

# PASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Martin K Campbell, Well Cottage, High Street, Southrepps, Norwich NR11 8AH  
Telephone: 01263 834551 E-mail: nnparishes@tiscali.co.uk

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5th May 2016 in the Church, Paston

Present: N Bardswell, P Clabon, C Emberson, D McKeogh, E Purdy (Chairman); Cllr B Smith (NNDC), two MODP officers and 15 members of the public.

1. Mrs E Purdy welcomed all those present with apologies received from L Nicholson, Mr R Knee.
2. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 14th 2015 were taken as read.
3. Chairman's report –

First I would like to extend a warm welcome to our two new members of the Parish Council and thank all of you for your hard work during the year. Three of our councillors have resigned – Mike Dawson, Brian Reynolds and Steve Puncher and I thank them for all they did for the village over many years. 'If a job needed doing – ask Mike and Brian', and Steve and the Clabons have kept the footpath to Mundesley cleared and in good order. Among the duties of the Parish Council is responsibility for the provision and maintenance of the playground, payment for street lighting, emptying of dog bins. We liaise regularly with NCC on highways and footpaths issues. By careful management we have yet again managed to maintain our lower precept entitling us to a government grant.

With regard to the provision of affordable housing in the village we are still in negotiations with NNDC about the development of the council land off Bears Road for a small number of 'exception' affordable houses for people with a connection to Paston, but little progress has been made on this front. However, one of the alms houses has become vacant and is being refurbished for rent to a Paston pensioner. Two new trustees have been appointed to the alms house charity following the resignation of Christine Damen and Lucy Care and I thank them for all they have done.

The inevitability of coastal erosion is a matter of great concern. Parish Councillors have attended meetings liaising with NNDC and the gas companies regarding coastal protection measures. This will also affect the coastal path route planning. Ten planning applications have been reviewed and commented on. 'The Wall' in Bears Road has been of particular concern but we seem unable to move the matter forward with the NNDC. Nick Bardswell kindly undertook to establish if two footpaths could be formally registered.

The Parish Council is represented on NN Community Transport, the Great Barn Bat Project, Gas Site Liaison Committee, Paston Heritage Society and The Paston Community Project Steering Committee. We also make a donation to North Walsham CAB. The Paston Community Project steering group has made much progress with plans to provide a community meeting place in the church which would involve building a small extension to the north side of the church for meetings and providing kitchen and toilet facilities.

The accounts are audited by Warwick Slater whom I would like to thank for his services.

We are very grateful to our councillors and other volunteers for taking on these responsibilities as well as to our local councillors Barry Smith and Wyndham Northam. Very special thanks to our Parish Clerk, Martin Campbell, who does his job with such dedication and helps the parish council so much.

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## 4. Other reports:

