

**Minutes of the 21st Annual Assembly of Gorefield Parish Council held at
Gorefield School on Tuesday 7th April 2015**

Present: Councillors: Mrs Hall (Chairman), Humphrey,
Mrs Humphrey and Mrs Hunns

Councillors A Lay and Mrs S Clark and 1 member of the public

Apologies: Councillors Fraser and Holt

Minutes of last Annual Assembly were confirmed and signed

Chairman's Report

Welcome to anyone attending the Annual Assembly for the first time.

At the Council meeting in May, Councillor Michael Humphrey chose to relinquish the position of Chairman after 20 years of untiring service since the formation of the Gorefield Parish Council.

Throughout the year members of the public have made use of the initial 10 minute slot on the agenda to bring to the Council's notice issues on highways, rural crime, footpaths and transport. Contributions from Fenland District Councillors, Michael Humphrey and Sam Clarke and Cambs County Councillor Alan Lay have helped members consider how wider issues within Fenland and Cambridgeshire may influence decisions of this council.

In May, a Golden Age Fair was held. Over 60 people accessed the wide range of service providers and support groups whose stands filled the Community Hall. The Playing Field Committee had the bonus of being given the indoor curling equipment, which had attracted much attention during the morning.

Pressure on staffing has meant that we have had no police presence at meetings this year although reported crimes and issues which are currently presenting problems have been emailed to the clerk.

The successful bid to improve the footway along the length of High Road saw lots of activity throughout the summer. There was a significant improvement in the stretch from West End towards Allen's Drove. However by the autumn it became apparent that the standard of work, evident through broken kerbs and uneven or unfinished surfaces was unacceptable. Cambridgeshire Highways engineer is continuing to chase the contractor to resolve the matter.

Councillor Fraser's meeting with the Cambridgeshire Highways

representative reported that the County Council intended to undertake patching of major pot holes along Hassockhill, Marshall's Bank, Harold's Bank and St Paul's Close during the summer. He also announced that a 2 year scheme had been put in place to repair and replace road surfaces along Leverington Common and from end to end of Black Lane.

Our bid for a jointly funded Minor improvements Grant will see the extension of the footpath from St Paul's Close to Back Road during 2015/16.

Together with members of the Bowls Club committee we have successfully agreed the terms and signed the lease between both parties. The Playing Field Accounts show that an amount of £100 per month will be paid into a separate "sinking fund" for long term future needs.

It has always been a pleasure to see how much the children's play and adult exercise equipment is used. Safety inspections are carried out each month and repairs undertaken by Fenland Leisure and members of the council. The obligatory ROSPA inspection is made each Spring. We were fortunate to have the grant from Fields in Trust to replace the surface areas around 3 pieces of equipment which have heavy use.

Street Pride has become active again albeit separate from the parish council. Its current focus is to encourage responsible behaviour with regard to dog fouling.

Each year the Parish Council considers applications for donations from a wide range of charity and support groups. During this year we have supported the Pre School to purchase an acrylic window to encourage pupil painting activities and have made a contribution towards kitchen equipment at Gorefield Primary School. In addition we have made donations to Magpass, the Air Ambulance and FACT.

Setting the precept this year was huge challenge. In addition to the regular areas of expenditure, because of proposed changes in funding from Fenland District Council, this council needed to budget £18,118 for repairs and replacement street lighting over the next 3 years. Election costs for May 2015, if contested will amount to £1,276-35, and £ 231 -08 if uncontested. The Concurrent Function Grant for 2015/16 will be £1,820. Whilst we have traditionally maintained one of the lowest precept increases within Fenland Councillors agreed that in order to provide for the street lighting maintenance of £5,540 for next year, the total amount to cover all expenses would need to rise to £13,760, equating to a payment of £34 per Band 4 property.

In the autumn Council members distributed questionnaires to gain

information which is used to guide Cambridgeshire Future Transport Strategy and encouraged parishioners to collect data on patterns of usage on the different bus routes that served Gorefield.

In conjunction with Wisbech St Mary and Parson Drove Parish Councils Gorefield will fund a rural Citizen's Advice Bureau regularly. Each village will take it in turns to host a rural CAB session. It is hoped that Gorefield can kick start this initiative on 14 May from 10 – 12 noon in the Community Hall.

As a Council we continue to be concerned about speeding, highway matters, rural policing, planning and enforcement. We have tried to encourage members of the public to become involved with Speedwatch training and have listened and responded to issues from the Police Forum. There has been Gorefield Parish Council input into the Planning Advisory Service Review and attendance at councillor training courses.

I would like to thank all members of the Council for their contributions to our discussions and for their practical involvement in the many important tasks that require attention within the village and, for representing Gorefield Parish Council at a range of meetings, events and activities. My special thanks go to Rosemary as Clerk to the Council for her efficient work and for ensuring that I am aware of all the key statutory requirements of the Chairman.

Financial Report

See attached summary of receipts and payments

Public Participation

Was very pleased to see the dog mess had been highlighted but is the mess to be cleared up afterwards. The marking up was done by the Streepride Group but Steet Scene should have followed up by clearing it away. Councillor Humphrey will contact Fenland DC.

The state the pavements have been left in is a cause for concern. Clerk has recently received a response from Cambs CC saying that the slurry sealing will be carried out in May as an ambient temperature is required for this process. This very good news but some parts of the pavement are still in a very poor condition

There being no other matters to be discussed the meeting closed followed by Parish Council meeting

Signed Date