

Grendon Parish Council

Annual Parish Forum

19th April 2023, 7.30pm

Minutes

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ian & Lulu Denton, Rev Morna, Trevor Higgs & Andrew Rush.

2. Welcome & introduction, Councillor Smith, Chairman

Cllr Smith welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2022 were approved.

4. Matters arising

There had been one matter arising which was upgrade of the stiles on the 'Grendon round' walk. Some repairs have now been completed, and additional work will be considered as part of ongoing budgeting.

5. Annual report from the Parish Council, Councillor Smith, Chairman, followed by questions and answers.

The Chairman presented a summary of the annual report.

There were no questions or comments.

<https://www.grendon-pc.org.uk/uploads/grendon-parish-council-annual-report-2023.pdf?v=1681835847>

6. Discussion on proposed new burial space & show of hands in support / against proposal.

A discussion took place about the report presented at the meeting -

<https://www.grendon-pc.org.uk/uploads/grendon-burial-space-report-for-annual-parish-forum.pdf?v=1681979293>

the general opinion seemed to be that whilst residents thought there should be the option to be buried in the village the cost was too high as things currently stood, and that the awkward road layout could be difficult to overcome. A further questionnaire will be circulated more widely to residents.

7. Report / Observations from Unitary Councillors

No attendance

8. Reports from local clubs & organisations and questions & answers

1st Grendon (St. Mary's) Brownies

Numbers have dropped since we re-opened post covid and we now have 7 girls who still attend weekly and seem to enjoy what we have to offer. The girls have continued to take part in many adventures, crafts, badges & games. As a Church sponsored pack we have continued to attend events at Church such as Remembrance, Harvest and Mothering Sunday. Most recently we have been discussing how to protect the World around us as part of the Thinking Day Badge. Due to lower numbers and the effects of Covid (when we dropped the amount girls paid but actually finished up with higher costs as we put together & delivered activity packs for online brownie sessions) income has suffered which has made it difficult to pay our insurance costs of £40 per girl and adult helper, a bill of £400 for this year. Thankfully the Grendon Charities and Parish Council have supported us financially which will allow us time to rebuild our bank balance. Brownies would not be possible without our wonderful helpers, Ann & Polly and we are really delighted that Anna our Ukrainian guest has also been helping us, the girls absolutely love her and their attempts at helping her with her English are interesting!

Flower Show Committee

This years show will be held on Saturday 9th September as it is traditionally held on the 2nd Saturday of the said month.

Over the years the show has been seen as a wonderful get together for, not only the residents of Grendon, but other enthusiastic gardeners from local villages.

Even when we have entrants from others who put their heart and soul into growing the biggest and the best, it certainly doesn't put others off---It is the "wow" factor and we should applaud ourselves for having a show that encourages the competition and having a platform for those exhibits to be seen.

Last years show—questioned the shows committee, to the point of losing sleep, as to whether we go ahead or whether we don't. As you remember our Beloved Queen had died, but sad as it was, we knew how much she loved her own flower show at Sandringham, so we believed that she wouldn't expect us to cancel ours.

We did the right thing.

The show was fantastic, despite the weather making it difficult for flowers and vegetables to grow as we wanted or expected. And the weather seemed to bring out villagers who have been in Grendon some years and of course many new families who have moved here. They all joined in--- husbands/fathers made cakes (very well too, if I remember), the floral arrangements were amazing and the children got involved, with not only the younger classes, but they enjoyed entering the other classes as well. And of course the handicraft classes are very popular as well.

The weather obviously makes a difference and we were lucky with that, so enjoying tea and cake in the sun was a treat.

Each year the committee donate a sum of money to a deserved local cause. We have taken our time over this one and between us we thought that the Information Board outside the school, needed updating and tidying up, add a bit of colour etc.

Trevor Higgs contacted Martyn Smith, who then raised the suggestion at a Parish Council Meeting so we hope that the project will go ahead.

Flood warden

No issues to report again this year. The dredging has continued which assists the water to flow away from the village.

Again residents have kindly reported potential problems, like branches or tree trunks falling across the brook. One of these residents identified the location by using the What-Three-Words app. This is not only extremely useful for me to easily locate the matter but also for the Environment Agency team who remove the offending objects.

Finally we have used part of our grant to provide vulnerable dwellings in Lower End with flood barriers which will be distributed shortly.

Footpath Warden & walking group – Trevor Higgs

Grendon has 8¼ miles of footpaths with 15 separate footpaths. Eight of the paths link the village with other local villages and the remaining 7 are paths linking differing parts of the village. All are coded with a TF prefix for Grendon.