4.1 Charities - Pat Dawson reported that as was stated last year, two of the new Trustees had taken over in April, due to illness of a retiring trustee. The third new trustee, Nicky Emberson, took over on the due date of 14<sup>th</sup> May. Together with Jonathan Care, the only existing Trustee, they formed the new group. At our first meeting we established our roles. Some of the transfer of paperwork and meetings with both Christine Damen and Jan Francis happened quite soon, as Jan was due to go on holiday. There are still some outstanding archives to be transferred, which we hope to organise as soon as possible. The responsibility for notifying people about the change of Trustees - like the Charity Commissioners, the Almshouse Association etc. was done by the new Trustees, not the retiring ones. It was felt that this should not be the case next time anyone wishes to resign. For much of the year, Jan has kept receiving post from various sources and having to bring it to Pat. I think we have now re-routed all correspondence correctly. Wherever possible, all bills are now paid by direct debit. There was a long delay in getting the bank signatories changed over. This led to the retiring trustees frequently being required to sign the cheques still. We apologise to them for this, but it was out of our control, and we just had to follow bank procedures, and tolerate bank mistakes. The building project at No 2 should have been in its final stages of completion, but due to extra works having been found as the project progressed, there was still work to be completed. The builders did not turn up every day, so this added to the time. When it was judged to be completed by the builder, (Ryan Davis), then, Pat Dawson and Nicky Emberson made an inspection of the premises. A few things were noted as not done or not finished and these were duly noted, and completed by Ryan himself. There was a great deal of pressure from Ryan to pay him immediately, the final amount - which had been kept back, pending satisfactory completion of the whole project. (approx £10,700). As Nicky was away, it was explained to him that payment must wait for her return. This was subsequently a couple of days later than expected, and Ryan came every day to see if his cheque was ready. We have since learned that it is normal practice for the final payment to be kept back for a longer period (eg two months), to enable any faults, or omissions, which come to light, to be put to rights by the builder. This would have enabled the cost of the subsequent necessary work being deducted from the kept back amount. Instead of which, we are still experiencing difficulty with this. At this point, we were actively seeking the new resident for No2. The retiring Trustees had drawn up a list, as enquiries came in. There were a total of seven applicants, including one couple. Only two of them had any links to Paston. It was decided to send both of these application forms. Subsequently, the couple from Derbyshire withdrew, because they felt they didn't fit the criteria. That left just Melanie Bossom, who was only 50. However, she was homeless, and had lived in Paston in the past, and as she had provided the required 3 letters of reference, it was decided to offer her the vacant Almshouse.

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The Valuation officer came on 8<sup>th</sup> May, and looked at both almshouses, accompanied by Trustee Peter Gallon. His advice was to be taken about the setting of fair rents for each dwelling. These were to be put up in two stages – in July 2015 and July 2016. Both residents were given notification and found the increases satisfactory. The turf for the front lawn at No2 was laid in June. We had a letter from Pauline Hyland about the state of the lawn and areas around No 1 Almshouse. It had not been returned to its former condition by the builder. We apologised and reached an agreement. Mrs Baldwin's new fence, plus access to the rear by a newly re-surfaced pathway, were installed. This work was carried out by a firm called Secret Gardens. They also put up a new fence at the edge of the upper rear lawn area. There were not sufficient funds to finish off the rear lawn, nor parking area. This will be done once we have the money. In July, there was an objection from some villagers as to the advertising and choosing of the new tenant. This was resolved by advertising again, to include those aged 50, and above. There were no more applicants, so Melanie Bossom was given the tenancy. Also in July, we had some prolonged sudden downpours, which resulted in THE KITCHEN, HALLWAY AND PART OF THE LIVING ROOM BEING FLOODED. Investigation by Peter Gallon and Chris Emberson revealed faulty drainage problems, which should not have been installed as they were. Ryan Davies, the builder, subsequently came to see, and along with PG and CE, made an inspection of the drains and flood damage, and other outstanding work and agreed to complete it all. We are still awaiting his arrival, to complete the last few requirements. (Details of all the work needing completing not given today, but will be forwarded to Parish Council.) There has been slow progress with the sale of the land adjacent to the Almshouses but it is in the final stages of payment now. This has been under the guidance of Jonathan Care. He is also dealing with the new tenant /or/ the sale of the Townlands field, which belongs to the Charity. Chris Payne (current tenant) did not see fit to pay the whole of the amount asked for in Jan's letter of February 2015. He had received a year's notice that there would be a rent increase in 2015. This is still to be finalised satisfactorily to the Trustees. We have organised to change the name of the Charity to: Sir William Paston Charity - so now everything has the same name: Bank account; at the Charity Commission; at the Almshouse Association, thus making everything easier and less complicated. Both residents seem happy with their homes, each other, and we hope their Trustees. The second increase in rent is due in July 2016.

