



MINUTES OF LYNG ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN LYNG VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 10th APRIL 2023 AT 7:30PM

Introduction from Chair – Steve Davies welcomed people to the meeting

To receive any apologies for absence – No apologies for absence were received.

To receive Chair's report –

Since my last Chair's report in 2023, the Parish Council has been elected by residents voting for the first time in nearly a decade, and we now have a fully elected Parish Council who are determined to instigate improvements for the residents of the village.

In saying this, we now have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor as our longest standing Councillor, Melanie Joyce, has regrettably handed in her resignation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Joyce for the unswerving service to the Village, her support over the last three years of my tenure as a Councillor, and for the fact that without her we would not have the dynamic Council we now have. The residents of Lyng owe Melanie a huge debt of gratitude.

The main focus of the new Parish Council has been to look for and instigate improvements to the Village for everyone. With this in mind, we have started a clean-up of Village Street Furniture, and intend to maintain a rota of maintenance for all such items around the village. The first was the Queens Golden Anniversary bench outside the Chapel, on The Street, and we will be moving on to the Village Notice board on the verge on The Common this year. This is following the instalment of the Queens Diamond Jubilee Bench at the play area in March 2022, the repair of the car park infrastructure, a new Cemetery Notice Board in July 2022 and the Parish Notice Board.

Future projects identified by the Council include the drive to build a BMX track on the playing field for young village residents, in partnership with The Vikings Motorcycle Club, and the possibility of installing a Bouldering / Climbing Wall on the Field (this is being looked into as I speak).

We are also trying to communicate more effectively with residents and thanks go to Councillor Drabble for his monthly contributions to the Hill and Vale, and we are also publishing minutes and agendas on social media as well as on our Notice Board outside the shop and on the website.

The Clerk has been challenged in the use of her time over the past year/ 18 months. Responding to the various Freedom of information requests following the Council's decision to ban vehicles on the playing field unless by prior approval and with regulatory safety measures put in place and responding to the subsequent complaint from the Information Commissioners Office has greatly impacted on her allocated 7 hours per week and has taken her away from the usual day to day administration of the Council.

A huge, unexpected drain on our finances has been the realisation that the Trees within the Churchyard, with the closure of the Church burial ground, are the responsibility of the Parish Council and after a Tree Survey which is carried out every 3 years, we found that urgent major work needed doing, which has cost the Parish nearly £5,000. This was very much unexpected expenditure.

Another big investment has been the upkeep and maintenance of the play area, which saw major work undertaken following the annual inspection report. The bark which covers the surface of the play area is in fact acidic and is rotting the wooden posts, an issue not foreseen when first installed, with a financial cost of over £6,000 last year, double our usual maintenance bill. In order to bring down these costs, the Council is now actively pursuing alternative coverings for the ground, and although initially will be a cost to the parish, will lower the annual maintenance quite considerably. Our thanks go to Councillor Wright who diligently checks the play equipment each week and performs routine maintenance work and Councillor Kirsty King who is leading the project for the alternative coverings. Residents who do use this facility are asked to keep an eye on the youngsters using the equipment and to help us stop the large amount of litter and minor issues that occur, i.e. bark being piled up on equipment and pushed away from the base of equipment.

As you may well now realise, the past financial year, the Parish Council has had to spend out far more than received from the precept. It is only due to the income received in respect of burial and memorial fees, £4000, that the Council has been able to balance the books. This year, as always, the New Parish Council reviewed areas within the budget and allocated sums of money to each issue we thought at the time would be needed. In this way we could look forward and competently estimate our expenditure over the year. Despite this, and with the ongoing costs rising annually for maintenance, salary, subscriptions, insurance etc we felt the need to raise the precept for 2024/25, in order to carry out our statutory duty and to avoid using our reserves even more. To put this in context, in 2020/21 the precept was £18,000, and remained at that level up until 23/24 when it was raised to £19,000 (3 years). Our forecast for 2024/25 is that our expenditure is expected to be £26,345 with only Allotment fees and Burial Fees (from which we cannot guarantee an income) as additional income. If we did not increase the precept, we would not be able to maintain our services and assets, nor would be able to even think about improving village facilities.

Some of our other success's this year has been the approval from the IDB to be able to remove water from the drain bordering the Allotments for plot holders to use during drought periods, and the setting up of the Community Speed Watch Group of which Councillor Gittins is a key member. This group has had an immediate effect on cars speeding through the village based on our SAM2 camera which is maintained by Councillor Jason King. Through his work we are able to identify key hours when cars travel in excess of the posted speed limit and by operating the Community Speed Watch at these times has seen a huge reduction in vehicle speeds on The Common. We have ten members of the group and are actively looking for more residents to join us, as then we can have more sessions. Due to police regulations, we must have a minimum of three people at any one time and are only allowed at present to be stationed outside the shop. With more members we can apply for a second spot, perhaps further on up towards Elsing.

We are also currently trying to register the land that the Allotments are on to obtain the Deeds for that land and have them registered in perpetuity for the Village.

