

BEKESBOURNE WITH PATRIXBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May 2021 at 7:00pm via Zoom
Minutes to be agreed at the next meeting.

Present: Parish Cllr Andrea Nicholson (Chairman)
Parish Cllr Graham Duplock
Parish Cllr Christine Sladden
Parish Cllr Joanne Watt
Parish Cllr Emily Young
Parish Cllr Mary Evans
Parish Cllr Christine Ash
Mrs Nicola Purcell, Clerk to the Council

There was 1 member of the public present.

1. CHAIRMAN WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Cllr Nicholson welcomed all attendees and thanked everyone for being present.

2. RECEIVE APOLOGIES

None received at the time of meeting- City Cllr Louise Jones sent apologies after the meeting as it was also Canterbury City Council's AGM. KCC Cllr Michael Northey also sent apologies after the meeting.

3. AGREE MINUTES OF 2019 APM (NO APM HELD IN 2020 IN LINE WITH KALC ADVICE)

All were in agreement that the minutes of the last AGM held in April 2019 were a true and accurate record.

4. CHAIRMAN REPORT

Cllr Nicholson gave the following report:

Welcome everybody and thank you to everyone who has contributed to our meetings and the life of our villages during the past most difficult year. All meetings have been conducted via zoom as we have all lived through this COVID-19 epidemic. It has been a difficult year of isolation, the loss of loved ones and friends and worry about the future for each of us. Now we are being vaccinated against the virus we may hope that life gets back to a more normal pattern, though we need to realise this might have to be a different normal to what we are used to.

Despite everything the business of the Parish Council has continued as best as possible. Plans for the Village Hall refurbishment are coming together, and a new play area has been installed at the recreation ground. This proved timely as many parents and children sought out places to play during lockdown and our roads and footpaths were well used by visiting walkers and cyclists. This caused a problem last year when someone publicised the walk along the footpath through Howletts, resulting in traffic mayhem along Bekesbourne Lane and disruption to the residents of Lackenden Cottages.

In the last year the new houses in Aspinall have been built and are now occupied. We welcome these new residents to our Parish. Over the year many plans have been sent to the Parish Council, so building work and extensions have continued in the area, despite lockdown. Our views have been sought for a review of the local plan being conducted by the City Council, and Councillors have been involved in meetings with the City Council into how they wish to fund the work of the Parish Council in the future. We have fought hard to

retain the status quo as we feel expecting us to fund more of these costs from the precept which you our residents pay is not fair. Residents of the city do not pay a precept and maintenance of the play areas in the town is paid for by the City Council for example

Just before Christmas we learnt of the sad death of Cllr Jill Thomas and paid tribute to her at our January meeting. Jill will be much missed by the whole community not only here but in the wider area. She was very active in Village life, with the recreation ground, the Friends of Bekesbourne Church, the school in Bridge and her role as Secretary of the Nailbourne and Little Stour River Management group, and many more aspects of village life. Her knowledge and commitment to 'see things done' will be sorely missed. I certainly missed her earlier this year when we were faced with the prospect of flooding when after a lot of rain in the autumn the Nailbourne rose rapidly in February. Thankfully due to a dry spring the river has now dropped in level and this week the road through the fords has been re-opened, and tankering from the sewers has ceased.

Over the last year Nicola updated our website and thanks must be given to her for all the work she does for us. A plea however, she only works 10 hours a week and is not necessarily available immediately to attend to Parish matters.

Finally thank you to everyone who has helped neighbours and friends during this last year with offers of help and just keeping in contact with those living alone. It's been a strange and at times frightening year. I hope we can all meet again soon and continue all our normal community events together once more.

5. CITY/COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

None received

6. LOCAL GROUP REPORTS

Cllr Watt read the following report provided by the Jane Millyard and Tom Webster on behalf of The Bekesbourne Explorers:

Firstly, we have to record the sad loss of Jill Thomas, the founder and leader of the Explorers. She put a great deal of time and energy into planning and reconnoitring our walks and was tireless in attending to any walkers in difficulty. We will remember her with great fondness whenever we walk.

Covid has been a mixed blessing for the Explorers. We coped with the rule of six by allocating the walkers in advance into separate groups of six or less who walked the same route at a distance from each other or in opposite directions. The more welcome effect has been an increase in the number of walkers when walking was allowed.

We have walked some new routes this year including a walk through Fredville Park (the name is Norman not nouveau riche) which takes in Barfrestone Church and another one along the Stour via Tonford and back through Toddler's Cove and Westgate Gardens.

Our next challenge is to develop new walk leaders, unsurprisingly we think we will need to find two or three leaders to replace Jill. We restarted our monthly walks on Wednesday 14th April.

Cllr Watt read the following report provided by Amy Fitton on behalf of Bekesbourne Village Book Club:

Bekesbourne Village Book Club formed in September 2020. I enquired on the Facebook page as to whether a group already existed which I discovered it did not, however, there was a good amount of interest so the group formed. We meet via zoom every second Tuesday of the month to discuss texts of varying lengths and genres. The books are chosen at random from titles submitted by the members and each month the group receives 9 questions, a week prior to the meeting, which form the basis of the discussions. We then all score the text out of 10 to generate an average score. Our highest scorer at the time of writing this report is *Dominicana* by Angie Cruz, a superb novel set in the 60s about a young girl forced into an arranged marriage, to enable her family to emigrate to New York.