The paths are walked and checked at least 4 times per year by me. The distance to check the paths is approximately 13 miles of walking mainly because of the retracing of steps once the parish boundary is reached.

Last year I reported that Parish Path Wardens in Northamptonshire were no longer permitted to undertake minor maintenance on their footpath network e.g. stile repairs, cutting back vegetation etc. This year this has been further reduced with the replacement of Waymarker Discs being removed from the wardens duties. This is because there have been instances of wardens marking the incorrect line of Rights of Ways and placing waymarkers on garden furniture and private trees. Therefore waymarkers are no longer issued except to landowners with Rights of Way crossing their land.

However being a land owner with a footpath across my land I have been able to secure a small stock of waymarker discs. All other issues have to be reported via the “Street Doctor” online reporting system.

Comments or complaints involving the parish paths may be either passed to the parish clerk or me. Or reported via the Street Doctors system

The status of the Rights of Way team that deal with the counties footpath network has, to my knowledge, not changed and the section is still operating with drastically reduced staffing levels.

Following the replacement the replacement of a series of 6 stiles on footpath TF8 (Chequers Lane to the Cricket Pitch) last year I made a request to the Parish Council to fund the replacement of a further 7 stiles with Kiss Gates on what I have called the Grendon Inner Circle Walk which loops around the village via Blackmile Lane. This will provide a 2¼ mile dog friendly, stile free, walk around the village. However due to planned demands on the Parish Councils budget this year the proposal has been deferred and will be considered again as part of the budgetary process for next year.

Current Issues

TF10 – Station Road Loop There has been no change to the status of this problem and this long standing issue is a registered Definitive Map Anomaly and requires a legal order to bring the path into a usable state. The order will be completed by the Definitive Map Team. However the path is not walkable on the line shown on the map with buildings erected on the line of the path. It has been in this state for at least 15 years. With the current budget constraints this issue is very low in priority. The hedge has now completely overgrown the access stile and the path is not walkable.

As far as I am aware all the Grendon Footpaths (except TF10) are marked and walkable at the present time. If you have any queries or wish to report a problem please contact me or the Parish Clerk.

During the Covid lockdowns the use of our local footpaths grew substantially with many of the villagers exploring the countryside around the village. A selection of walks around the village has been published in the “Grendon Times”. These range from short walks in an around the village to longer walks to nearby villages. These walks are available to be downloaded or printed from The Grendon Walks Website:

<https://walksgrendon.wixsite.com/grendon>

Grendon Walking Group

In January 2015 we resurrected the Grendon Walking Group with the the aim to limit the mileage to 5 miles or less and to encourage people to walk.

We meet twice a month normally on the 2nd Sunday and last Thursday. The walks are advertised in the Parish Magazine, Grendon Parish Website and in the Grendon Walks Website (above).

We walk from outside the school or from nearby locations usually starting at 10.00am. Very often we combine the walk with a visit to a coffee shop. Everybody is welcome and we look forward to seeing new attendees.

My contact details are:

Phone - 01933 663706

Email – trevorhiggs722@gmail.com

Grendon Annual Parish Forum

Church Report

2022 began significantly more positively than the previous year had done. We were continuing to follow our new service pattern which had begun in the autumn before, and we're managing to hold services as planned across the board, along with the rest of the country. We were encouraging folk to test before coming to services, especially major festival services, but apart from that things were running normally.

We had a vision day in April where each PCC had the opportunity to review their ministry and impact within their communities. This was well received by those who attended and was taken back into St Mary's PCC to continue the conversation.

We had an Easter Walk on Good Friday for our little ones and a Dawn Service on Easter Sunday which was attended by a few, but lovely.

After Easter there were wonderful Platinum Jubilee celebrations, which began with a church service and jovial hymns in the churchyard as we waited to light the beacon.

In September we commemorated the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II which was very solemn in comparison to the celebrations of mere months before. Later that month we said farewell to the Reverend Janet Tebby, our Associate Priest, who had given freely of her time and ministered amongst us for five years of her retirement. With covid, and holding an interregnum, they had perhaps been more turbulent years than anticipated!

In the later half of the year we had our Harvest service and Remembrance Sunday. I am so grateful to all who made our Advent opportunities possible during my period of sick leave, especially Deborah Rush who spent the whole day at Grendon Primary School - so many children got to hear the hope of the Christmas story through Christingles thanks to this work and I am grateful beyond belief. All of our Carol Services and Christingles were able to go ahead and were very successful.

Finally Worship without Walls in Grendon began monthly as Church outside with good numbers and aims to be a way of worshipping inter-generationally outside. It has been less popular as the temperature has dropped!

