

MINUTES OF THE NORTHCHAPEL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Thursday 16th May 2024

At Northchapel Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present from the Parish Council: Mr Alex Baker, Miss Laura Green, Mr Melvin Greet, Mrs Sharon Holden, Mr John Sochovsky and Mr Ed Warren

Also present: Two members of the public
Mrs Helen Cruikshank (Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed all to the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting (APM). As previously agreed, written reports from the various organisations were read out by the Parish Clerk.

1. Apologies for absence: Parish Councillor Mrs Daphne Trussler

2. Minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting: The minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 18th May were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. Parish Council's Chairman's report: Sharon Holden

Welcome everyone and especially to the members of the public. We don't often get visitors so it is nice to see some residents here. The Parish Council continues to support many local organisations giving grants or donations to St Michaels Church, Northchapel Primary School, Little Oaks Pre-School, Fruit & Flower Show, Village Hall, Waverley Citizen's Advice Bureau, Petworth Cottage Hospital, Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance and Petworth over 60's Club. We continue to maintain the village and in particular the village green with fortnightly grass cutting from April to October. Many thanks to Laura who ensures this is done well.

My thanks go to all my fellow councillors who work tirelessly with me to do the best for our Parish. Thanks to our District and County Councillors who attend as many meetings as they can and who are always at the end of an email ready to help. Thank you to Willie who continues to oversee the allotments. Huge thanks must go to our hardworking and efficient Clerk, Helen who continues to be a great asset not only to myself as chair but to all council members.

4. Youth Club report: Ed Warren/Laura Green

Northchapel Youth Club is going well. We need more regular volunteers. We have two youngsters who are using Youth Club as the volunteering part of their Duke of Edinburgh Scheme which is good. We are looking for a new leader as Bianca is standing down. The lighter evenings mean outside activities have commenced but with 20 children we just need more help please!

5. Churchyard report: Clifford Bell on behalf of the PCC

The Churchyard has been kept in good condition by virtue of the regular grass cutting carried out by the contractor engaged by the Northchapel parish council. This has been supplemented by monthly volunteer work parties who have carried out clearance of the southern boundary to optimise availability of space for burials, removed fallen timber and cleared redundant grave decorations.

Work to fell a large conifer tree that was affecting the boundary and adjacent ancient yew was also completed with support from the council.

Maintenance of the Glebe area and public footpath had lapsed however work has been conducted recently to remove bramble growth and ensure the footpath is kept clear.

One point to mention is the dilapidated condition of the churchyard shed which is used to store maintenance equipment. It will in the near future need some work to assure its future.

The St Michael and All Angels parochial church council wish to convey their sincere thanks for the support of the parish council in funding churchyard maintenance, which is appreciated.

6. School report

There was no report.

7. Village Hall report: Jane Dadswell

It has been a mediocre year. Bookings were slightly up on last year with the Lottery, Lunch Club, Pilates and Service Dogs being our main cash generators. However, this failed to generate a positive cash flow due to an increase in the cost of services and repairs to the car park. Had we not received sizeable donations from the Parish Council and the PTA Summer Fair this deficit would have been considerably more. So, we have some difficult decisions ahead as this situation is not sustainable.

We continue to keep on top of repairs and maintenance and have had the Hall partially redecorated with a hopefully more durable paint.

As ever we continue to look for new members to join our committee, this is especially important as Gaye Jordan recently stood down as a trustee due to her impending move. We are now down to five members.

8. Sports Club: Laura Green (Secretary)

The Sports Club's main focus continues to be the MUGA (multi-use games area) & getting the funding in place to install it.

We have recently had our first successful grant application with £20,000 being pledged from Chichester District Council from the UK Shared Prosperity / Rural England Prosperity Fund. This now takes our current funding total to around £55,000 of the total needed of £117,000.

The caveat with this is that the money has to be spent & the project completed by the end of April 2025. So, it's all systems go to get the rest of the money in place.

It's likely that we will achieve around £5k from our normal fundraising this year.

Other grant applications are being explored & conversations are also happening with local people/businesses who had previously shown an interest in supporting financially. We're hopeful that with a pledge from someone willing to invest to boost our total that this will then encourage others to do the same too.

9. Parish News

Simon & Karen Arnold are now the editors for the Parish News and doing a great job. Moneywise the income from advertisements covers the cost of the printing.

10. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

The meeting was closed at 7.45pm

Signed..... Dated.....