

SOUTH CREAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Memorial Pavilion on Wednesday 10th May, 2023, at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors P Abbey (Chair, Parish Council), T Allen, J Amor, S Baldwin, R Chantree, P Collins, L Goodall, B Rosen, B Sexton, the Clerk, Sarah Harvey and four parishioners.

The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor P Abbey.

1. The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.
2. **Declarations of Interest by Councillors:** None.
3. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 11th, 2022, copies of which had been circulated were approved and signed by the Chair.
4. **Chairman's Annual Report**
Councillor P Abbey presented the annual report on behalf of the Parish Council.

'We have two annual meetings this evening, which are:

This meeting, The Annual Parish Meeting, which is a meeting of the people of the Parish (peoples vote). The meeting acts as an annual democratic point of communication enabling your Parish Council to explain what they have been doing during the last year and to provide an opportunity for you to have your say on anything you consider important; The meeting to follow, the Annual Parish Council Meeting, is a meeting of the elected or co-opted Parish Councillors at the start of which the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected (Councillors vote). Both meetings are organised by our Parish Clerk, Sarah Harvey.

Since May 2022, the ongoing hard work provided by your Parish Council has ensured that South Creake is kept at its best, by continually monitoring our areas of responsibility and ensuring that Parish public funds are managed and prudently used to best effect.

Finance

Parish finances were carefully recorded by Sarah Harvey (in her role as our Responsible Financial Officer) and are reviewed at every Parish Council meeting. Expenditure for 2022/23 was £28,811.13 Income, including the precept set at £17,728.50 was £32,095.57. Once approved by the following Parish Council meeting, the accounts will be available on the village website. This year the precept application was set at £16,336.

Allotments

The two allotment sites at Back Street and Leicester Road continue to be generally well used and maintained We completed the program of renewing the allotment signage to be clearer regarding access. This year has seen continued development of the fruit orchard project at the Back Street site with the 60 or so trees all blossoming.

The Parish Council also obtained trees through the Norfolk County Council 'Million Trees for Norfolk' campaign. Planted on the village green (or meadow if you prefer), the 10 fruit trees near the Memorial Pavilion have also blossomed but the small copse of 70 trees planted to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee have not done too well due to the lengthy hot period last summer.

Unfortunately, we have also lost several mature trees near the adult gym and will have to plan for their removal and replacement.

Flood and infrastructure

Although we have not had a repeat of the flooding experienced in 2021 and by all accounts the aquifer is fairly low (hence all the ponds around here being dry), I have very recently been contacted by the Water Management Alliance (part of the Internal Drainage Board) as the NCC has now approved funding for the River Burn total management study. They would still like help from all the Parish Councils along the River.

Highways

Great news that the Traffic Regulation Order, for the speed limits to be changed, has now been completed with 30mph all through the village and 50mph through Creake Common, also with a reduction to 50mph between South & North Creake.

Open Spaces

Both BT Kiosks were repainted and a library, which is proving popular, installed near the bus shelter. As part of the paint task; Johnson's Bridge was also repainted as was the goal posts and some of the children's play equipment.

The war memorial was cleaned to look splendid just prior to our Remembrance Service and is always a stunning sight when surrounded by the spring daffodils.

As always, the Christmas lights team worked hard to set up an amazing sight for our annual informal competition with North Creake. Many complimentary comments were justifiably received.

Although we don't currently have a village football team, we have hosted Colkirk Football Club this season and it's good to see the pitch continuing to be used, although you might have noticed the old changing rooms are now consigned to history. Their manager said "Colkirk FC has enjoyed its best season for many years and it has worked well being able to use the excellent facilities and would be delighted to continue with the same arrangement for next season".

I should also mention the popularity of the Memorial Pavillion, Tennis Club and Bowls Club; and offer our thanks to all those who provide those excellent facilities.

Ostrich Inn

No village is complete without its pub, and we are still fortunate to have the Ostrich open. It continues to evolve with bringing back the booths and bar stools and theme nights alongside their regular menus. I know they would prefer to be busier more often, but places do seem either busy or slow around this area, no doubt an impact of the cost of living situation.

Play Area

The play area and adult gym provide exercise opportunity for young and old alike and both have recently passed the annual inspection. We are planning to renovate the children's play area and are now applying for grants to help.

River Burn

The Norfolk Rivers Trust constructed their 'Refugia' alongside the River Burn and this has now been filled and small population of village ducks have already made it home.

Last years heat wave seemed to have a natural effect on reducing the population of ducks around the village green. However, the information signs are now available for placement alongside the river, to promote good practice regarding the feeding of fowl and with additional information regarding the environment and how to help protect our rare chalk river.

