

Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council

Incorporating Brookhouse, Carr, Slade Hooton and Newhall
Hamlet



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 8TH JUNE 2016 AT 7.30PM

Present: Councillor T Stanway – Chairman, Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council
Mrs Caroline Havenhand - Clerk

In Attendance: Councillors; Mr P Green, Mr S Johnson, Mr R Thrower, Mr G Price,
Mr P Lilleker and Mrs A Mitchell

There were 6 parishioners present including the 5 Councillors.

1. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

2. Report of the Chairman covering the activities of the Parish and Rother Valley Area Assembly followed by any questions.

This year was the first year of the new council elected in May last year which saw the election of myself, Paul Green, Simon Johnson, Judith Leaning, Peter Lilleker, Greg Price and Robin Thrower. We also started the new Parish Year with a new clerk Mrs Caroline Havenhand.

It has been a year of significant change in the way the Parish Council conducts its affairs which we all believe has helped us to become more focused on our obligations as councillors. Many of these changes have been brought about by our new members attending induction courses for new councillors and also courses attended by Caroline which have highlighted where improvements needed to be made. We have all learnt a lot from their experience and the PC has put in place new systems and procedures to ensure we function as a council more effectively and efficiently.

We have this year been involved in

- 1 Discussions with the Laughton St John's Road Allotment Society and the Agent of the St Leger Estates, Savilles have taken place and are still on going as the PC seeks to obtain a longer term lease on the allotment site. It has not been easy as the proposals by Savilles and the aspirations of the allotment society were not the same and so discussions to achieve a compromise acceptable to all parties are still in progress.
- 2 A new barrier has been fitted at the entrance to the village hall and recreation ground so as to restrict access to the site overnight. The barrier closes at 11pm and reopens at 5.30am each day. The rationale behind the decision was based on evidence of syringes found in the car park drains plus complaints from local residents of anti-social behaviour late at night. This involved cars racing round the car park, late night revels and parties in the

- play area and car park which left significant amounts of take away food remains and packaging.
- 3 The CCTV system has been upgraded with High Definition cameras and a new DVR that has easier access and search facilities to enable any incidents to be downloaded onto USB flash drives for passing to the police. Along with this the light fittings have been replaced. The original system was installed in 2000 when the car park was completed and upgraded for the first time in 2009 when the playground was completed. Prior to the installation of CCTV vandalism was costing the PC and therefore you as parishioners approximately £1200 a year. The amount spent now on vandalism is virtually zero. The cost of all the work undertaken on the CCTV over the years is well below what the PC would have paid out over the past 16 years. The overall benefits CCTV has brought is reflected in the high use of the village hall and playground where users find that knowing there is CCTV promotes a feeling of reassurance and safety
- 4 The recreation ground football pitch is currently used by the Laughton Boys FC and the pitch is marked out for use by under 16's only. They also use the changing room facilities of the village hall. There have been issues with older groups of over 16 youths using the pitch much to the detriment of its condition for the younger players. We hope that removing the goal posts immediately after the season finishes will stop this happening in future.
- 5 We continue to employ a contractor to look after the flower beds and planters in the parish. We have a policy of low maintenance planting which is often in the form of shrubs and herb plants such as Rosemary and Sage. Feel free to take some if you can put it to use in your kitchen.
- 6 We have also installed a defibrillator at this village hall and are in the process of obtaining others for this village and also for the outlying villages if we can find suitable places to put them where we can get an electrical supply.
- 7 The PC receives requests for grants from organisations seeking help and looks at these carefully before making any decisions. We help the local PCC by paying for the emptying of the waste bins in the churchyards and also contribute to the grass cutting.
- 8 After a about 10 years of the PC making available funds to each of the local village associations in the parish we this year reviewed this method of funding and decided it had run its course. A new system has been introduced where these associations are requested to submit their proposals to the PC by the end of June in each financial year. We will not know whether this approach has been successful until we see what submissions are made.
- 9 There have been significant changes within RMBC since the council was effectively suspended and its running taken over by government appointed commissioners. Many of the staff with whom we had regular contact have left the council and this had led to short term issues in dealing with situations as both our clerk and us a councillors establish new contacts within RMBC
- 10 Finally, I would like to thank a few people without whom all of our work and success wouldn't have been possible.
- a. The grateful thanks go to our new clerk Caroline who in just over a year in post has breathed a new energy into the role of clerk. It is often said that it can bring problems sending people on training courses for they come back with new ideas. Our 2 new councillors and the clerk have both attended training courses and came back from these with new ideas and methods of working that we have all embraced as it will make the PC more effective in the way it operates. Our clerks past role in the banking industry has enabled us to set up stronger financial governance of the PC resources. It has all taken time but I now believe we have in place an excellent and robust financial management system. I thank Caroline for

all the hard work she has put in over the past year and know that due to her efforts we are now a far more effective PC.

- b. My thanks to all the other councillors for their efforts on your behalf. We are a non-politically aligned PC with our first aim always in any decisions we take being to ensure that it benefits the whole of the community regardless of political persuasion. It is a very rare indeed if any decision we take is not agreed unanimously by us all.
- c. To the members of the Village Hall Management Committee and particularly Ann and Don Mitchell who have worked tirelessly to turn the village hall into one of the most it not the most used village halls in the area. The footfall through this village hall in any one week is amazing. The village hall is soon to be redecorated, have new curtains and the floor sanded and resealed. All of this from the income the increased use of the hall under Ann and Dons stewardship has brought.
- d. My thanks to you for attending and listening. Do you have any questions?

Trevor Stanway

Chairman, Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council

3. Any other business (For discussion only)

No issues were raised.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Signed

Chairman