We have 11 members; women of various ages, most of whom I had never met before starting the group and I count myself very lucky to have the opportunity to know them better.

Mary Evans Spoke on behalf of the Recreation Ground Management Committee:

Like everybody else in the community we were saddened by the loss of Jill Thomas. But we have been able in the last few weeks to take things forward at the recreation ground and I would like to report two things:

The first is that plans are underway for building a disabled lavatory on one side of the pavilion. Work should start in the next few weeks, and we are very much looking forward to having that facility.

Secondly, we are very happy to see football groups are returning within the last month. Understandably the various uses of the pavilion are likely to change as covid regulations change but we are looking forward to both improving those facilities and seeing a more extensive use of the pitch when it is brought back to a better condition. It hasn't been used for a year, so it needs a bit of work to get it back to its usual standards.

The RGMC have met quite recently, and everybody is looking forward to taking things forward.

We are also looking for a new Secretary.

Clr Young gave the following report on behalf of BREW (Bekesbourne Rec Every Week):

There is not much to report as yet from the previous year. We had a bit of a false start- we thought that we had read the guidelines about what type of groups were allowed to meet and at what point with Covid restrictions beginning to lift, but we had advice that perhaps this was not the case. Therefore, we placed BREW on hold until after the 17th May 2021. BREW is a community group for all age ranges- everyone is welcome and we look forward to seeing everyone.

During lockdown I have made contact with some new residents in the village who are very community minded and in particular have started up community orchards previously. There are several of us who were thinking how to take forward some community planting opportunities in the future. BREW is a great resource for bring the community together and for starting community projects. We may look into a community breakfast, and we hope to establish some new connections within the villages.

Clr Nicholson gave the following report for St Mary's Church at Patixbourne:

Due to Covid- the church has been closed for the majority of the year. There has been 3 services- two of which were funerals, one of which was held purely outside last June; a

second funeral was held inside with limited numbers of guests; and thirdly a Carol Service, which was limited to 30 people socially distanced in the church, with a small choir of 6 singing the carols.

The plans for the extension on the church have still been progressing; planning permission was granted from the city council in the summer. Test foundations have been dug and we are awaiting the work being put out to tender. We are hoping to proceed well in the next 12 months with the help of grants. The church failed an electrical inspection recently, but the work has now been undertaken and is up to standard with new lights. The Vicar has filmed wonderful online services to keep everyone in touch. St Mary's is now ready to be open again, as soon as lockdown restrictions improve.

Cllr Duplock gave the following report on behalf of St Peter's Church at Bekesbourne:

It has been very similar to St Mary's- we have only been able to hold 3 services which have been funerals. The Christmas service took place without community singing. We are all very much looking forward to being able to have increased numbers and worship more 'normally' in the near future.

Cllr Duplock spoke on behalf of the VHMC (Village Hall Management Committee):

We were as a result of our survey planning a refurbishment which we are proceeding with. Plans have been drawn up for the outside and ideas for the interior of the building. Today we received notification that the planning application for the exterior modifications has been accepted- and the exterior of the building will have grey composite cladding, refurbished windows and doors replaced to improve the 'kerb appeal' of the building. Our next step is to now work on the interior.

The VHMC sold the old chairs. They were sent to Zimbabwe and we received approximately £300 for those. A sale was held to sell some items from inside the hall such as the crockery, cleaning equipment etc. £55 was made from the sale and we plan to hold another. The ambition is to have the new hall opening before Christmas.

Cllr Duplock reported the following as a Governor for Bridge & Patixbourne CE primary School

At our last APM (2019) the school has just appointed a new Head teacher; James Tibble. This has proved to be an extremely successful appointment and the school seems to be going from strength to strength. This year has obviously been very disrupted with the Covid situation. The school was closed to most children for several periods throughout the last year. The staff have really risen to the occasion and have provided remote learning for those children learning from home. A survey of the school's parents showed that 94% thought that the remote learning was 'good' or better. Everyone is happy to be back since the Easter term and working really hard.

The school now has a business manager, which is a new post and they have streamlined the office function and moved quite a few things online such as parent payments and most communication with parents. The school's website has been renewed. This year the focus is equality, diversity and inclusion to make the school as inclusive as possible.

Cllr Duplock conveyed thanks to James Tibble, Michael Taylor, and all the staff for all they have done coping so well through such a difficult period.

Cllr Duplock also gave the following report for the Friends of Bekesbourne Church:

Since Covid restrictions were enforced, we have held no events. We are hoping to hold a wine and wisdom in the Autumn and a Christmas Bazaar. Because the hall availability isn't guaranteed we have been looking into alternative locations, and we are in negotiations of using the barn at Woolton Farm. We would like to convey thanks to Steve Thomas for the 100 club, which is now up to approx. 120. We hope that in the future we are able to hold some sort of village celebration when restrictions are allowed.

7. AOB

None

Meeting closed at 7:29pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....