

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 18 April 2018 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mr Wenman - away

Present: Mr Sole, Ms Newland, Mr Wheeler, Mr Barnes, Mr Brown, Mrs Slator, Cllr Smith, Cllr Kindersley (after meeting in Orwell), six members of the public and the Clerk.

The Chairman, Mr Wheeler, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Police Report: A request to either attend or send a report was sent to the Police, but neither report nor representation was available.

District Council report from Cllr Smith:

Local Plan:

Apparently, the Local Plan is almost done and the Council is currently registering the representations from the last consultations. 950 representations were received from S Cambs residents and 250 from City. We still have no indication of when it will be finally adopted. Nor, we suspect, does anyone else.

Planning:

SCDC has to send a letter to Government explaining why the planning is in such disarray. There is a possibility that the District Council may lose its right to decide on planning applications locally. Croydon is very low key and not touched by the lack of a Local plan. There is to be a review of the planning delegation system. Officers can make decisions on applications for up to 100 houses and do not even have to consult Parish Councils.

Finally:

Cllr Smith thanked Councillors for their support, especially when she was being bullied. She is very sorry that she will no longer be representing Croydon, but is always happy to help - just contact her.

The Chairman thanked Bridget for her consistent attendance, her help over so many local matters and wished her well for the future.

County Council report from Cllr Kindersley:

Potholes!

There is a budget for potholes that the Highways Supervisor has to allocate across the very worst potholes throughout South Cambs. The County Council currently has a contract with Skanska, who are supposed to be filling the worst potholes. The bottom line is that there is not enough cash to pay for all the potholes.

Flooding:

It has been a difficult year all round due to financial constraints. There has been a site visit to Arrington to see if the reason for the frequent floods can be determined.

Ely Bypass:

This will probably be over budget. Due to the make-up of the ground, it is likely that the supports will have to be 40m deep before there is any suitable base for the concrete. No test holes have been dug in order to establish this. If this is the case, then digging to this depth will add an extra £13m to the contract. County does not seem to learn from its previous mistakes (e.g. Guided Busway).

Shire Hall:

CCC is leaving Shire Hall and planning to sell it; it currently costs around £2.2m per year to run as it is a Listed Building, as are the others on the site. Moving the County Council to a new building at a new location (currently unconfirmed) will cost a tremendous amount of money. When SCDC moved from Cambridge to Cambourne the bill was around £17m. This scheme is not alleviating the cuts that are being made to services.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Kindersley for his report.

Report from Orwell School: Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 contributed to this report.

The children continue to enjoy school and their particular favourite subjects are: maths, PE, ICT and science. Some of the reasons given were:

- Find algebra fun
- Like the practice tests taken home
- Weekly maths challenge
- Space topic - one child liked learning facts and said, 'Did you know that Venus days are longer than its years?'

The favourite part of the day, for most, remains playtime and lunchtime. The children enjoy playing with friends, but also enjoy working with their friends where they can share ideas and help one another out. When asked what they would change, some children suggested: more art, more fun in PE - currently, in one class they are doing an initiative called 'Every Minute on the Minute' a series of activities lasting for one minute e.g. 20 high knees or 10 burpees. It's very hard work! Thanks

There have been many trips out and visitors in to school and a highlight of last term was the 'Young Voices' event at the O2. Over 7000 pupils took part and there was singing and dancing - they did a Stars Wars Dance and loved dancing to the song 'YMCA'. There was a big audience. The pupils also took part in a Mini Olympics event where they competed against local schools - this included long jump, dancing and a wide variety of other activities

There have been many opportunities to visit local churches and a very interesting day was spent at Ely Cathedral.

Currently, there is an Oracy Project taking place across the school and the children were able to speak about some of the skills they are currently developing – keeping eye contact with the speaker and listening carefully. They explained why this is so important.

The children were overwhelmingly positive about the adults at school. They felt the teaching was good, that all adults listened and were friendly, kind and helpful. They all had someone to speak to if they were worried. One child said that the adults make sure you're having a good time and that they help with friendship problems.

The children greatly value the awards that are given out in assembly. At the moment there is a weekly award for each class for writing. They said it was good to see other children's work and it was explained why each piece was good and that this could help to improve their own writing. They also liked the Hollands Cup for music. A child can get this for playing a musical instrument, singing well or for having a good attitude.

