads and Tristan Tomlinson agreed, noting that the intervention criteria for highways to do anything about speeding traffic is extremely restricted. Frankie added that NCC Highways would not take notice of any data generated by SAM2 sign (or Speedwatch, or even Traffic Police data), rather relying on their own equipment. Tristan mentioned that he has been recording data on his own radar equipment. Cathy Warnock thought that installing pinch points along the Swaffham Road would be a good idea and seemed to be successful in other villages, but perhaps not in Oxborough due to the farm traffic. Bar Pritchard suggested that installing white gates would point to an area of population and would act as a reminder to drivers. Simon Willies added that NCC Highways might not choose to install them but that this would be a cost for the PC to bear. Martyn Cockerill asked if Speedwatch could operate at this particular location and Frankie Watkins responded with no and explained how specific locations had been authorised by the police. Denis Madden supported the idea of installing a chicane, which he understood would be costly but seemed always to be a successful measure to reduce traffic speed. Cathy Warnock suggested that a group of like-minded villagers could form a group to address the problem of speeding vehicles. Tristan Tomlinson recalled how a few years back the question of installing a trod on the verge of Swaffham Road, between Windy Corner and Darwin House, had been broached with NCC Highways. The verge is dangerous to walk along (for both older and younger people) but NCC Highways deemed it too narrow for a trod. Graham Allison remembered that particular meeting but added that the engineer said that the main reason it would be impossible for a trod to be installed was because of the service cables which were buried beneath the surface of the grass and vegetation. Cathy Warnock added that

at least something should be done to make it safer to traverse and Tristan agreed that the grass should be kept short, adding that with the removal of the trees a little while ago, this should be possible.

3.7 Hewars and Hammonds Trust Report prepared by Miles Griffin, presented by Simon Willies (see Appendix E). Bar Pritchard suggested that people might apply for support to pay for gaining computer skills (and other lifetime learning skills) and Susan Hernandez mentioned how her children had applied for help to pay for university books.

3.8 Gooderstone School Report -None (Simon Willies suggested that this was probably unnecessary going forward).

3.9 Speedwatch Report prepared and presented by Frankie Watkins (see Appendix F).

Eileen Stapleton expressed her surprise to learn that the data from the SAM2 sign was not being supplied to the police and asked why but also if this were to happen, what action would the police take. Frankie responded that David Hotchkin who single-handedly manages the equipment, had been informed when the equipment was first installed that the data return would not be relevant information for the police, however this advice was contrary to what she has learnt during her years as Speedwatch co-ordinator, and that in fact the police (and specifically the Police Traffic Officer who routinely attends Oxborough) would be influenced by the data. Cathy Warnock agreed that any data returned to the police would be of relevance to intelligence gathering and deployment of Police Traffic Officers. Jackie Norton asked if it would be useful to inform the Speedwatch police contact of any data from the SAM2 sign, but Frankie advised that this information is not of any interest to that point of contact, although if the information was returned to the Traffic Police this would likely affect the attendance to the village. Graham Allison pointed out that as the equipment is owned by the PC, the PC could do more by way of communicating with David Hotchkin concerning the data return. Bar Pritchard supported the notion that the SAM2 data must be returned to the police. Martyn Cockerill suggested the police might agree to Speedwatch moving from the Church location and instead, monitoring the far point of Swaffham Road as vehicles entered the village - but Frankie responded that the existing locations had been carefully assessed (e.g. clear line of sight, legal and safe) and approved by the police in the first place. Denis Madden asked if the Traffic Police van needed to be so visible, in effect alerting drivers to the speed trap, and Frankie said yes, again citing safety reasons. Simon Willies asked if anyone would like to join the Speedwatch team they should contact Frankie, and Bar Pritchard expressed her thanks to Frankie and her team who seem to operate in all weathers.

3.10 History Group Report prepared and presented by Bar Pritchard (see Appendix G).

Simon Willies asked when the History of Oxborough book would be published - Bar advised that after losing Kelvin Smith (the original author) she had been doing her very best and that hopefully the book would be ready by this time next year. Simon Willies thanked her for her report.

3.11 Annual Parish Meeting Report: The minutes of the previous year's meeting had been approved and signed off.

4. Open forum for discussion of any topic raised by a resident of Oxborough Parish

Jackie Norton asked a question concerning the current condition and use of the telephone box. Simon Willies confirmed that the PC had voted to retain the redundant red telephone box just as it is, and Graham Allison added that he planned to carry out some further maintenance work on it once the weather improves. Eileen Stapleton asked why there are bare electrical wires visible inside the box which could cause a hazard to anyone inquisitive enough to take a look. Graham explained that following on from a PC meeting earlier in the year (clerk note: the PC had received an unexpected invoice for an unmetered supply of electricity from Npower when the previous provider, E.on. had never charged for the unmetered supply), he had been asked to find out whether there was a live electric supply to the box. However, this was not conclusive, and he suggested that an electrician should take a look at it. Jackie asked about the posts alongside the steps leading alongside and up towards the village green. Graham responded that these had been needlessly damaged, and Simon suggested that the PC should discuss this at a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm and the Chair thanked everyone for attending, wishing them all a good night.