4.2 Paston Heritage Society - no report

4.3 Paston Community Project/ Paston PCC - Nick Bardswell reported that this year (2015/16) after an eventful few years we have paused, firming up plans for what to do next and how to fund it. Making it a good time to review what we've achieved and our objectives. Six years ago worship at Paston was set to finish. The church council the PCC consisted of three frail octogenarians who were doing the best but struggling. At the same time it was recognised that Paston with its historic connections was much too important a church to be allowed to close. It also emerged following

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various surveys that the building was in danger of some catastrophic structural collapses (though nobody was then aware how imminent the danger was), and the damp was slowly destroying the historic wall paintings. Various plans and solutions were discussed and proposed. Finally a new church council set itself up adding two new Paston resident members and two from other villages. In particular Philip Burton, now retired as Council Chief Executive agreed to come on board and who has been able to give massive help.

The reconstituted PCC kept worship going and raised the necessary £200,000 or so to carry out the works to hold the building together, reduced the damp so as to preserve the wall paintings and to stabilise them till we could raise the funds for a full restoration. Having spent that amount of public, charitable and donation money the right thing to do was clearly to extend the church's potential use by organisations such as the Paston Heritage Society, who in fact already hold events there as best as they can – the last being in January.

A committee was formed with members of church council, parish council and heritage society to plan what to do. After looking at many options we have now gone firm on plans to put in water, toilets and kitchen, demolish the current vestry and take out some of the rear pews. The only problem is that having costed all we want to do it comes out to about £120,000 which we'd need to raise. We are now looking at what we can leave out, and as to paying for what remains, we're meeting with a fund raising advisor in a couple of weeks time.

Worship is continuing if slightly spasmodically. There is however a great difference between one or two services a month and none at all. Our small but loyal congregation sometimes gets into double figures and we get people from other villages. This last autumn we welcomed our new Group Rector Andrew Jones and his family. He has been looking at all aspects of the way the Trunch group runs itself and is gradually introducing changes. He and we are also having to contend with having only one ordained priest between 7 churches that's Andrew and we are now dependent on unpaid readers and worship assistants for having regular service. We have one Communion Service a month, which requires an ordained priest.

This year we have embarked on, which won't cost huge amounts of money, is our churchyard. It's now generally realised that churchyards provide a valuable haven for wildlife and plants. We have a management plan drawn up for us and supervised by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust for making it more wildlife friendly and encouraging wildflowers.

A particular plan we have is to turn the corner by the lych gate into a place to sit surrounded by herbs (offered by Pat Dawson whose idea it was too) and place there any plaques commemorating people whose cremated remains are in the churchyard. As part of this programme we tagged on to our harvest festival in October a general grass raking session as advised by NWT, followed by Harvest Festival service and food. It was particularly lovely seeing the children all having such fun. And we do hope the churchyard project will be something that people who live in Paston will want to join in with, whether or not they ever attend a church service. It's where people want to be married, buried and occasionally celebrate occasions. And many Paston people seem to be unaware of what a special place they have in their village and hopefully will get to know it better.

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4.4 Policing matters - MOD - an officer introduced himself and reported on on-going exercises and their wish to ensure their activities have minimum impact on the community.

4.5 Paston Great Barn - no report

4.6 NNCT - the Clerk advised that the main focus of attention at present was to find new premises for the office and vehicles, which provide an ever extending service across NE Norfolk including County contacts for Dial-a-ride and school services.

4.8 NNDC - Cllr B Smith touched on the new 'Mayor' idea for Suffolk Norfolk and Cambridgeshire with its impact on N Norfolk. The Big Society fund is to continue and he was active regarding the litter issue along the coastline.

4.9 NCC - no report.

5. Open meeting – the first item raised was concerning the planning process which allowed the development at the Holiday Camp and Cllr BS was encouraged to ensure NNDC monitored the conditions placed on development there. Flytipping was seen as a regular problem and some villagers had been very caring by collecting rubbish which had been strewn around. The playground's future was aired extensively and there was a strong feeling, supported by a petition, that the play equipment should remain and be upgraded when possible. Some villagers undertook to see if a group could be formed to facilitate this. The history of the village hall was explained and the need to have a community centre/meeting place appreciated by all. The meeting closed at 20.20.

Signed .....

Chairman

Date ..... July 2016