They spoke about their learning and the fact that they had to come out of their comfort zone – particularly in maths. In lessons, they had activities to complete and then had an extension, sometimes in the form of a problem, at the end. It was stated that the teacher taught them well during the first activity, helping them to learn something new and then they were challenged in the final activity. They thought it was usually hard, but not too hard.

Finally, they would like you to know that they are happy at school and that they think it is a great place to learn.

Report from Mrs Diana Walters - Chair of the Reading Room Trustees

The Reading Room had new eco lighting fitted following a successful application for a District Council Grant and support from the Parish Council. We also had a new Gents toilet and hand basin fitted. The Reading Room remains independent and self-sufficient and we are working hard with ACRE to sort out our legal status and responsibilities. Work in progress, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. Bookings have been up but we sadly lost our newly appointed Booking Clerk, Janet Wheeler, but we now have a super new Website, which has made the job much easier and raised the profile of the

Reading Room with a regular Tai Ji Classes on Thursdays and Tuesday Group Meetings with an interesting variety of activities.

Wear and tear is an on-going feature requiring constant maintenance and help. We are planning a fund raising Golf Day in September to raise funds to build a store room attached to the building, a bigger food hatch and French doors out onto the clearer patio area, suitable for a few small outside activities. Percy is kindly doing the plans and Church is interested in the Shed for storage. We still hope to tidy up the pond, which could be such a lovely area in time with the support of Mr Farrer and The Fresh Waterways Trust. Fingers crossed.

We hope 20018/19 is another successful year. My thanks to all the Trustees, and the continuing support of the Parish Council, whose contribution to this year's projects and grass cutting has been invaluable. We welcome interested Villagers to come to our AGM in July and welcome all feedback and ideas.

TRUSTEES

Chairman, Bookings Clerk & caretaker; Diana Walters

Secretary; Janice Horsford

Treasurer; Chris Elsley

Rev'd Felicity Crouch

Valerie Barnes

Judith Pillinger

Report from Mr Ralph - co-Chair of Implementation Group:-

The full Implementation Group (IG) has met twice in the past year supplemented by several smaller team meetings focused on particular areas of activity.

Taking some of the Action Plan headings in turn:

1. Village Development: Previous reports have largely focused on the proposed development in the middle, and to the south of, the High Street. Sadly, there is no substantial progress to report though very occasional contact has been maintained.

A second possible development at the west end of the village was referred to last year. Once again no progress has been made.

Recently an application was made for outline permission for a further development of three two-storey houses behind the Queen Adelaide. Representatives of the IG development sub team picked this up and were very grateful that the owner agreed to a site meeting. Following this, comments and reactions were made to the Parish Council meeting. In brief these were that the IG was in principle supportive of small developments but there were concerns with this particular proposal about the parking situation and access in general, that the rearmost house extends too far back towards open fields and footpaths, and that consideration of the site as a whole, rather than piecemeal, would result in a better proposal. These comments quite closely mirrored those independently submitted by several villagers. Since the Parish Council meeting, contact with the owner has continued and an alternative layout has been discussed which may address many of these concerns. Whether these will be adopted may well depend on what decision is reached by SCDC Planning. The IG would like to thank the owner for his willingness to meet and discuss alternatives.

Other than the above, and in the absence of any kind of community land, the IG is beginning to consider whether any alternative sites might be suitable which might help to meet the aspirations described in the CLP. Sadly, there has been no quick provision of, for example, community land so persistence and necessarily slow progress seems to be the way of things.

2. Village Environment: Again some good success to report. With PC support there have been two very good litter pick and tidy up days. There was a good turnout on each occasion and a large amount of rubbish was collected, roadside paths cleared and branches cut back. The PC funded long handle grabbers have been put to good use on these and many other days. These can be borrowed from Bedlam front porch or the church front porch where they are left openly available. Thanks to Elaine

Hughes for leading this work area and also to SCDC for collecting the filled bags. It is intended to have another clear up day in May, possibly the first or second Saturdays (5th or 12th); please be on the lookout for further information.

3. Facilities - Display boards: These are available for anyone's use and are currently stored in a locked cupboard in the church. Anyone wishing to borrow these on loan should contact Val on 208532. It is hoped they will have a good airing during this year's Car Show on 15th July.