Appendix A

OPC Report: Simon Willies, Chair

Another year draws to a close which has been challenging yet satisfactory with the outcomes.

Firstly, some thank yous - As Parish clerk Susan Hernandez does a sterling job and to be fair we would be lost without her efforts. To my fellow Parish Councillors, a big thank you for your contributions, challenges and support.

Ian Monson has served on the Parish Council for many years both as Chairman and Councillor. Ian has decided not to stand for re-election in May. Thank you for all your hard work and efforts on behalf of the Parish of Oxborough and the support and advice you have offered over my years on the Council. All the best for the future.

Mike Nairn, our local Breckland Council representative and current Chairman has also decided not to seek re-election. Thank you for your service and support to Oxborough. All the best for the future.

The saga of the old Beech Tree on the Green finally came to an end. The monolith might not be to everyone's liking however it was the practical solution to ensure support for the environment and wildlife. The hibernaculum is going to be reinstated in the autumn months hopefully. A very big thank you to David Hotchkin for his generous financial contribution ensuring the Parish Council did not have to enter into a long-term loan. Ian Monson also made a contribution which helped ease the financial burden of the project.

The Lime Tree on the pound has finally been pruned and looks to be in good shape for future years. Whilst on the subject of the Pound it was decided to cordon the area off in the extremely hot spell of weather. This did not meet with everyone's approval however action was taken to protect property, residents and the environment especially in light of the experience of the Ashill community.

The Queen's Platinum jubilee was celebrated on the Green through the efforts of the Village Hall Committee and support of residents and the Parish Council. We are hoping to replicate the event for the King's Coronation in May. Fabian Eagle our County Council representative kindly donated a swift tower to the Parish to encourage swifts to nest in the village and help support the dwindling number of birds. The Parish Council has yet to find a suitable location for the tower that suits everybody's wishes. If people have suggestions on a suitable location please let us know.

Appendix B

Village Hall Report: Cathy Warnock, Chair

1. TEAM VILLAGE HALL - a huge thank you to all our committee members, our volunteers, and our friends of the Village Hall. Each and every committee member has worked so hard either leading on specific issues such as creating a Safeguarding Policy, co-ordination of all lettings, baking bread and jam to fundraise for our events, maintaining excellent financial records and processes. Our volunteers who run the quiz, who bake and serve at CafeOx, who erect our marquee when needed, or who do the maintenance of the VH or maintain the lawn and grounds - we thank you all so much.

2 a) GOVERNANCE ISSUES - our historic Trust deed remains in place

b) Our PC and PPC reps provide succinct and interesting reports to each Committee and back to their representative bodies.

c) New procedures -

(i) Safeguarding policy and procedure completed and displayed

(ii) Healthy environment rules replace all references to Covid19

(iii) New Role Profile for our long serving cleaner reflecting point (ii) and issues arising from our Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)

(iv) FRA written by our Fire safety company based in Swaffham. Various priorities need to be discussed by the new committee (May 2023)

(v) Access Audit completed by Julie Wood. New Committee 2023 should revisit this.

NOTE: We are members of the NCF - Norfolk Community Foundation - and consult them on issues as necessary.

3. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE VILLAGE HALL -

(a) New baffles installed to deaden excessive noise

(b) New window to rear of hall replacing old 'bookcase' door. A tremendous amount of additional light plus a lovely view comes in through this window.

(c) New marquee - chic and high quality - used for first time

(d) New hot water cylinder replacing a very old leaking one

(e) New lawn and grassed area alongside new ramp

(f) CCTV installed outside of premises

4. FUND RAISING

(a) MacMillan fund raiser CafeOx raised £65

- (b) Breast Cancer Cafe and quiz raised £328
- (c) A fund raiser for Ukraine sent via British Red Cross raised £1,050
- (d) Jams, piccalilli, chutney and homemade bread and homemade celebration cards raised £464 towards the second Children's Magical Christmas event. Also, a Village Breakfast held and raised £272 towards this event
- (e) £2,000 received to run a Community Hot Spot for people who may not have regular warm homes and to prevent social isolation. Applied in 2022, took place 2023
- (f) CafeOx raises on average £50 per week net towards Village Hall funds. It is run and managed by a group of volunteers independent of the VH but from inception has donated all funds to the VH

5. EVENTS

- (a) Panto Aladdin 2 a great success as always. Raised £1,102 net. Proceeds shared Village Hall and St. John's Church
- (b) Open Gardens wonderful weather, very good turnout. Raised £912 net. Shared as above.
- (c) Village BBQ - great event using marquee and all our new garden furniture on beautiful new grass and area for children to play.
- (d) Village Breakfast held in November
- (e) Craft Fair run by VH - first one a great success
- (f) Children's Magical Christmas second annual event. 17 village children all received an array of gifts from our very own Santa Claus. Beautiful decorations, music, carols and food.

