

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

FOR RESIDENTS OF BLETSOE

Held on Tuesday, 28th May 2024 7.30pm at Bletsoe Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Clare Goduti (Chair), Mark Abraham, Alison Field-Foster, Peter Margrave, Sue Binks, David Brough (Clerk), Martin Towler (Borough Councillor), and 21 members of the public.

1. Welcome by Clare Goduti

Clare welcomed councillors and 21 members of the public to the meeting.

2. Annual Report of the parish council

Clare read out her annual report, which can be found in the appendix.

3. Other groups and individuals

- **Bletsoe Fete Committee**

A representative of the committee gave details of the upcoming fete, including a “Country & Western” theme for a week of fun, including fancy dress, and money going towards two charities.

- **Village Hall Committee**

The committee were represented at the meeting and gave details of the past year, with spending on items such as the electrics, LED lighting, acoustic ceiling, and redecoration. The coming year should include bifold doors and further maintenance.

- **The Lady Smockers**

The Lady Smockers were represented at the meeting and spoke in relation to struggling without a working mower at present, and a plea for more volunteers.

- **Friends of St Mary’s Church**

An update was provided into activities at the church, including making it a more comfortable space (the chancel is cold), the support of international charities, enhancing the churchyard, and more...

Appendix:

Annual Statement from the Chair - Bletsoe Parish Council

As Chair of the Bletsoe Parish Council since the elections, I am pleased to provide an overview of our activities and achievements over the past year.

Infrastructure Upgrades:

In May, we approved funding to upgrade all 19 parish council-owned streetlights to LED. This project was successfully completed in August, resulting in benefits such as energy savings, reduced carbon footprint, and lower maintenance costs.

Safety Measures and Initiatives:

Our efforts to enhance safety in the community included the installation of a replacement defibrillator at the village hall, generously donated by the Town Close Charity. We also organised and funded a defibrillator training session in collaboration with the East Anglian Air Ambulance, which were well-attended and received. Thank you to Cllr Donna Glanvill for organising that. We also replaced the No Flytipping signs on Coplowe Lane, although we do appear to remain a target for this activity.

Play Area Improvements:

Following recommendations from our annual play area inspection report, we approved spending on safety surfacing under the swings to address potential risks. We are grateful for the contributions from Borough Councillor Martin Fowler's Ward fund and general grant funding from the borough council towards this initiative.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Review:

We conducted a thorough review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) in July and affirmed its relevance in guiding future development in our community. As a consultee in the borough council's planning process, we have provided feedback on various domestic planning applications and are actively engaged in assessing proposals for new dwellings in line with the NDP.

Memorialisation Policy Adoption:

The adoption of a Memorialisation Policy, including an application process for memorial benches and other forms of memorialisation, reflects our commitment to honoring and preserving the memory of community members.

Ongoing Planning and Consultation:

Our councillors have formed a working group to review quotes from planning consultants and explore options for future development in alignment with community needs and preferences. We continue to engage in fact-finding and consultation to ensure informed decision-making.

Community Support and Engagement:

We are keen to support community events and initiatives. Notably, we covered the insurance costs for the annual fete, reinforcing our commitment to fostering community spirit and participation.

As we look ahead, the Bletsoe Parish Council remains dedicated to serving the best interests of our community and fostering a thriving and inclusive environment for all residents. Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

Sincerely,

Clare Goduti

Chair - Bletsoe Parish Council