And to end

A repeat of my public vote of thanks to all involved with our Parish Council for helping me get through this year.'

5. To receive other reports from community representatives and organisations

5.1 **County Councillor's Report:** It was noted no report had been received from the County Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh.

5.2 **Borough Councillor's Report:** Borough Councillor C Morley provided a report in his absence to be read on his behalf.

'Current Position following recent elections.

Because no party has a majority the leaders of the elected members are discussing a way forward with the chief executive. The Independents, Lib Dems and Greens have formed a partnership (although, unlike members of political parties, Independents vote as they wish). Labour are still

considering and the Conservatives are trying to persuade people to join them. Needs to be sorted this week.

Through the year.

It has been a difficult year as working got back to nearer normality post covid. However, inflation, from whatever source, has placed many households in very difficult circumstances. For example, there are just over 71,000 dwellings which attract council tax and around 12,000 of these have discounts or exemptions, which shows the need or level of extra support that is needed for many people in the Borough.

There has been a range of grants to help with energy etc but the evidence in the change in shopping and need for food banks shows the degree of help needed.

Pressure was also put on our finances by, amongst other aspects, energy inflation, reduced visitors to Kings Lynn and the agreed wage awards being higher than the amount by which we could raise tax. Therefore, looking forward and to keep council tax as low as possible, we need either more business rates or more households to improve their financial position. Both are unlikely and as a result, our forecasts show a black hole in the accounts in 3 years' time. This situation also highlights that we need more than a fair deal if Devolution goes ahead and we are dependant upon funds from an elected Mayor in Norwich. We will have to get on board of the negotiations and stand our corner.

Although we have been awarded £25m for projects in Kings Lynn and via the County's levelling up money, £24m for road improvements to the Southgate entrance into the Town, these projects consume a large proportion of staff time and consultant fees. Again putting pressure on the budget.

We failed on a bid for money to replace Hunstanton Oasis at considerable time and energy from County and Borough officers. I hope this form of "bidding war" stops with Devolution or a change of or within, Government. We are going to spend a lot of money on these projects over the next 3 years and there are many reservations about the value they will bring. Not least the Lottery Heritage Fund who thought our Guildhall Project was too ambitious. The next Council Administration may have to scale some of these back, or at the least, keep a tight hold over the works and payments. In fact, there is much work to do in the Council over getting things right, first time, and control.

On a lighter note, Coronation coins are to be given to all Nursery and Junior school children. Hopefully, they will be kept alongside their late Queen's Platinum Jubilee coin for future generations.

Thanks to all who voted for me but of course, I will represent all in the Ward equally.'

5.3 Other Reports

5.3.1 South Creake Charities

A report was read on behalf of Mrs S Hart (Clerk, South Creake Charities).

'During the last year the Isaac Lane Fuel Charity made a fuel allocation of £100 to 24 eligible households, distributed prior to Christmas. The Charity was also fortunate in receiving additional monies throughout the year from the Norfolk Community Foundation, i.e., £1,250, £2,550 and £1,250. This was delivered to the households who already received the annual fuel payments from the Charity.

The Dorothy Woodhouse Trust has made educational grants to two University students. In total £1200 has been awarded to help towards their expenses. An additional payment of £349 was given to a College student on application to purchase a new laptop. Individuals may apply in each academic year of their studies. The South Creake Charities have money available in an educational trust for College, apprenticeships or university education, as well as grants to assist younger children with the cost of educational projects or field trips. The applicant must reside in South Creake. Applicants are asked to contact the Clerk and request an application form, giving details of their course, project or educational trip. Receipts are also requested.

A grant of £750 was also awarded to South Creake Tennis Club to help towards the cost of tennis coaching sessions for the children of the village by a professional L.T.A Tennis Coach. In the past the coaching sessions have proved popular and beneficial to the children of South Creake.

The balances at the bank as at January 2023 were South Creake Joint Charities £9,462 and South Creake Dorothy Woodhouse Charity £4,783.

The Trustees meet twice a year and normally in the months of June and November.

This report was prepared by the Clerk (Sue Hart) on behalf of the Trustees.
Father Clive Wylie (Chairman), Sara Freakley (Vice-Chairperson), Barbara Allen, Lorna Goodall, Amanda Mendham, Pete Abbey'

5.3.2 Burnham Market Area Community Car Scheme: no report had been received.

5.3.3 Memorial Pavilion Report:

Mr P Hart (Secretary) of the South Creake War Memorial Institute Committee presented a report on behalf of the Memorial Pavilion.

'The Trustees of the South Creake Memorial Pavilion can report that the Pavilion has been well used after a very difficult period. Private bookings have increased plus the regular activities have expanded.