4. Sustainability: The "village" is signed up to the SCDC Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP). Judith Pillinger has continued to be the main contact and SPEP information is being received. Following the trial in early 2017 it is hoped to once again loan the SPEP thermal camera and offer it to households and other premises to establish key areas of heat loss. Anyone wanting their house/offices to be added to the winter 2018/19 list and checked out for heat losses should contact Malcolm 01223-208939. It is expected that membership of the SPEP will lead to future activities in the area of sustainability. There plenty of opportunities in this area and Croydon's level of involvement is limited only by the number of volunteers so anyone interested in this area of work please contact Judith on 07774-126686.

5. Communications: This is one area where the IG has been trying to make a difference. Last year's report was all about the Communications Survey so it is good to be able to report that there has been good progress. The e-News system is up and running and is successful as far as it goes. It is being received by 65% of households and messages are being opened by up to 70% of recipients. By industry standards this is a very high success rate but for a small community like ours the Comms Team thinks we should be able to do better and especially as 90% said they wanted such a system! Also quite a few house sales have occurred so new owners need to be contacted and hopefully brought in. So there is more work to do. Very much on the plus side, the PC Clerk is now trained and up and running – and currently holds the record for highest opening rate!

The other Comms area of activity has been to work support Garth with news feed for the village website. There has been some improvement with the website looking fresher but again further improvement could be made and this will continue to be worked on. Anyone with a news item who is not sure how to get it on to the website then simply contact either Judith on 07774-126686, or Malcolm 01223-208939 or Garth 208709.

6. Recreation & Facilities: It is pleasing to report that two new village groups have been started. The First Tuesday Group meets as you might guess on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Reading Room. Just turn up on the night and be sure of a warm welcome. Its aim is for local people to get together in a relaxed atmosphere to pursue an agreed programme of events, speakers and activities. To date the programme has been very varied, from board games to poetry. The current emphasis is on gathering and then recording local history, photographs, local buildings, notable people, wartime experiences etc and eventually to produce a public resource available to all - how many villagers know that King Edward II stayed in Croydon for three days in the early 14th century?

The second group is a bird watching group. This has already been on two outings, the first to darkest Wimpole and the second to even darker Fen Drayton. Their record speaks for itself, 32 different species on the first trip and 40 on the second. For further information contact either Val (208532) or Carol (207354).

Finally, most of you will know that Tai Ji classes have commenced in the Reading Room and for more details contact Di on 208042.

So with relaxed social evenings, bird watching and Tai Ji, the village should increasingly be full of happy smiling faces – especially those leaving the now thriving Queen Adelaide!

Finally, finally, the IG would like to thank the Parish Council for its continued support, also to Sue for her invaluable linking role and to all of the Councillors, and the Clerk, for giving up their time for the benefit of the whole community here in Croydon.

Thank you.

Malcolm & Jonny - Implementation Group Co-Chairs

Implementation Group

Jonny Firth Co-Chair - Malcolm Ralph Co-Chair

Sue Slator PC Rep

Judith Pillinger

Elaine Hughes

Val Barnes

Maggie John

Keith Buchanan

Vivien Taylor

Janet Wheeler

Tim Walters

Percy Mark

Anne Wood

Terms of Reference of the Implementation Group:

“In cooperation with the Parish Council, the role of the Implementation Group is to implement the expressed wishes of Croydon people as presented in the Community Led Report & Action Plan, and consulting further where necessary”

Chairman of the Parish Council - Mr Wheeler gave his report to the meeting.

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen – welcome to this year’s Annual Parish Meeting. 2017 – 2018 has seen some changes to the Croydon Parish Council with the welcome arrival of Caleb Wenman. It is pleasing to see that after a couple of years being closed the Queen Adelaide is open again serving our parishioners and others from nearby towns and villages.

Although we did not have a Vehicle show in 2017, plans are being drawn up for a show on 15th July and any offers of help would be greatly received.

There continues to be a number of issues that we are working on as a Parish Council.

Planning: There have been a number of plans submitted in Croydon which have come to the attention of the Parish Council and we have fed back our views on the merits or otherwise. There has been no progress on the proposed small development in the High Street. However planning for a further three houses to the side of the Queen Adelaide has been submitted which, including the flats will increase the number of new properties in the village by 7 since the Village Plan was published.

Dog Fouling: The number of complaints continues to be lower than previously reported.

Website: The Implementation Group have decided to keep the current site working for now, but will ensure that frequent and current information is provided to the village web master.

