

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BAWDESWELL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH MAY 2019 AT THE VILLAGE HALL.

Present: B.Cunliffe (Chair), P. Lilwall, A. Toomey, K. Ewing, A Hartley-Walder and R. Read

Mrs. J Boxall (Clerk)

Members of the public – 5

Cllr Bill Cunliffe opened the meeting at 7.00pm and gave the following report on behalf of the Parish Council.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019

The last year for Bawdeswell has been a one of successes, and during this year the PC has strengthened its ties with local organisations and with our neighbouring Parish Council in Foxley.

Our existing Parish Council were re-elected this year, without the need for a costly election.

I believe the current council to be a strong, representative and positive Council and I am grateful to all the councillors for their hard work, dedication and commitment.

We are also fortunate to have Jo Boxall as Parish Clerk. Her knowledge and dedication is much appreciated.

There is a common ground that all our councillors share, they are all proud to live in Bawdeswell and are happy to give up their time without payment to ensure Bawdeswell is the village we all want it to be. Having said that, I do admit that having trudged through deep snow one winter's night to attend a council meeting to find no parishioners had attended was a test of our resilience, especially when a parishioner who was not at the meeting later wrote to us complaining that the 45 minutes the meeting took was too short...

This year Councillor Tony Smith resigned after many years service to the village. He was replaced by Anni Hartley-Walder who has already become a vital member of the council. Roy Reed rejoined us and is a very valuable asset.

Most people know Bawdeswell to be a lovely typical Norfolk village with a beautiful church, an excellent primary school, a great new village hall and a garden centre. Those who live here know that we are much more than that, we have a community spirit second to none.

I feel it is a huge benefit that our councillors are involved in other facets of village life as it ensures the Parish Council is aware and able when possible to assist these organisations.

Since becoming the proud chairman of the Parish Council, I have made it a major priority of mine to improve relations between the council and the Village Hall Trustees. I believe that the relationship between us now is one of trust and mutual respect and I am dedicated to maintaining this.

I am also pleased to report that we have an excellent working relationship with our church and will soon hopefully share with the church the cost of maintenance of the church wall which is in need of repair.

Our primary school now has a new head mistress, Emma Yerby-Smith and Councillor Hartley-Walder is on the School Board of Governors. The school and the village hall are vital ingredients of village life so this year I introduced an agenda item for all PC meetings to include updates on school and village hall matters. This will enable the PC to assist when necessary and possible.

Whilst on the subject of the village hall, I am pleased to report that they have had another very successful year, improvements to the facilities have ensured that this year again there has been an increase in bookings by the many and varied users. The hall is a massive asset to the village and the PC appreciates all the hard work carried out by the Trustees and the excellent band of helpers.

The recreation ground is also an important part of the village. The Youth Football Team play regularly and use it for their Wednesday night training sessions. They have had a very successful season winning trophies and offering great coaching for those playing. The PC continues to support the football team financially and have

given permission to have their much needed store room in the recreation ground. The children's play area has been another well used facility and the cost of repairs to some of the equipment is fully justified.

Our Primary School has had a successful year and having met the new headmistress I think the school will have continued success and I anticipate many improvements. To see the pupils of the school entertaining at the FAB Over 50s Christmas Party with Christmas songs in the village hall was a clear example of a close community working together for the good of all.

Our church, like many others is doing all it can to increase attendances. It is a lovely church and with Christopher as our Reverend we have a great opportunity to increase the size of the congregation. The World War Memorial seat was finally positioned in the churchyard, after many parishioners made their feelings known. It showed the PC does listen to the views of the residents. The seat is now clearly visible, is pleasing on the eye and is regularly used.

One of the most important matters the PC has to deal with is planning applications. Unless we are vigilant and continue to fight all attempts to inflict unwanted developments which are outside the Settlement Boundary, we risk becoming a large building site with no amenities. The final say in planning matters always rests with Breckland Council and we know they have quotas to reach. However we will continue to ensure Breckland hear the voice of those who are most affected by their decisions, namely the villagers of Bawdeswell. We will constantly remind Breckland that we expect them to keep their promise that the granting of permission for 40 new dwellings in land off Hall Road will fulfil our quota under the New Local Plan for the next 25 years. We have recently successfully objected to the application for a small development in Dereham Road and we will continue to object to any development outside the Settlement Boundary.

The Bawdeswell and Foxley Parish Councils work closely together when planning applications impact on both villages. Breckland maintain that the lack of facilities in Foxley is irrelevant, stating there are sufficient facilities in Bawdeswell to service both villages. This is a claim we vehemently contest, given our limited resources. On the subject of Parish Councils working well together, a major application during the last year was for 10,000 new dwellings in a new town in North Elmham. This caused much alarm in all the villages affected, including Bawdeswell. Our PC had three councillors on a joint committee of those villages affected and worked together to object to the application. Together we attended the meeting of the Breckland Planning Committee and strongly objected to this major development. As the application could not continue without the support of Breckland we were pleased that Breckland rejected the application and the plans were abandoned. What the application did prove was that a joint, well co-ordinated co-operative of PCs is a force to be reckoned with.

So there you have it, a year of successes, of consolidation and co-operation of working together in our village. Long may it continue, and I make this promise, Bawdeswell Parish Council will fight to maintain and where possible improve the living conditions and facilities of all those fortunate to live in our lovely village.

Bill Cunliffe

Chairman Bawdeswell parish Council.

There being no further business the Annual Parish Meeting was closed at 7.10pm