

SPALDWICK CIVIL PARISH

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held at 8 pm Thursday 21 April 2016 at Spaldwick Primary School

Present: Councillors Fane de Salis (Chairman), Harriman, Jackson-Rimmer, Johnson, Robinson, Wakefield, the Clerk (Mr D Stowell), and 3 members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Smith.
2. **Minutes of Meeting** held 23 April 2015 were approved and signed
3. **Matters arising** – none

4. **Annual Report by Chairman of Parish Council** – Cllr Stephen Fane de Salis

I wish to thank all the Parish Councillors for their hard work and support during the last twelve months, and especially David Stowell, the Parish Clerk, for his knowledge and expertise. David has stated his intention to retire this year and will be a huge loss.

During the last year we have dealt with eleven full planning applications, including the Spaldwick Service Area, which caused a considerable amount of work for everyone. Having attended both public meetings we asked for comments via Spaldwick Website which proved very useful. We delivered a survey to every household and collated the results and comments before holding a planning meeting, at which we voted to object to the application. This is still showing as 'in progress' on the HDC planning portal.

We have conducted site visits and have engaged with members of the village to better understand their needs and wishes regarding other applications. We have also dealt with numerous Listed Building Consent applications and have visited the Manor House to see first-hand the work which is being carried out. The owner, Richard Johnson, has supplied very detailed drawings and descriptions of the work he is doing to restore and maintain the buildings for the future.

We have undertaken a programme of maintenance of Village Assets, including the repair and painting of all the benches, the notice boards and the shed door for the Bier. Also the replacement of the post with a security hoop barrier to the Open Space to prevent unauthorised access.

The maintenance of the War Memorial has been an ongoing project for some years, after consultation between our working party and The War Memorials Trust it was recommended that engraved stone plaques be placed adjacent to the memorial. Quotations have been received for this work and the working party will be applying for a grant from The War Memorials Trust to assist with this cost.

Another ongoing project is the resurfacing of the cushioned flooring under the play equipment in the play area on Ferriman Road. We are awaiting a third quotation before deciding on the best option; but have already replaced the seat of the large swing due to wear and tear.

Last year we were asked to look at ways of assisting with the gritting of Belton's Hill as it is not included in the normal gritting schedule. After costing various options It was decided to purchase a gritting bin, which will be located at the top of the hill.

Another area of concern was raised when the School Governors stated they would need to use the Community Room as a classroom for the next school year. This has been put on hold whilst an investigation is conducted into any conditions which were placed on the use of the room.

Other actions carried out by the Parish Council include The Community Speedwatch group which have conducted five sessions during the last year, two on High Street, two on Stow Road and one on Thrapston Road. They have assessed the speed of 615 vehicles and reported 21 vehicles for exceeding the speed limit.

We have also arranged two Village Tidy Up days, one on Church Lane and one at the Play Area on Ferriman Road. Both were well supported and made a big difference to the look and accessibility of both areas. Thanks go to those people who assisted on these days.

Thanks to Cllr Richard Johnson for arranging and paying for the sign for Chandlers, after suggesting this name in memory of the two brothers from Spaldwick who died in action during WW1.

I would also like to thank Mark Heath (Spaldwick Website) and John Blatch (Spaldwick News) for all their efforts in keeping the village informed. These and all the organisers of the various groups in Spaldwick help to make this a thriving community, together with Steve Cooper from The George who caters for many of our groups and organised events.

5. Parish Council Financial Report

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year 2015/2016 summarised as follows:

	Parish Council Fund	Charity Fund
Balance brought forward at 1/4/15	£64325.95	£196.00
Receipts	£10759.33	£376.00
Payments	£10799.61	£180.00
Balance carried forward at 31/3/16	£64285.67	£392.00

The Parish Council balance at 31 March 2016 is allocated as follows

Replacement and Maintenance of Village assets	£40000.00
Ferriman Road Grounds Maintenance Fund	£11159.83
Parish Plan Grant	£ 176.36
War Memorial renovation	£ 1000.00
Maintenance of property including trees	£ 2000.00
Bus shelter	£ 2000.00
General Reserve	£ 7949.48

Mr Blatch commented on what he considered to be the relatively high cost of the village grass cutting compared with that paid for the churchyard and suggested that it might be advantageous for the Parish Council to consider using the same contractor.