Thanks: I would like to thank the Chairmen of the Reading Rooms and the trustees their efforts in ensuring the Reading Rooms are continually maintained.

I would also like to thank the members of the Implementation Group for the work they are undertaking.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who has helped with village matters over the past year, the councillors who give up their spare time and patience and especially to Marian for her unfailing enthusiasm and dedication that she puts into her position as Clerk.

Parish Council Finance: The Clerk gave a report of the financial activities of the Parish Council during the last year, as below. The figure for the bank balance was an assessment, based on the assumption that all cheques issued had been cashed. Clerk will be writing to Barclays as no statements had been received since November, asking for copy statements and amending the financial report if necessary when the statement has been received.

Receipts		Payments		
Precept	£3,360.00	Insurance	£412.92	
Push Energy	£4,935.00	Reading Room	£130.00	
Interest - NSI	£8.36	Churchyard Maintenance	£400.00	
VAT reclaimed	£382.05	Contribution to deer sign (Hatley)	£80.00	
		Subs to Associations	£59.00	
Total receipts	£8,685.41	Storage device	£35.98	
		RBL wreath (2017)	£17.00	
		Website	£39.99	
		Auditor	£35.00	
		IG Stamps	£20.80	
		Clerk (including petty cash)	£1,211.73	
		Total		£2,442.42
Restricted Funds		Restricted Fund Purchases		
Community Benefit Fund		Croydon Reading Room - lighting		£350.00
Balance to date	£12,183.70			£2,792.42
Total expenditure this year	-£350.00			
Balance remaining	£11,833.70			
Balances at 31 March 2018		Balance at 31 March 2017	£12,186.67	
Investment Account	£11,781.57	add receipts	£8,685.41	
Bank Account	£6,315.09	less payments	-£2,792.42	
Less unrepresented chq (RBL)	-17.00			
Total	£18,079.66	Total	£18,079.66	

There were no questions from either Councillors or the floor on the accounts.

All Saints Church – Fabric Report to the Annual Parish Meeting

Churchyard Maintenance:

Summary

A year of preparation for the 5-yearly fabric inspection while completing holding repairs in some areas. Early non-invasive investigations of the Downing Vault.

Full Report

The condition of the stonework around the window in the south west corner of the Nave has been causing concern for some years and it was decided that shoring up was necessary to pre-empt a risk of collapse. John Hopwood was engaged in April 2017 to install an internal timber frame within the window reveal and at the same time to refit a section of cast iron gutter missing from the Chancel Roof.

During the Spring and Summer, we benefitted from several visits by teams under the Community Payback Scheme with their main task being to clear the trench around the perimeter of the Church and then lay a membrane topped with gravel. Overall, they were a well managed group and they did a good job all for the cost of opening the Reading Room and providing a few drinks and facilities – though we did, of course, have to pay for materials.

Ahead of the Quinquennial Inspection several maintenance tasks were undertaken, work was completed to rainwater goods including the Tower water chutes, also internal stair access to the Tower was cleaned; the Tower sounding chamber ladder and hatch were woodworm treated and the bell hanging irons painted and support beam oiled. A more significant completion was the installation

of a fixed ladder to the Tower Roof hatch which now permits inspection of the Tower Roof – the lack of a ladder was a particular criticism in the last report.

Last year I mentioned that the entrance to the Downing Vault had been identified and some small bore holes had been drilled below ground level in the outer Chancel Wall in an effort, unsuccessful as it turned out, to establish the floor construction. This remains an on-going effort. The Downing College Archivist has visited the church and it is hoped this will lead to stronger links being forged. If the Downing Vault eventually needs to be opened up, clearly, this will be a very newsworthy item.

The Quinquennial inspection was finally carried out in late August by Mr Oliver Caroe and the report was issued on 30th September 2017. The Report lists 18 urgent tasks, a further 51 tasks to be completed in one year, a further 35 tasks to be completed within two years, 19 within five years and also lists 9 maintenance items. 9 tasks which were listed in the previous report are now shown as completed. It is immediately clear that such a schedule is beyond the capability of a parish of this size so, as in previous years, we can only do our collective best to apply for grants to support major works whilst completing as many of the urgent items as possible, and carefully monitoring the rest. What is comforting is that there were no structural surprises. The most significant items are to monitor cracks notably at the Tower base, cracks also in the Chancel Floor which covers the Downing vault, repairs to the stonework of several fragile windows, various external wall and internal plaster repairs and repairs to the Roof ridges. More recently, urgent repairs were needed to a small section of the Chancel ceiling which was in danger of falling, this has now been secured.

