

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Pluckley Parish Meeting held on Monday 4 April 2005, Pluckley Village Hall

Present: Janet Gwillim in the chair, James Ashby, Ann Murray, Cllr Andrew Wickham, Russell Keep, Trevor Oliver,

Parish residents: Cynthia Linzey, Ray Reese, Jessamy Blanford, Ros Rowan, Rosemary Davies, Geoff English, Eileen English, Angela Bates, Martin Newman,

Keith Scandrett, of ADAS

Clerk to the Council, Mrs Jackie Grebby

Apologies for absence were received from Alan Davies and Tony Rowan

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 19 April 2004, having been circulated, Ann Murray proposed that they were taken as read and approved, carried unanimously.

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report: Mrs Gwillim welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that the parish council had met on 12 occasions during the past 12 months. The plans committee met in between those meetings whenever there were planning applications for discussion before the next full council meeting.

A parish surgery had been started in January. This was an open morning once a month for residents to discuss and view various issues. This is held in the village hall where there is wheelchair access. The Clerk to the Council is presents together with one or two parish councillors.

The council had considered 34 planning applications during the year, the majority being for alterations and extensions. The parish council had objected to eight of these applications. Ashford Borough Council have taken into consideration the Pluckley Design Statement when making decisions.

The Brickworks Sub-Committee of the Plans Committee met throughout the year and were currently waiting the Environment Agency's decision. The EA had given the applicants until 8 April to produce assessments of traffic movements, noise and dust, and an ecological survey. Newsheets were delivered to all houses in the parish and beyond and residents have been encouraged to write to the EA voicing their objections.

The annual village cleanup took place on Saturday 19 March. This year it was coordinated to take place at the same time as surrounding villages. There was a poor turnout from the parish.

The 2004 Hog Fair was very successful, raising about £6,000. Alan Davies would be chairing the 2005 Hog Fair when the proceeds would be going towards the new sports pavilion.

The parish council was pleased to announce the arrival of Broadband internet access in August. Pluckley's website www.pluckley.net received a commendation in the Website of the Year competition, and thanks go to Christopher Grebby from Chrysalis Computer Solutions for hosting and designing the site.

The Clerk to the Council has a list of residents with email address and is able to send parish news via the internet. Any resident who would like to be included should contact the clerk.

The chairman concluded by thanking Ann Murray for delivering many of the parish newsletters and the clerk for the extra time she freely gave to the community. She went on to thank all the parish and district councillors, all of whom work, sit on numerous committees, run homes and families as well as doing parish council work; and the many members of the public who also do a lot of committee and volunteer work to keep the village going.

Pluckley Station Action Group: Andrew Buchanan reported that PSAG was formed in April 2004 when a decision had been taken to cut two train services to London. Together with Wendy Toms an action group was formed. The aims of PSAG include retaining the existing rail services, promote the station, and sort out parking problems.

Several meeting have been held and volunteers have been actively agitating at the various meetings held to discuss the future of the rail network and delivering leaflets on train journeys. Pluckley is escaping the rail cuts lightly compared to Staplehurst and Headcorn, but there will not be any reduction in passengers wishing to use the services and Pluckley is set to lose the two busiest services in June.

Help has been given by Ashford MP, Damian Green. Everyone was encouraged to write to him voicing their objections to the cuts.

Wealden Wheels: the enterprise, having been set up in conjunction with Egerton, Smarden, and Charing, was progressing well, some groups taking advantage of cheap return tickets to France. Both vehicles are easy to drive and one has wheelchair access..

Cllr Andrew Wickham: reported on his past year at Ashford Borough Council when he served on several committees, including the Policy Advisory Group, which was all about rubbish. He was also a member of the Standards Committee, the Pluckley Brickworks Sub-committee, and PSAG.

Ashford Borough Council's budget for 2005/6 had produced the lowest council tax rise in Kent, and Kent was one of the lowest in the country, at just 4.9%. This would have been lower (1.9%) if the borough did not have to compensate for funds sent to regions in the north of England.

He closed by asking that if any resident wished to meet with him, then he could arrange to meet at one of the monthly council surgeries.

One member of the audience asked if the council tax rises would be sufficient to cover the expected additional services required by the proposed new housing. Cllr Wickham replied that the income from the new houses' council tax should compensate.

Another member reported that the new switchboard system at the Civic Centre was 'hopeless'.

The reason why plastic bottles were not recycled was that the procedure involved was currently too expensive.

Pluckley Village Hall: the chairman reported on the past year, saying that, a grant of £3,000 had been received from CASK towards new stage lighting. A donation from Pluckley Panto of £1,700 had also gone towards the lights. A grant from the parish council of £3,000 and one of £500 from KCC had also been received. Bookings were approximately £1,000 down on last year. Amongst payments made during the year, was £4,900 for the stage lighting, and general repairs amounted to approximately £1,000. Two new heaters cost £435.

It was regretted that Rosemary Davies was standing down from the committee, but Andrew Buchanan was elected in her place. Cyril Hoad, Michael Barton, and Jackie Grebby were willing to continue. Parish council representatives to the committee would be elected at the annual parish council meeting in May.

Any other business:

Station Parking: this was again getting worse, with vehicles parking on the approach to the bridge on Station Road. The Clerk to the Council explained the current situation, the council having contacted all residents in the vicinity of the station asking if they were in favour of the proposed yellow lining of the area. The criterion was that at least 50% of residents had to be in favour. Unfortunately only 30% replied. The parish council is continuing to have meetings with highways.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:45pm and Chairman, Janet Gwillim introduced Keith Scandrett of ADAS who gave an interesting presentation on the new Kent Lifescapes Information System that could be accessed at www.Kent.gov.uk/klis

After the presentation, members of the public were invited to join the parish council for light refreshment.