6. Reports from other village organisations

Spaldwick PCC – John Blatch

The church has had an average year, service attendances reaching double figures only occasionally with an age level well into the 70's. Despite this we managed to pay our way and raised about £8000 during the year, of which £800 came from the Parish Council. Just enough to pay the routine running costs of the Church, but no more. There is little more to report on last year and I think it of more interest to talk about the future. There is a scheme whereby small rural churches get taken under the wing of nearby thriving churches, indeed this is happening with Ellington and Grafham joining with Brampton. Two small villages joining with Brampton, a village of 5000 residents, may work. In our case six villages joining with Kimbolton (1200 residents) probably would not. This scheme and the talk it has generated has inspired the PCC to try and do something about our own future. Almost anything to do in our Church is affected by the lack of water and drainage. We have known this for a long time but with the prospect of a Village Hall being built adjacent to the church, and these utilities becoming available, we have delayed doing anything. But things have reached a stage where we feel that we must go our own way and so the PCC have decided to try and raise the funds required

to lay on water and drainage, irrespective of what progress is made with a Village Hall. We will be funding this work by raising money within the village and also by appealing for help from a range of funding organizations.

In this connection it has not escaped our notice that the Village Hall Committee has considerable funds in the bank, but we have not approached the Committee for any help. Nor do we intend to do so. Indeed the situation is actually the complete opposite; the PCC has something to offer to the Hall Committee. We understand the situation facing the Village Hall Committee. At this moment there is a problem about siting, once it is built it immediately becomes a liability requiring some thousands of pounds per year upkeep and there are a number of people in the village who question the whole need for a Hall, considering that we have managed so long without one. There is a building that answers all of these points, the Church. It just needs money spent to make it usable for a whole variety of events as well as for Sunday services. It is the intention of the PCC to do this in the long term; our present plan to connect water and drainage is just a start. We would wish to do this irrespective of any progress with a Village Hall, but if the Hall Committee and the Parish Council should think that its plans would move more quickly by utilizing an existing building, the Church, then I can assure everybody that the PCC would be pleased to discuss the matter.

Village Hall Committee – Grahame Leach

We recently held an A.G.M for the election of members for our Committee.

We now have the following people, who are registered as Trustees with the Charity Commission. Lyndy Pullan, Raine Thompson [Treasurer], Stephen Bowering, Peter Edwards, Grahame Leach [Chairman]

We have a co-opted member, Councillor Mike Robinson, who represents the Parish Council

We have been helped by David Henrick who has helped us with our minute taking and Jim White our H.D.C. Councillor, who has taken a keen interest in our progress. Mark Heath has placed all our minutes on the Webpage and many other documents. This has also been of great help.

We were recently given a renewed offer on a site within the village at Bury Field. We have discussed this and have now written to Robinson Hall, to put this on hold. We were worried about the cost of building and running costs and felt we needed to fully check any possible building decisions. This is nearly complete and we will present a full case for or against the building of a Village Hall, at a meeting, within a short time.

We had already decided to do all this before we heard about the plans for the Church. We welcome the possible development within the Church and fully understand the need to modernise this wonderful building.

It does pose further problems for us, as we have potential running costs in the future of £8/10000pa and the Church will require a sum of £8000 pa, as well as ourselves. We also have a huge shortfall in funds and would need a massive fundraising effort to build a hall. Can the village afford to run two competing buildings?

It is important that we look at this very carefully and we will approach the village for a future direction for our Charity, at and before our future meeting.

We all feel it is unacceptable to keep the money we have, for year after year, without a decision from the village, on how to spend it. It is our hope to solve this problem within a short time with your help and most importantly with a vote from all those eligible, within our proposed village meeting.

Superfast broadband- Mark Heath

Spaldwick has maintained its high national profile with superfast broadband over the past year. Camera crews visited Spaldwick to create video case studies to support the Government's national superfast broadband campaign.

Mark Heath was invited to present to MPs and other VIPs at Connecting Cambridgeshire's celebration event in January 2016.

Spaldwick has the highest superfast broadband take-up of all villages and towns in Cambridgeshire – with about three quarters of households in Spaldwick now subscribing to high-speed fibre broadband.

When Minister Ed Vaizey visited Spaldwick, some villagers expressed the hope that Spaldwick would benefit from future broadband enhancements. In the past year, there have been several service improvements. Ultra HD TV is now broadcast via our street cabinet, and Spaldwick received the very first Ultra HD broadcast by BT in August 2015. G. INP has been implemented in the street cabinet, giving an extra few Mbit/s for many villagers. Recently, BT increased the maximum download speed of its Infinity 1 service from 40 Mbps to 52 Mbps.