Looking to the future, a visit was made to Great Eversden Church by a small team from Croydon to see what had been achieved by way of a servery, toilet facilities and heating. The group came away impressed with the quality of the design and construction and the use of space under the Tower. An air source heat pump system supplied the heating though the parish was experiencing some control issues.

As for grant applications, it is early days but it is clear that significant grants will be necessary if we are to make major progress and initial thinking has begun about how best to take this forward.

In February of this year an insurance assessment was conducted by Ecclesiastical Insurance and again, thankfully, with no surprises and no major insurance issues.

Moving on to the churchyard, some trees along the boundary with the Rectory have been pollarded down to hedge height and we thank Peter Slator for doing this. More needs to be done at that particular boundary, also the trees alongside Church Lane require re-pollarding as part of a moisture control programme. We want to thank Michael Norie for doing a great job in keeping the grass cut and the Churchyard tidy, also to the Parish Council for their continued financial support given towards the upkeep of the churchyard. Without this support, finding the resources would be difficult.

Very briefly on finances, the Car Show last year had to be cancelled very late on due to problems with the parking field. As a consequence the PCC has had a shortfall of funds for general expenditure in 2017 and has needed to dip in to savings otherwise earmarked for building fabric (the Show brings in around £1200 to both the Reading Room and Church). Clearly, this is not a sustainable situation especially when the PCC's own funds will be needed to top up any grant aid that might be forthcoming. Thankfully, the Car Show is back in the diary for this summer. In addition it is planned to circulate to all households information on church finances and what is needed to keep this Community building open for 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and hopefully this will spur further interest and commitment. It is often surprising how many people pop in at all times of the week, including the odd MP seeking an escape!

Finally, a huge thank you once again to all in the parish who contribute financially in any way whether by regular giving or indirectly by helping to organise, or support fund-raising events. Without such continued support we would not be able to keep open this beautiful mediaeval gem of a building.

Thank you

Malcolm Ralph & Carol McGeogh - Churchwardens

Community Benefit Fund:

It was decided that the Councillors would receive the CBF criteria by e-mail for review and discuss any amendments at the May meeting.

Public Session:

No matters were raised from the floor.

Council Matters Requiring Attention:

Speed cables:

There are a lot of cables across roads locally which Councillors believed to be for speed purposes, but apparently they are for counting traffic numbers and to do with the possible rail link for this area. Cllr Kimndersley thought they had been placed illegally.

Lower Road - white lines:

These have not been repainted yet, but the weather has not really been good enough to undertake this. Mr Brown is monitoring the situation and the original e-mail regarding this will be sent to Council.

Reading Room Trustee: Councillors are being invited to volunteer for this.

Mailchimp: The Clerk has successfully sent out the first agenda by Mailchimp. All future agendas are to be sent in this fashion, and will also be put onto the Notice board and website.

Car Show toilets: Council decided to accept LSK's quotation and Clerk will contact Mrs Sole, who has offered to liaise with the company.

Gransden Gliding Club: Council's comments on the amendments were sent to both Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils.

Comments from Croydon Parish Council on the application reference 18/00548/S73:- Council has concerns regarding unlimited aerotows and suggests a higher limit than at present might be acceptable, but otherwise has no objections. All were in favour.

Electoral register: Update circulated to Councillors.

Barclays: As previously stated, no statements on the account had been received since November. It was suggested that the December statement could have been lost in the Christmas post, but because no transactions had taken place since then, Council was not expecting a statement. The Clerk cannot communicate with Barclays directly because she is not a signatory on the account, so letters have to be signed by the bank signatories, so this does take a little time. Clerk had explained earlier to the meeting that for the purposes of the bank balance on the Financial Report, it was assumed that all cheques issued had been cashed. Once the copy statements are received, if this is not the case the report will be amended..

***Note:** The bank balance was subsequently amended as the RBL cheque had not been cashed in the financial year. The copy report in the minutes has been corrected.*

Date of Next Annual Meeting: 17 April 2019 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm

Date of Next Meeting: 16 May in the Reading Room at 7.30pm - Annual Parish Council meeting

As there was no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting formally closed at 8.35pm.

Signed

Date