

ELSWORTH PARISH

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in The Sports Pavilion Broad End
On April 19th 2023 at 7:30pm

The meeting was chaired by Mr Peter Deer, Chairman of the Parish Council.

Those present

Seventeen parishioners attended the meeting along with District Councillor Peter Sandford

1. Apologies for absence:

County Councillor Mandy Smith, District Councillor Sr Mark Howell

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 18th May 2022

The minutes were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(Proposed James Howell Seconded James Witherow)

3. Chairman's address to the meeting

Peter Deer noted that the Parish Council had lost one member in the last year and had welcomed three new members, Lawrence Siefert, Tim Hegan and Richard Hyde. South Cambridgeshire District Councillor Peter Sandford had replaced Cllr Nick Wright who did not stand in the May 2022 Elections.

The Parish Council had completed the refurbishment of the play area and had recently purchased two new picnic tables which would be sited in the area. To finish things off, it was hoped to paint the big swing and put a new notice in place. Two donations had made this refurbishment possible and the PC had put all its section 106 funds towards the costs.

The Chairman and D Cllr Sandford updated those attending on the proposals for East West Rail. Since the last meeting, neither feedback from the consultation exercise nor a business case for the railway had been published. However, it was expected that the route alignment and the location of a station for Cambourne will be announced by HMG in May. Assuming EWR's preferred route were followed, this would see a station and related infrastructure being sited to the north of the A428 as far as Knapwell and bring the possibility of massive housing development in this area, although currently there were no specific proposals in the Local Development Plan. PD mentioned the liaison which has taken place with other parishes to the north of the 428 and the Elsworth and District Facebook page that published information about this scheme.

Flooding issues in the village continued to occupy the Parish Council and would be a major focus in the coming years. It is supporting the Community Flood Group which is working on the myriad problems that contribute to the flooding and to identify and tap into sources of funding available in order to address the village's flooding problems.

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The regular matters that the PC has to deal with, such as consideration of planning applications and highways matters - repair of potholes and traffic flow etc - had increased following the pandemic. The Chairman highlighted a scheme for the imposition of 20mph zones that the County Council was offering funding for, although this was limited as only eight schemes would be chosen to go ahead in the current year. He canvassed opinion on whether the PC should apply for funding a village-wide 20mph restriction. Some attendees expressed concern over the speed of vehicles in certain parts of the village where there were no speed cushions, but noted that an increase in street furniture would not be desirable. Concern was raised over parents from outside the village now parking in Avenue Business park and walking their children to school from there to avoid the congestion problem in Broad End. This involved crossing Smith Street near the blind bend where traffic enters the village from Rogues Lane. It was generally felt that the Parish Council should express an interest in the County Council's 20 mph scheme this year and in subsequent years.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her continued hard work and handed over to her for the financial report.

4. Summary of Elsworth's income and expenditure for year ending March 31st 2023

Liz Sim, the Parish Clerk, presented a summary of income and expenditure (unaudited) for the financial year ending March 2023, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. She outlined in detail a breakdown of costs advising that both the income and expenditure incurred had risen considerably during the past financial year and the PC would therefore not be able to self-certify for external audit as the £25,000 threshold had been exceeded for both income and expenditure. In addition, the external auditors had included Elsworth PC in their random selection for intermediate audit for the year 2022-23 accounts. Mrs Sim advised that audit costs would be higher in the coming year due to this but also to the fact that the internal auditors had failed to invoice the council in the last financial year and that these costs would be added to the invoice for the coming internal audit currently being carried out. The precept for the coming year had been kept at the same level as the previous year although expenditure was expected to rise considerably in the current climate.

5 Question Time

Parishioners raised the following:-

- Mrs Sue Taylor asked about the continuation of publication of the Elsworth Times and PC funding. Mrs Taylor noted that her team had agreed to continue editing the newsletter for a year after the 2022 annual parish meeting. The view of those attending was that it was worthwhile continuing with its publication, however, a decision needed to be made as to whether the PC was prepared to keep funding it. Mrs Taylor also advised that the publishers (Pendrill Publications) had indicated that they would be retiring in the coming year. It was agreed that these matters would be put on the agenda for the May 2023 Parish Council meeting.

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- Mrs Elizabeth Bennett, the Head Teacher of Elsworth Primary School, reported that the tree that had been planted for Queen Elizabeth II's 70th Jubilee was thriving. She expressed her gratitude to the landowner who had dug out the ditch behind the school during the last flood episode, thus saving the buildings from extensive water damage. Her concern was that this ditch should receive ongoing maintenance to prevent it filling again. She also raised the narrowness of the footpath in Smith Street/ Broad End and asked if this could be widened for the safety of children walking it to school. James Howell thought that the village maintenance volunteers might be able to do this siding out on Monday May 8th bank holiday. The Clerk also advised that County Highways could be contacted and asked to side out the path and the Rights of Way Officer with regard to the ditch as there was a public footpath in that area.
- Chris Woodbury, secretary to the Elsworth Sports Club, thanked the PC for the financial support that it had given to the club. He noted that the club might break even financially this coming year but that there was a current need for help maintaining the sports field as the groundsman was due to have an operation.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:39.

Signed _____ (Chairman). Date _____