

PARISH OF SPALDWICK

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held at 8 pm Thursday 30 April 2009 at Spaldwick Primary School

Present Councillors K H Armer (Chairman), W Brown, B Plummer, J Pope, G Smith, R Wooddisse, five members of the public and the Parish Clerk (Mr D Stowell)

Apologies for absence - none.

1. **Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held 30 April 2008** - were read, approved and signed.

2. **Matters arising**

Old Bus Shelter site - There are a number of loose stones on the newly grassed area which will be removed shortly to reduce the risk of damage being caused to passing traffic when mown.

Bus Stop locations - CCC have just completed a survey of the services and bus stops in Spaldwick. A report is expected shortly. This will enable any new timetables to correctly describe the stops so that new users can identify where they are.

Furniture in Community Room - The dilapidated chairs have been replaced by the School during the year.

3. **Annual Report by Chairman of Parish Council**

Cllr Armer reported as follows :-

The Council held 11 meetings in the year plus the Annual Parish Meeting. Members of the public attended all of those meetings. The Council dealt with 10 Planning Applications over the year.

In November 2008, Cllr Shears resigned having moved to Ellington. His skills will be greatly missed. In January, Mr Graham Smith was co-opted to fill the vacancy.

The Council again made bids to the HDC / CCC Traffic Management Area Joint Committee for Jointly Funded Minor Improvement Schemes to complete the footway from Ivy Way to Beech House and for speed reduction measures in the village. These were turned down as they did not score sufficient points when marked by the assessing team. The Council continues to be concerned at the excessive vehicle speeds, and authorised a 7 day traffic survey in order to obtain numerical evidence of the problem. The results are being passed to the local MP, Police, CCC Highways, HDC and other interested parties.

The Council is still liaising with the Village Hall Management Committee in trying to purchase or lease land for the new hall.

The standard of grasscutting was very good this year, and we have not received any complaints. The bus shelter outside The George was removed because of its dangerous state. The base and railings were also removed, and the area top soiled and grassed.

A single street light has been erected in Church Lane. This was funded by the Parish Council with the aid of a grant of about 50% from HDC. The Parish Council will be responsible for its maintenance and for the cost of electricity.

The Council raised the precept to £9400 for 2009/010. This was to allow for increasing costs and lower interest rates and a balance to be carried over to 2009/10 to finance future projects, and also to allow for a donation of 50p per elector to the East Anglia Air Ambulance.

Again there is problem with flytipping within the parish and we report this to HDC as soon as it is reported to us. Also there have been large amounts of litter deposited within the parish. We have arranged litter pick ups with HDC, but it is almost impossible to keep up with, as is dog fouling, not only in the village but also in adjacent grass fields.

About 2 1/2 years ago I met a Drainage Board Engineer and discussed with him the flood scheme for Spaldwick. I pointed out to him that the one way valve east of the garage was covered with brambles and silt with a branch holding it open, and that this caused the flooding at the garage when the water flooded in from the east. In November 2008 it was observed that the valve was again blocked.

Following discussion with the Drainage Board it was determined that responsibility for its maintenance lies with the Highways Agency. Their contractor's engineer carried out an inspection in January and decided that it would have to be replaced. To date this work has not been carried out. Until the work is completed there is a real possibility that the east end of the village will flood under the right weather conditions.

We distributed the Christmas charities to 7 residents of Spaldwick.

Councillors and the Clerk have attended a number of external meetings / courses in the past year , but overall it has been a quiet year.

Finally I would like to thank Mr Stowell for all his work keeping us abreast of all matters and for his skills in the treasury department; Mr Brown and Mr Johnson for delivering the charities; Mr Johnson for his work as tree warden; Mr Shears for inspecting the play equipment and all the Councillors for their hard work in the past year.

