

GREAT GRANSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th April 2019

Those present were:

Andrew Pett Chairman

Diane Taylor Clerk

Michael Capps Parish Councillor

Nick Ginn Parish Councillor

Peter King Parish Councillor

Jeff Gorton Parish Councillor

Peter King Parish Councillor

District Councillor Richard West

and 1 member of the public

1. The meeting was opened at 7.30pm with a silent prayer.
2. **Apologies.** There were apologies from Parish Councillors Giles Scott and James Catmur and County Councillor Julie Wisson.
3. **Minutes** of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, held on 26th April 2018 had been circulated to councillors soon afterwards and were considered at the Parish Council meeting on 14th May 2018. The minutes were then approved and accordingly initialled. At this meeting the initialled minutes of 26th April 2018 were approved and accordingly signed by the chairman.
4. **Chairman's Report.** The Chairman spoke about the very busy past year. The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) had made good progress, with monthly meetings, workshops and an exhibition earlier in the year. Cambridgeshire Acre had run a workshop and councillors had been regularly updated. There had also been a meeting with the County Council and the school to discuss the future should there be too much development in the village. There had also been a meeting with HDC planners when assistance was given on housing numbers and future plans. Funding was applied for and very positive progress made. Adoption of the Plan early next year is the target. The Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) has received grants and ETC Sports Surfaces are due to commence work. Councillors have been kept regularly up to date by Councillor Peter King who has worked hard on the project. Traffic continues to be a problem; the attempt to lower the speed limit along Meadow Road to 50mph was unsuccessful but as a result of last year's Local Highway Improvement Bid, Crow Tree Street footpath was resurfaced and a 40pmh buffer zone put in along Meadow Road. Speedwatch continues; over 500 cars regularly enter the village in an hour with about 100 using Little Gransden route and the other 400 using Caxton Road. Vehicles established to have false number plates are reported to the police. Thanks to Debi and Andrew Pearce who regularly move the Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign. Infrastructure improvements have been a major area of focus with the announcement of the A428 preferred Orange route, the East-West Rail link going out to preliminary consultation with this Council maintaining that the sanctity of the Abbotsley valley should be preserved and that the southern routes are better placed to assist growth with the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Transport, Phase 2. Councillor James Catmur has worked hard on the Village Risk Register, having identified 24 risks to the Parish with an equal mix of those to be worked on including bus services, internet and mobile services and HDC's lack of a Local Plan, some to be monitored and some to plan for. The Council will continue to monitor the Register. An asset check and risk assessment has been carried out prior to the renewal of insurances in June. There are continuing issues with the County grass cutting, with the grass growing long over the full season. Increasingly, residents are cutting areas

Chairman's Report – continued:

that in the past were left to the County. The Parish Council's own contractors are doing well as the cemetery and sportsfield are being cut to specification. The West Street light was eventually connected after much investigation. An annual survey/inspection of the village trees is to be carried out as advised by the Council's insurers, rather than every 3 years. Thanks go to Councillor Michael Capps for his monitoring of this. Reserves on street lighting, further inspection of trees and a sinking fund for the MUGA led to an increase in the precept of £500 to £24,000 for 2019/20. Thanks go to Des Merrill and the village litter pickers who collected 60 bags of litter. There has been fewer recorded problems with wheelie bins and missed collections. Councillor Nick Ginn has reported back to the Council and provided regular updates on Little Gransden Airfield and the Gliding Club including the planning application to vary conditions to increase the number of aerotows per day as well as the complaints procedure which is being updated on the club's website. The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) became effective on 25th May 2018. Councillor King was appointed Data Protection Officer and the Council joined Capalc's GDPR Membership Scheme. Planning has been a very busy year in terms of attendance at the Development Management Committee meetings at HDC. Councillor Scott and the Chairman had attended a number of the meetings where the Officer's recommendation was contrary to the Parish Council's or where there had been a departure from the Local Plan. As HDC's Local Plan is out of date and the new plan to 2036 has not been formally adopted, the dreaded 'tilted balance' from the NPPF applies to most plans in HDC. The Parish Council wishes to maintain Great Gransden as a 'small settlement' without any large-scale development, but the District Council approved the Sand Road development despite over 100 objections. The fight goes on until the new Local Plan is adopted. Mark Deas of Cambridgeshire Acre addressed the Council at its August 2018 meeting about the Housing Needs Survey undertaken in the summer. The survey looked at growth, the percentage of owner-occupied houses, the percentage of affordable housing and the type of housing on the market in Great Gransden. This information is useful for the NDP in the future. Finally, Councillor Julie Wisson was thanked for keeping the Parish Council informed, Councillor Richard West for attending all our meetings and his advice and help on planning matters and development in the village as well as thanks to all his fellow Parish Councillors for their hard work and to the clerk for her help and assistance. Councillor Capps expressed his confidence and thanks to the Chairman on behalf of his fellow councillors.