6. HALL HIRE

- (a) New regular hirers - Sally Powell Free Spirit Yoga. Both previous yoga classes have ceased hiring. Various one-off or ad hoc hirers.

- (b) Existing old ones - Dog Club, Aerobics, Table Tennis,

- (c) Latin Mass Society - a regular annual booking by the LMS has now been cancelled as the Committee felt that the damage and a lack of responsible supervision of their hire of the premises and the new garden was completely unacceptable. Fortunately, we were able to back up our position thanks to the newly installed CCTV cameras And last but not least our thanks to (in 2022)

Committee -Cathy Warnock (Chair), Julie Wood (Secretary), Mike Craig (Treasurer), Susan Hernandez, Eileen Stapleton, Elaine Willies

Regular volunteers - CafeOx bakers and servers - Anita Cutler, Susan Hernandez, Janet Freedman, Elaine Willies, Susie Madden, Denis Madden, Cathy Warnock, Julie Wood, Jess Stansfield, Hilary Gay

Quiz - Bar Pritchard, Mike and Julie Wood

Maintenance - Mike Wood

Grass cutting and grounds - David Stapleton

Defibrillator weekly check and ad hoc advice - Tristan Tomlinson

Marquee - Andrew LeClerc, Jeff Cutler, David Stapleton, Mike Wood, Simon Willies, Sam Hernandez, Andrea and Bob Shimwell, Bill Taylor and committee members.

Appendix C

PCC Report: Julie Wood, Churchwarden

The church of St John the Evangelist holds Sunday services once every four weeks. The Easter Sunday service this year was very well attended. There were more than fifty in the congregation including several children, which was lovely.

Work on the refurbishment of the Bedingfeld Chapel will begin this year. The interior of the Chapel and its monuments were damaged by water ingress following the theft of the lead roof. Trials of the various materials to be used in cleaning the monuments will be carried out by the Conservator in May. On successful completion of the trials the refurbishment work will then be completed.

Fundraising events at the church this year include the Flower Festival on the weekend of 17th and 18th June which is held as part of the Oxborough Open Gardens event.

As usual, there will be a competition for village children. This year they will be creating a picture of something found growing in their gardens or further afield - flowers, fruit or vegetables. These will be displayed in the Bedingfeld Chapel. There will also be organ recitals in the church, kindly given by Martyn Clarke.

Appendix D

SAM2 sign Report prepared by David Hotchkin (see pdf. Uploaded to the PC website)

Appendix E

Hewars Charities Report: Miles Griffin, Chair

The Hewars Trust was formed from money left under the Will of Thomas Hewar in 1619 and is for the benefit of the Church and of the poor in perpetuity, together with monies from the sale of the original School House which is available for educational purposes for children living in the village. Income comes from the letting of approx. 10

acres in Ferry Road and the shooting rights of the Poor Fen in Eastmoor Road. A small amount comes from the Yorkers Trust which is based in Cockley Cley.

The current Trustees are:

Charles Ashley

Miles Griffin - Chairman

Paul Smythe

Simon Willies - Hon Clerk

The Venerable Linda Lubbe - Ex Officio

The monies are invested (after taking professional advice) in Schroders Equity Income Trust for Charities and The Growth Trust for Charities. At a time when it is extremely difficult to invest for income the monies are still generating a small amount of income.

The monies are distributed to anyone in need in the village who either apply to one of the Trustees or whose need is brought to our attention by friends, neighbours etc. Help can be applied for at any time during the year for anyone in need or for educational purposes.

Since the last report the Hewars trustees have made a further payment for the maintenance of the village defibrillator, providing replacement consumables, in addition to the annual payment to St John's Church.

Additional measures were undertaken to communicate the availability of Hewars grants, with a leaflet drop to all households over and above the presence on the various village social media sites, however the Hewars trustees have again had no applications for grants this year.

The accounts for the year 2022 can be viewed on the Charity Commission website, with a link available on the Oxborough Voice website.

Appendix F

Speedwatch Report: Frankie Watkins, Coordinator

Formed in March 2016, our Speedwatch group is now 7 years old. We remain a small group of eight volunteers which includes three of the original members. We do now have an additional two new members awaiting police clearance and completion of their training.