4. **Parish Council Financial Report**

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year 2008 / 2009, summarised as follows :-

	Parish Council Fund	Charity Fund
Balance brought forward at 1/4/08	£51055.56	£120.00
Receipts	£14870.86	£120.00
Payments	£14178.40	£120.00
Balance carried forward at 31/3/09	£51748.02	£120.00

The Parish Council balance at 31 March 2009 is allocated as follows :-

Village Hall & Playing Field project	£22000.00
Ferriman Road Grounds Maintenance Fund	£20643.37
Parish Plan Grant	£1225.79
General Reserve	£7878.86

5. **Reports from other village organisations**

Mr B Plummer reported on the following :-

Parish Plan.

The Parish Plan Questionnaire was circulated to some 240 households in June 2008 and resulted in 414 individual responses comprising some 74% of Parish residents – an almost unprecedented result! Since then the steering Group have met almost weekly to analyse the results and to formulate the Plan Report and associated Action Plan. This has proved a substantial task and has taken much longer than anticipated, however, the draft is now nearing completion and it is hoped that it will be ready by midsummer.

Village Hall

The responses to the Parish Plan questionnaire have endorsed a strong demand within the village for wide ranging facilities which a village hall should provide and for associated sports fields. This gives greater impetus for the Village Hall Management Committee to develop a hall but the difficulties in obtaining a suitable site, which would stand some chance of gaining planning consent, remain the major stumbling block. Advice from the planning authorities concerning possible alternative sites around the village has been sought but the options appear extremely limited. The area behind the school remains the best possibility but the question of vehicle access remains to be resolved.

Investment of the Village Hall funds continues to draw interest and the total now stands at: £247000.

The furniture and crockery from the old Hall remain in store and are available for use by the village residents.

Carpet Bowls Club

The club has enjoyed another successful year with both membership and attendance remaining satisfactorily constant and sufficient to cover costs but some new members particularly from the village would be most welcome.

The club continues to hold its regular club nights in the school hall every Tuesday evening during term time. It remains a lively club with a full programme of competitions and matches. A number of

successful social events have been also been held during the year including Presidents day, annual dinner, BBQ and ten-pin bowling.

Spaldwick Community Room Users Association

The Community room at Spaldwick School has continued to function smoothly and although its use has again improved it remains somewhat under-utilised. It is a village facility, which includes both the meeting room and kitchen catering for up to 50 people and is available for hire for both group and private functions. Regular users have the option of joining the Association which entitles them of some reduction in hiring fees.

Mr Stowell reported on the Community Access Point (CAP)

This facility comprising two computers in the Community Room is available on Mondays from 1.15 - 3.00 pm. Anyone wishing to use the CAP to access the internet or wishing for training in the use of computers should contact David Stowell on 890065, who will arrange to be in attendance to advise.

6. Open Forum

Public participation in Parish Council meetings

Mr Traynor suggested that as well as a session at the beginning of the meeting, it might be helpful to have a similar period at the end to allow members of the public to comment on decisions made.

Layout of room for Parish Council meetings

Mr Traynor said that he finds it difficult to hear what councillors are saying as they sit on the front row facing the Chairman and have their backs to the members of the public. He queried whether something could be done to improve this situation.

Dogs off leads and fouling bridleways and footpaths in the countryside - Mrs Brown expressed her concern regarding this problem and queried what could be done about it.

Parking on footway in Thrapston Road - It was pointed out that a car was occasionally parked blocking half the footway thus forcing people with push chairs to walk in the road. It was suggested that the persons concerned should be asked not to park there.

The above matters will be referred to the Parish Council for consideration and action where appropriate.

7. Statement by Chairman

At this point Mr Armer informed the meeting that, with a heavy heart, he had decided to retire from the Parish Council having been a member for 19 years and Chairman for 15 years. He mentioned by name many of his colleagues who had served the Council well during this period. He said they had been worth their weight in gold. In conclusion he wished the Council all the best for the future.

8. Thanks to Chairman and Clerk

Mr Brown expressed thanks to Mr Armer for all the work he had done for the Council and wished him well in the future. He also thanked the Clerk for the work he had done during the past year.

In the absence of any other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.04 pm