The recent bad weather we have experienced has resulted in the worse flooding in Back Lane and Lyng Road that has been experienced in many years. The Parish Council have been actively acquiring the assistance of our Breckland, Norfolk County Councillors and Member of Parliament to put pressure on the various agencies involved to get some action to solve the issue. To this end we were able to have a site meeting with Senior Breckland and Norfolk County Highways personnel on two occasions, from which we were able to secure some action, on street cleaning and on cleaning out the drains. However, as there are some 34 agencies involved, including local landowners, there is still a way to go to stop the issue happening again, but we will continue to put pressure on the relevant agencies as the year progresses. Our thanks go to Gordon Bambridge, (Breckland Councillor), Bill Borrett (Norfolk County Councillor) and our MP George Freeman for their support and their work behind the scenes.

We would also like to thank Monk Plant Hire, who donated an amount of road plainings which, with the help of the Village Voluntary Working Party, headed by resident Alan Chapman, we were able to resurface the entrance to the car park at no cost, just their time. If anyone wishes to join this band of stalwart volunteers, please contact Alan who would be more than grateful to hear from you.

There is still the ongoing issue of dog mess being left on pavements, roads and the playing field. We've had a number of complaints about owners that do not clean up after their dogs throughout the village – particularly on the playing field – and concerns about control of dogs also on the playing field. The vast majority of dog owners do pick up their dog's mess and do control their dogs in a responsible manner. It is the one or two residents who do not or cannot do so that affect all of us. Dog mess is the most unacceptable and offensive type of litter on our streets. Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, but also dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness or seizures. This is a reminder that anyone who fails to clear up after their dog is likely to be breaking the law; this could result in a fixed penalty notice of £100 or a maximum fine, if prosecuted, of £1,000. Breckland Council do take this seriously and always prosecute offenders. The law states that being unaware a dog has fouled or not having a suitable bag is not a reasonable excuse. The council are purchasing some bright, biodegradable spray paint cans to highlight areas where irresponsible dog owners are leaving their dog mess. In other villages this has proven to have had an impact as owners that do not clean up after their dog are embarrassed into action. We are also going to improve the signage around the area to remind dog owners of their responsibility and have contacted the Breckland Dog Warden service who can install Infra-Red CCTV over the field and conduct regular patrols in the village.

In conclusion, this Parish Council are now determined to improve the facilities within the Village for residents and will continue to work towards this aim. Each Councillor has taken on a role and have been active in that role. We do have a vacancy, and we urge anyone who wishes to join this pro-active team to put their name forward, if they are willing to be hands on, dedicated and think above their personal agendas.

To receive the District Councillors' report, County Councillors' report and reports from Community Organisations

No reports had yet been received but would be published on the Parish Council's website once received.

The following report was received from the MUSA;

LYNG MULTI SPORTS AREA – end March'23 - April 2024

Since the CCTV cameras were install last March we have had a few teething problems the CCTV though it is currently working well. The CCTV images and alarms have meant we have been able to intervene when people have been spotted climbing the fence or using the area without booking.

One event of theft was also able to be handled with care,

After the removal of both litter bins from outside the area, there has been no increase of littering or accumulation of rubbish in or around the area. April 2023 – March '24 as busy as usual with two to three bookings per night using the area every weekday evening during the football season. Tennis coaching continues every week for three hours throughout the year. This year has seen more adults joining the tennis coaching and when asked about their opinion of the courts and the coaching they expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation of the surface and high standard of coaching. Between April and September, the usage reduces although we still have regular weekly bookings and casual bookings are taken and supported during the summer months.

The hire receipts were up on the year 2022-23 by £657.56. We are in the process of purchasing new goals for the area.

We are very pleased to welcome our new Treasurer who will be taking over at the start of the new financial year. Our retiring Treasurer is thankfully keen to remain on the committee, in a different capacity, for which we are very grateful.

The area continues to be maintained and the surface and equipment is reviewed regularly throughout the year. It is planned that we will purchase new goals in preparation for the 2024-25 football season, for which bookings have already been received and reserved. Special thanks are expressed to all those involved with keeping this valuable asset to the village running smoothly.

Camilla Davis

Tom Gittins gave a brief update on behalf of the Village Hall – The hall continues to be well used for a mixture of private and community events. The financial situation is strong, but after 5 years, some maintenance is now required, fire alarm and shutters. The hall has run some successful events, which have been well supported and have raised funds, including the Christmas pantomime. There is a good board of trustees, trying to bridge gaps between village hall and groups. It was confirmed that the hall would be celebrating their 5th birthday with special events. A beer, gin and rum festival is planned.

Open session – To consider any items raised by members of the public

A resident raised the idea of resurrecting the Lyng Football Club. He has looked at the playing field deeds to see if a clubhouse could be erected for football, subject to planning etc. It was acknowledged that a football club requires changing facilities and that the recreation ground would require further maintenance to be suitable for playing football. It was agreed that the first step would be to consult with residents to see if there was any enthusiasm to support a football club and set up a working group to investigate matters further.

Cllr Drabble raised concern about the lack of community engagement and suggested villagers be encouraged to subscribe to an email based subscription list from the Parish Council website. Council to include as a future agenda item.

There being no further questions the meeting was closed at 8.09pm