Conclusion

2022 has been a stabilising year. We are now down to one full-time priest and we do need to adapt to that. Equally, where things aren't working well, perhaps making small tweaks to adjust, to welcome, and to embrace the new, the different, and the unfamiliar.



St Mary's Bell Ringers

This last year we have tried to keep the bells ringing both on the regular Tuesday nights and special occasions such as the Jubilee and daffodil festival.

We are still critically short of ringers however and it would be nice to see some more villagers getting involved to keep the bells sounding out, anyone can do it, you don't have to be musical or physically fit, although a good sense of rhythm is quite useful. If anyone is interested or would just like to know more about this quintessentially English pastime you would be most welcome to come along on any of our Tuesday night practice session between 7:30 and 9:00 when you hear the bells or contact me or any of the other ringers.

Martin Howell 01933 664038

Grendon C. of E. Primary School (no attendance or report received).

Grendon Sapphires

Last year was a good year for Grendon Sapphires making 3 finals and 2 semifinal's and bringing home the league 1 trophy and the league's club of the year, however with the success that the squad had the league felt that we would be too strong for the championship and decided that we should jump the championship and go into the leagues premier division, during pre-season a majority of the players felt that they would not cope with the pressure and challenge of the premier division and opted to transfer to lower teams in the league worse was to come as it became evident that a few of the lads had been approached by other teams to join them and although they played the first game of the season what followed can only be described as a nightmare as we lost 12 of the cup squad to other clubs within a week and for the next 3 games played with 7 players whilst we desperately tried to recruit players but when those players you are trying to recruit see the results that you are having they are not that keen to join, but we were determined that the previous seasons success was not going to be the downfall of the club and week by week we signed new players some good, some not, some staying other deciding to not play but we are still here it was agreed early on that this season would be a long pre-season getting new players in trying new formations and positions, we are preparing for next season players have been approached with regards to joining during the summer break as we will be relegated regroup and go again, we have to give a big thank you to Alison and Greg Parker at BC Workspace for their support and sponsorship of our strips and a massive thanks to Ann Hughes at the HalfMoon for her support sponsorship and roasties for the team without the support and encouragement from you all this season would have been harder than it is so from all at the club we thank you for your support and hope for a better 23/24 season and your continued support and belief. We are always looking for people to help out around the club whether it be on match day's to sell refreshments or cutting grass or lining pitches any help would be greatly appreciated, if you know anyone who is 18 or older and would like to come along and join us at the club please don't hesitate to contact us through our Facebook page or messenger or contact Colin Hodson and have a chat.

Grendon Village Hall Management Committee

The main focus of the Committee this term has been to maintain and increase the use of the Village Hall via bookings from local residents and surrounding areas. We've been successful with this approach and in turn this has ensured the finances of the Hall continue to be in good shape. This has also enabled us to support local village events such as the Grendon Show, Grendon Daffodil Festival and sponsor our Annual Christmas Get Together. We've also continued to hold our monthly coffee mornings which have proved very popular with the local community.

We had the honour of receiving an award from the Low Carbon Workspace initiative for our efforts in reducing the carbon footprint of the Hall by ensuring the Halls electric consumption is kept to the lowest level possible using efficient heating and lighting solutions.

I would like to thank all the current committee members for their efforts over the last year. Who are Pauline, Trevor, John, Lynne and Yvonne.

I'd also like to thank local residents:

Peter Bailey for his efforts in cutting the grass around the Village Hall.

Keith Abbot for decorating the Hall and help with installing the Christmas Lights.

Martyn Smith for his support to the Committee as Parish Council representative.

We have have 5 new volunteers step forward this year to assist the Committee in running the Hall.

The committee is encouraging residents for suggestions and new ideas on the running of the Hall, which will ensure the Hall continues to be a valuable asset to the Village.

Poors land Charity

The Poors Land Charity generates income from a field along the green lane section of Blackmile Lane.

This field was kindly donated to the village in 1962 with the prime aim of providing financial assistance to those Grendon villagers who may need it.

Last we year were pleased to be able to grant funds to a worthy village cause. This was very gratefully received and appreciated and is exactly what the charity was designed for.

We are continually seeking applications . Which can be done by speaking to any of the trustees; Ian Denton, Jason Ross or me, Tony Knuff. Or the secretary Deborah Rush.

Please be assured that anything and everything discussed will be in total and absolute confidence.

There were no questions or comments.

9. Open forum

Some discussion took place about pot holes and the general state of the road, in particular the standard of repairs.

Residents were reminded that items can be reported either online via <https://www.fixmystreet.com/> or using the app FixMyStreet which is very easy to use when out and about.

Cllr Griffiths was thanked for his help with a recent issue relating to the Statera works.

There being no further business the **meeting closed at 8.50pm**