We try to conduct monitoring sessions at least once a week, but this is dependent on weather and volunteer availability. We have been thwarted by the weather for much of the year so far. We continue to concentrate our efforts on the Swaffham/Stoke Ferry Road as this is the busiest road and where we believe we have the most effect in slowing traffic.

As the number of groups across the county has increased, there are now 101 compared with 84 in 2018, there have been some procedural changes; most of these changes have not affected our presence in the village. However, you will now see the teams operating by the Village Hall when the SAM sign is at the opposite end of the village near the Red House. This is to ensure that drivers are not monitored twice on the same small stretch of road.

Data from the SAM sign can be sent to the police and that data also feeds into intelligence gathering and deployment decision making, alongside our returns. The management of the SAM sign is not carried out by the Speedwatch group, but it is my understanding that data from our sign is not currently being sent in. Following today's Speedwatch coordinators' meeting I have clarification of the format in which the SAM data should be sent and to whom. I will pass this information on so that the data from our sign will hopefully be submitted in the future.

We have again enjoyed a post-Christmas lunch, this time in February at the Swan in Hilborough. It is even more difficult to coordinate eight diaries than to find an hour when three members of the team are free!

I would like to thank Paula Gilluley, our local community engagement officer, for her support and, as always, thank the group of volunteers for their continuing support, hard work and good humour.

Anyone interested in joining the group please either contact me, or come and have a chat when you see us out. A larger pool of volunteers would mean we could conduct more sessions, or each member would do fewer.

Appendix G

Oxborough History Group Report: Bar Pritchard (01366 328 730 / bargeoff@yahoo.com)

Firstly, a big thank you to the village hall for continuing to accommodate the archive.

Thanks also to Mike Craig (treasurer) and James Parry (author, historian) for their continuing support and advice, and everyone else, both long standing supporters and welcome newcomers to the village. Interest and involvement also increasingly come from organisations and individuals from further afield, including:

- The National Trust/Oxford Archaeology: Fieldwalking, collecting surface finds on farmed land the NT recently bought back for the Oxburgh estate - before restoring it to estate parkland. After all the washing and sorting of the finds we will receive a report.
- Brecks Fen Edge River projects (BFER) and the Breckland Society: Contributing to historic uses - both industrial and recreational - of our local rivers, the Wissey and Gadder.
- Combining events with other local history groups, Methwold and Stoke Ferry: Three, grant-funded, illustrated talks on the Prehistory of the Brecks. The 3rd and last in the series is next Monday, April 24 in Stoke Ferry. (Fliers available at the door.)

Along with internet enquiries these all bring ongoing interest, queries, information and stories, each like a piece of a jigsaw, building up pictures of times past for the village archive.

The financial position remains pretty much as last year, a little more, at £4,232.98). All in-year activity has been funded with income raised in the same period. Within this, the remaining Lottery Grant to cover publications remains ring-fenced. For this we have largely to thank Phyllis Clarke for the fascinating and informative talk and display she presented in November on patchwork, both recent and historic, based on her American heritage and ancestry - while raising £81; also, the grant-funded Prehistory talk we hosted in the VH in March which raised £108. Other events have included:

- A Platinum Jubilee display in June 2022: Historic newspapers featured past Coronations and Jubilees, alongside a sharing of personal memories and some wonderful memorabilia, quite nostalgic for some of us! (How fortunate that the worldwide celebrations marked the 70th anniversary of the Queen's Feb.1952 accession, and not her June 1953 Coronation, which she wasn't to survive.)
 - Unfortunately, a failed out-of-hours visit to Oxburgh Hall: Planned for October 2022 we were to be shown (by Lyndsey, Curator) a selection from the thousands of historic 'under-the-floorboards finds' during the recent extensive roof repairs. This was sadly cancelled as Lyndsey left, and apparently is still not replaced. Hopefully to be re-arranged.
 - Open Archives session, January 2023: This was very well supported, with a further one planned for May.
- The History of Oxborough book progresses, hopefully completed by this time next year. Meanwhile a 24-page visitor guide to St John's Church is ready to print. Once the copies are given to the church, their sale will hopefully help a little towards restoring their depleted funds, after the impending repair of the Bedingfeld Chantry Chapel and terracotta tombs, caused by water damage when lead was stolen from the roof.
- Lastly, public local access is being sought to a C4 Roman lead tank (possibly a font and/or ritual deposition), unearthed in Oxborough in 1985 and found to be in storage at Kings Lynn Museum. Despite considerable barriers, a small, first, positive step has been made with news just received from Norfolk Museum Service that our proposal - for it to come to Oxborough for a day - has at least been accepted for submission to the relevant panel for consideration, though with the warning that this might take a while.