

**Minutes of the annual parish meeting held on the 28th April
2021 via ZOOM commencing at 7:00pm**

Present

S Wilks (chair), W Millen, E Searle, J Lemmy, K Motion, C Johnson

1 Apologies

None received

2 Minutes of previous meeting and issues arising

The previous minutes (20th May 2020) were read and signed as a true record of the meeting

3 Chairman's report

Once again I am reading this report from home as the Covid 19 virus still runs its course. All our elderly residents have now had at least the first dose of the Covid vaccine and infection rates have decreased dramatically, but we are not out of the woods yet. We still have to be cautious and hope that life can get back to some kind of normality very soon. Looking at infection rates around the world it seems we are going to be living with the effects of the virus for a long time to come. The Parish Council has adapted over the course of this year by holding all meetings via Zoom which disadvantages those who don't have the technology or don't want to use it. We hope to be back to face to face meetings in May. Indeed we have been advised that Zoom meetings will then be illegal for parish councils.

Since this time last year we have coped with lock downs, the school and church being closed, no in person group activities in our community spaces, no informal coffee mornings in friends' houses, no bonfire night fireworks. We have had to get used to wearing masks and sanitising wherever we go. The Village Pantry proved a welcome addition for those struggling to buy supplies. I would like to thank Jane Jones, Steph Beckett and all those who helped run it out of the village hall and indeed all those who helped out friends and neighbours through what proved to be at times long and tedious weeks. I think I can safely say that support was there for anyone who needed it. Small gifts and bunches of flowers were distributed by the W.I. and others to cheer people up and compensate in part for the absence of the normal village celebrations and get-togethers; phone calls were made to alleviate loneliness. The War Memorial was beautifully decorated with poppies and we managed to have a socially distanced service on Remembrance Sunday. We had to do without our normal Christmas

celebrations but we adapted the annual Advent Calendar windows event and compensated for not having the get-together around the tree on Hall Hill by encouraging people to put Christmas trees outside their houses. Hall Hill looked wonderful with the knitted winter wonderland scenes kindly provided by the Knit and Natter group and other village knitters. People have continued to put out displays for various calendar dates to cheer us up as we walk around the village.

On December 23rd the village was hit by severe flooding following heavy rain. Ten houses in the village were inundated as well as the doctors' surgery, village hall and Harper's Court. We had very little warning so it was difficult to react quickly to the situation but we were able to use items from the flood store and close the roads. In spite of Covid, willing volunteers helped get residents from Harper's Court out of their flats and find alternative accommodation. Once again our community rose to the challenge and coped magnificently with the devastating situation. A "Flood Fund" raised more than £5,000 for those affected by the flooding particularly in Harper's Court. The doctors' surgery staff managed to keep dispensing prescriptions in spite of the flood damage. This was probably the worst flooding the village has ever experienced with damage caused to the footbridge along Church Walk and a large tree falling from the Manor House gardens across the path. We look forward to the flood report and to see if there is anything that can be done by way of flood alleviation. We have learned a lot from the experience and we shall continue to work on our emergency plan. The Parish Council is a member of the Partnership Approach to Catchment Area Management group looking at the Harper's Brook catchment area as a whole and ways of managing water runoff. New developments in Corby, particularly on the Cowthick plantation, have meant changes to the way runoff is managed. We are hoping that developers will get involved in going over and above what they are statutorily obliged to do with regards to water management on their properties.

The Parish Council instigated a "Village Tidy Up" day in April when flood debris was collected by willing volunteers and people responded by sprucing up their own patches. We also reseeded some of the grass verges. Thank you to all those who took part.

Last year saw the installation of three wooden planters which have greatly enhanced the look of the village. Thanks to Steph Beckett, Glenda Stephen and friends for maintaining them so beautifully. We have a new solar speed sign on Stanion Road which is working well and encouraging cars to slow down as they come into the village.

Following a change of energy supplier we have gone "green". The MUGA has been a very successful addition to the Meadow and it has been joined by some smart new cricket nets.

Looking ahead we shall be having 35 new houses in the village very soon. Working with Grace Homes we have been able to come up with a scheme that is probably the best we can achieve on the Stanion Road site. Other planning applications have proved challenging and I would like to thank Ken Motion for chairing the planning committee so well for us. In the end the parish council is just a consultee but we have listened to local residents and groups and tried to represent their views.

We are hoping to be able to come up with a parking scheme outside the school which will provide much needed additional parking and enhance the area. We can then seek funding for the project.

We continue to get the old lighting equipment removed. Our new lighting has proved popular and much cheaper to run.

We are starting to see the effects of Ash Die-back in the village. There are many ash trees in the area and the parish council should perhaps give some thought to how these can be replaced.

We are now part of North Northamptonshire, the new unitary authority. Elections take place next month to fill seats. It will be interesting to see if the new set up impacts us positively or negatively - or not at all. It may certainly be easier to have all services under one authority. With regard to the Parish Council we shall not be having an election but I am pleased to report that we have a full complement of councillors.

This is my final report as chair of Brigstock Parish Council. Thank you to my fellow councillors for supporting me so well over the years. I think we have quite a few achievements of which we can be proud. A particular thank you, as always, to our clerk Nigel Searle who is such an asset to the parish council. I have enjoyed working with him over the years. We live in a truly supportive community which has proved resilient in the face of various emergencies because many people have been willing to contribute to the well being of the village as a whole and making this such a lovely place to live.

4 Public Forum

No issues reported by the public

5 Any Other Business

None

6. Date of next meeting

April 2022

Meeting closed at 7:15