Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 9th May 2019 in the Church, Paston

Present: N Bardswell, (Chairman), M Brett, B Tumber, D McKeough, J Manricks

 and 2 members of the public.

1. Mr N Bardswell welcomed all those present with apologies received from C Emberson.

2. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 3rd 2018 were taken as read.

3. Chairman’s report -

This report reviews the year to May 2019 and some of the things with which the Parish Council has been dealing.

Highways - Some additional road signs have been put up by the District Council in Pond Road and Chapel Road effectively to tell visitors and people making deliveries when they have not

yet arrived in Bears Road.

“Affordable Housing” - The Parish Council’s policy continues to be that we would like more housing, and that it at least some of any new development should be “affordable housing”

with co ownership or restricted rent. The two problems remain - the District Council’s policy of only allowing development around towns and larger villages, and the shortage of suitable

and accessible sites.

Planning applications - have been looked at and commented on. Though no new applications have been submitted by the Holiday Village that continues to be a focus. Development to

towards the cliff top is now limited to movable “lodges” rather than brick built units due to coastal erosion, and development overall is limited Coastal protection. The “sandscaping” scheme is now getting under way by which a stretch

of beach alongside the gas terminal and either side is to have 2 million cubic metres of sand deposited up to a height of 7 metres. The sand will stretch from Walcott north west to just short of the holiday village, gradually reducing. When the new outfall from the terminal is completed the sand depositing will start – expected June.

Footpaths - The Parish Council has given support and provided evidence for an application to the County Council for registration of Sandy Lane and Yarmouth Way on the “definitive map”– these run from Stow Hill west to Knapton Road and east past the Holiday Village to the cliff top. The application is to register the paths as used on foot, horseback and bicycle (-no motor-powered vehicles). This has been with the council for some time due we are told to a surge of applications as the cut off date approaches.

The Sir William Paston Charity - for the benefit of poor people in Paston, runs the alms-houses. Cris Emberson a Parish Councillor is one of the trustees who have brought the charity’s finances under control from the rocky state they were in two to three years ago.

The Church - The village steering group’s project to widen use of the church for events particularly educational the village steering group’s project is now hopefully about to be implemented. It involve slaying on water, install kitchen and toilet, removing some of the rear pews to create an open space, and removing the breeze block vestry to open up the north door. The sale of the former village hall site has provided much of the funds that will be needed and the application is now with the Diocese for formal permission to proceed. The new memorial garden is now in place and ready to take plaques and ashes.

The Playground - As everyone will know th spectacular new equipment is now installed, at a cost of around £40,000 and the playground was opened formally last summer. It has been a great success. Word has been getting round and families are visiting from neighbouring villages, from as far afield as Southrepps. A great achievement by the playground committee led by Parish Councillors Maggie Brett and Denise McKeough. The next possible addition is a shelter or pavilion.

The Pond - has been cleared of undergrowth and now looks more like it traditionally has in old photographs – thanks are due to its owner Pip Clabon and his team.

The Parish council website - is now required by Law to enable everyone to read Parish Council meeting dates, minutes, reports and accounts. As we have to have it anyway it can also serve to give news and comment on things of concern and interest to Paston residents. The Council have resolved to move on from the present outdated website hosted by the Norfolk Association of Local Councils to a more modern more accessible website. Contributions are always welcome.

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4. Other reports: 4.1 SWP Charities - one almshouse is now vacant and may have roof repairs prior to being re-let.

 4.2 Paston Heritage Society - no report

 4.3 Paston Community Project – as Chairman’s report

 4.4 Paston PCC – as Chairman’s report

 4.5 Policing matters - no reports

 4.6 NNDC – no report

 4.7 NCC – from Ed Maxfield

NNDC LOCAL PLAN - Congratulations to Clive Stockton your new District Councillor. I am sure the new Local Plan for North Norfolk will be taking up a lot of his time over the coming months. The County Council has a role in planning issues only as a consultee - particularly relating to the impact on Highways and school places. I have been asked to submit any comments I have about the draft District Plan by 24th May: the County Council will then submit a ‘corporate response’ to the plan. I am very happy to include any points you would like to make in my comments to the County Council.

THE COUNTY COUNCIL’S NEW ‘CABINET STRUCTURE’ - I am writing this immediately after the County Council’s AGM where the new ‘Cabinet’ was confirmed. I have mentioned the move from a committee system to a cabinet system at previous meetings but in a nutshell it means that the senior politicians making up the cabinet (all from the majority Conservative group) will make decisions about policy and councillors will have the chance to scrutinise those decisions through a new set of committees (up to now, the committees themselves debated and agreed the policies.) There are arguments for and against the new system and I’m not going to go over them again: what really matters is that nothing really changes in how you can raise issues that concern you: if you have any concerns about any aspect of the County Council’s work I would be very happy to take them up on your behalf. After two years on the Children’s Services committee - a job I am hugely grateful to have had - I have decided not to sit on any of the major new committees.

CLIMATE CHANGE - There was a debate at today’s Council meeting (and a number of questions to the leader) about the County’s role in tackling climate change. The issue is pushing itself up the political agenda and it’s likely that we will be discussing the issue a number of times over the next two years in relation to decisions the Council makes. The Council also adopted a ‘vision document’ to guide its policies over the next two years at the meeting today and one of the points made in the debate was how little it talked about public transport: a really important service in its own right of course but also an important part of an environmentally sustainable future.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS - The government has launched a review of how special education needs and disability (SEND) services are funded. There’s a real crisis looming in funding for SEND - it’s predicted that there will be a £3.1 billion short fall in funding for Children’s Services overall by 2025 and SEND services make up a huge part of the overall Children’s Services budget. At today’s AGM I asked the Council leader if he will support parents who are campaigning to get the government to increase SEND funding. I’d be happy to provide any additional information about the campaign if any members of the Parish Council or community are interested.

COUNCILLORS’ EXPENSES - At today’s Council meeting we also debated the latest recommendation from the independent panel that looks at Councillors’ expenses. The panel recommended that councillors don’t get another increase in allowances at this time - this was accepted by councillors. I am sure the issue will be debated again soon because the leader of the Council has not ruled out looking at who gets additional allowances under the new cabinet system.

HIGHWAYS ALLOWANCE - With the £6,000 local highways fund topped up again for this financial year I am always on the look out for small highways projects locally that could be paid for from the fund. If you have any suggestions, just let me know.

5. Open meeting - with no further business the meeting closed at 19.20 .-

 Signed .................................................. Chairman Date .......... July 2019