5. County Councillor Julie Wisson. In her absence, the Chairman read out the report from Julie Wisson which is filed hereafter as Appendix No. 1. The report covered the A428 preferred route option and the option for the Black Cat Roundabout, consultation on the 5 route options for the East West Rail link between Oxford and Cambridge and the proposal by the mayor of Cambridge and Peterborough for a metro system, Cam metro linking St Neots surrounding areas with Cambridge. Additionally, Councillor Wisson continues to sit on the Children and Young Peoples Committee and work closely with residents of Loves Farm as well as continuing to attend parish council meetings, support bids to the County Council's Local Highways Initiatives and help the Parish Council and Speedwatch to reduce the problem of speeding traffic through Great Gransden.

6. District Councillor Richard West spoke about planning decisions and the lack of consistency. HDC were asked to provide for 14,000 houses and subsequently asked to deliver 21,000. As HDC's policies were not suitable, tilted balance has come into play leading to unsuitable development. He expressed concern about the constraints associated with listed buildings. He also expressed his disappointment with the level of service at the District Council although there has been a move to modernise customer service. His two-year term as Chairman of the District Council will come to an end in May. His duties also include Chairman of the Employment Committee, Member of the Development Management Committee and Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park sub-group. His report is filed hereafter as Appendix No. 2.

7. Financial Statement. The clerk's summary for the year had been circulated. The summary is filed hereafter as Appendix No. 3.

8. The Poor's Land Charity. The Chairman reported that there had been no new requests this year for financial assistance with 4 villagers continuing to receive 5 payments per annum, it having been proposed that the winter fuel payments be increased by £5 per month to £135. Various grants had also been made to village organisations including the Lighthouse Café, Gransden Allotment Association, Explorer Scouts, Christmas Hampers for village recipients, the MUGA, Equestrian Vaulting and St Bartholomew's Church. The trustees are the Chairman, Councillor Scott and Councillor Gorton who had met on 3 occasions discussing the objects of the charity and its income which is available for the benefit of Great Gransden residents. The charity has a moderate risk strategy and the trustees are guided by the charity's financial advisor. The present investment mix provides an immediate income requirement and a longer-term goal for growth. The 12 months figures show a total yield of -4% net of fees (capital growth -6.4%, income return 2.5%). The stock market has declined; the FTSE All Share index is -9.5% in 2018, with the charity's funds ahead of that. Although the asset value of the charity's fund has declined over the past 12 months, today it has almost recovered. The present estimated income yield is 2.55%.

9. The Parish Council Cemetery. Jeff Gorton presented the report that is filed as Appendix No. 4. The report commented on the excellent grass cutting and the Garden of Remembrance has also been well maintained. No theft or vandalism has taken place over the past 12 months. Work has been carried out to the trees bordering the Dole Field with their lower branches removed as well as work to reinstate the rain water supply which included work to trees adjacent the shed whose canopy was shielding the shed roof and unblocking the gutters which were hindering the collection of rainwater. The accident with one of the older gravestones, reported last year, was rectified during the year.

10. Reading Room Management Committee. Peter King read out the report prepared by Celia Chignell on behalf of the Reading Room Management Committee. The report is filed as Appendix No. 5 together with the accounts. The re-thatch of the Reading Room was completed in August and tree work carried out when some large branches came down during windy weather. Fundraising has continued and donations received from Don Airey's Blues and Soul evening as well as a bequest from the late Mrs Margaret Marr.

11. The Gransden Sportsfield and Recreational Association. Nick Ginn read out the report prepared by Nancy Kyle on behalf of the GSRA. The report is filed as Appendix No. 6 together with the accounts. The defibrillator has been installed, Buchans, grass cutting contractor, has continued to do a great job and lights replaced at the Tennis Club. Drainage is still a problem. Villagers have been asked for ideas concerning the sports field and a cricket match is to take place in June between the two local pubs.

12. The Gransdens Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Society. Jeff Gorton presented the report that is filed as Appendix No.7. The dry summer saw some crops flourish and others suffer. As a result, the society obtained funding with thanks to the Poor's Land Charity, for a water catchment system and a communal system is due to be installed. Two water stations will initially be installed eventually providing 8,000 litres of rainwater when and if the system catches enough water. Fundraising has principally been through shop sales of allotment produce. New initiatives are underway to encourage existing and new members of the local village to join the society.

There being no other business this meeting was closed at 8.23pm.