The monthly Coffee Mornings, Quiz and Bingo nights have been well attended, attracting members from South Creake and other communities and raising valuable funds for the running of the Pavilion. The coffee morning raffles are used to raise monies for various charities, collectively £1,434 was raised last year for recipients including Night Shelter at King's Lynn, Wells RNLi, Catch and Treat Strays, East Anglia Air Ambulance, Ukraine Appeal, Prostate Cancer, E.P Youth, Fakenham Blind and Partially Sighted, R.B.L Poppy Appeal and Salvation Army.

The MacMillan coffee morning and New Year's Eve Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal were held as separate entities. These were well organised by Jackie Amor, Rachel Dawson and lots of willing volunteers. Over £1500 and £645 were raised respectively. The Events Committee organised a most enjoyable Queen's Platinum Jubilee party in June 2022. The Christmas lights at the Pavilion lit up the village and we are very grateful to Nigel, Hazel, Peanut and Ray for providing their expertise.

Funding was obtained to allow purchase of three table tennis tables and equipment. The club is successfully run by Paul Collins on a Thursday evening offering the facilities to all age groups.

We are pleased to report that the football team has been reformed and uses the Pavilion on a regular basis.

The Trustees kindly allowed the Pavilion to operate a warm hub in the colder months and this was run by volunteers on a Thursday afternoon, transporting and offering a social afternoon with free refreshments. Funding was received from the Norfolk Community Foundation, and this was then developed into soup lunches purchased from Creative Home and Garden Café. The Coastal Community Supermarket now operates on a fortnightly basis to the public and free refreshments are offered by volunteers on the same day.

To aid our Marketing and Publicity a new website and booking system has been developed and this investment we are sure will pay dividends, helping to promote the excellent facilities the Pavilion has to offer.

The Trustees and band of volunteers work very hard in providing such an important asset to the village and local community.

Our financial situation remains satisfactory with our year end; Community Account at £26,088. Business Account at £6,308 and Business Bond at £50,000.'

5.3.4 South Creake Tennis Club

Mr M Hankin (Secretary) of the South Creake Tennis Club presented a report on behalf of the Committee.

'At the end of the season last year the club had 258 members spread across 91 households, a 50% increase on the previous year.

The season also saw record court usage by both members and visitors, and high numbers of children attending our popular Saturday coaching sessions, ranging in age from 4 to 16. As a club we aim to be as inclusive as possible and we thank South Creake Charities for their generous grant which meant that children from South Creake could attend, for free, the coaching sessions run by either a LTA Level 3 or Level 2 coach. The club also ensured that costs for all other children were kept at a minimum. Rackets were available for all ages thanks to a grant facilitated by Cllr Chris Morley of West Norfolk Borough Council.

For adults, the weekly club nights on Wednesday evenings were well attended and enjoyed by all.

At the beginning of 2022 we set ourselves the ambitious goal of renewing the club's aged fencing and gates. We reached our target by the end of the year thanks to grants from South Creake Parish Council, Jack's Lane Windfarm, the Community Infrastructure Levy Fund (CIL), the Borough Council small grants scheme; our commercial sponsors Smith and Pinching, The Grove Veterinary Hospital and Sowerby's; and a successful fundraising event in partnership with Archangel Distillers. The work was duly completed this February.

We are pleased to announce that Smith & Pinching and The Grove Veterinary Hospital have renewed their sponsorship with us for 2023. We also welcome a new sponsor, Hayes & Storr Solicitors. We are proud to be working with these well-known local businesses and thank them for their support.

Last year brought other challenges, most notably the high temperatures and drought which severely affected the playing surface towards the end of the season, despite assiduous manual watering by committee members and volunteers, working either very early in the morning or at sunset.

With a similar drought in 2018 and a prolonged dry spell in 2020, it has become apparent that climate change is now a real threat to sports of all kinds played on grass in this country. Luckily our friends and neighbours at South Creake Bowls Club came to the rescue with the suggestion that we could link into their powerful and sophisticated irrigation system. This works automatically overnight, keeping water usage to a minimum and removing the need for volunteers to turn out at unsocial hours. Further grant funding was applied for, and we also benefited from several generous donations from club members. Once again we reached our target, and the system was successfully installed this April by Panks of Norwich, using an ingenious mole plough which allowed pipes to be laid underground with very little disturbance to the grass.

We would like to thank the Bowls Club for their generosity in providing not only access to their pumping system but also expert advice on turf maintenance over recent years.

Our two courts were due to open at the end of April, but this year we faced the opposite problem to last year: too much water! Happily the weather turned dry and warm last week, allowing our final preparations to take place, and the courts are now open for what we hope will be a busy and enjoyable grass tennis season.'

6. Parishioners Questions: None.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.35pm.

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Chairman