In the future, the next-generation technology G.fast should be rolled out in Spaldwick, bringing download speeds of about 300 Mbps to villagers. Mark Heath will hopefully be visiting BT Labs in Ipswich in the next few months to understand the latest developments and timescales.

Spaldwick website – Mark Heath

The Spaldwick website has attracted a record number of visitors in the past 12 months. There were over 100,000 visits in the year, with each visit lasting just under 5 minutes.

There is increased awareness and reach of the website due to more people being registered for news alerts (email or the Spaldwick Facebook page). 375 people are registered for email alerts, and the Spaldwick Facebook page has reached 319 likes.

The ability to reach people has helped sell tickets for village events. For example, the 1940s evening was a sell-out, months in advance. The website also helped to promote events and clubs. This year's Santa Sleigh attracted the biggest crowds yet. Many of the clubs and groups in Spaldwick now produce content and news for the website.

Several articles produced a huge response. News on the service station fire brought over 3,000 visitors to the site within 24 hours, and developments at the service station have proved very popular. Photos have also continued to be popular. For example, there have been over 10,000 views of the photos showing the developments at Manor Farm. Special features about young people in the village – produced by Rebecca Heath – have created great interest, each achieving over 2,000 visits to the website. These included news about the successes of Molly Hall and Zoë Perkins. Shortly, the website will provide coverage on Zoë's appearance at the Brass Final of the BBC Young Musician of the Year 2016 competition.

Bowls Club - Andrew Vicars

The club meets in the School Hall and the Community Room from 7pm every Tuesday night, during term time, the aim of the club is to provide a fun and social evening. In the past year the club played 11 friendly matches against clubs from nearby villages, of which 6 were won, during these matches the host club provides refreshments and members get the chance to socialise with other bowlers. A full programme of inter club competitions took place throughout the year, with the annual presentation dinner taking place at "The George". The clubs other main social event this year was a summer barbeque which was enjoyed both by members and friends. The club has managed to remain financially viable, although vacancies exist for new members who would be made most welcome, with that in mind the club are hoping to hold an open night in the near future

Escape Youth Group- Sharan Jackson-Rimmer

The fortnightly meetings at the school are much appreciated by the 20- 30 young people who attend. A brilliant time was also enjoyed at the archery & climbing wall event held recently at the Grafham Water Centre. The committee is now trying to recruit a trained youth worker or someone who is thinking of a career in youth work or social care who would be trained to a minimum status of Level 1 youth worker by Huntingdon Youth Services, and would be paid!

Some of the current committee plan to stand down at our next AGM in July, so new members are disparately needed to ensure continuation of the youth club after the summer break.

Social Group

Several very successful events were held during 2015 including the St Georges Day celebration at The George in April and the Fete in the School grounds in July.

The George was also transformed on the evening on Wednesday 24th February 2016, when it hosted the 1940s Dinner of a Decade organised by the Social Group. The Dolly Girls were a highlight in what proved to be a superb evening.

Footpaths – Mick Ager (received after the meeting but included as agreed)

Laminated Footpath right of way maps have been produced. One will be displayed when the proposed additional notice board is erected on the Village Green, Bridge/kissing gate (footpath12) midway between Spaldwick and Easton became overgrown again in summer 2015 and was subsequently cleared following discussion with the CCC Rights of way team (Simeon Carroll) who actually cleared the bridge personally. Simeon Carroll has now moved to a similar role to the south of Cambridge. It would be appreciated if he could be mentioned in the AGM (or minutes) for his support of Spaldwick.

Footpath waymarks have been provided during the year on footpath 15, North of the concrete path on the North side of the A14.

Cockway Lane - the man made hump 200 metres west of the end of Mount Pleasant has been removed to put the path back to its original elevation.

Footpath 15 - Bridge safety rails above the flood drainage channel on the concrete path parallel and North to the A14 has been replaced by the local farmer Concerns of a Parishioner regarding horses in a paddock which footpath 12 cuts across was escalated to Easton Parish Council. A reply was forthcoming but only went some way to allay the fear of one of our village residents. No further incidents have been reported.

Horses in Bury Close damaged the last remaining wooden kissing gate, this was repaired but has been damaged again (winter 2015).

7. Public Open Forum – not required.

In the absence of any further business the meeting closed at 8.43 pm