

Ellington Parish Council

Minutes of Ellington Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting
on **Tuesday 18th May 2021 at 7.30 pm at the Village Hall, Ellington.**

Present:

Councillors:	Cllrs Chapman, Elliott, Lumbers, McCutcheon, Porter and Walters
Clerk/Dist	Cllr: Darren Tysoe
County Cllr	Ian Gardener

Public: 4 Members of the public were present

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Palmer, and County Cllr Gardener

Chairman's report May 2021

The Chairman presented his Annual Report:

In early March 2020 Coronavirus became a fast moving issue and the PC were advising people to wash their hands for happy birthday, be prepared to self-isolate and to get into good habits to protect ourselves and others to stop the spread of viruses and germs. Little did we know.

This past year has been a year like no other. The pandemic has dramatically changed the way we work, live and communicate, possibly forever.

For Ellington Parish Council this has impacted on how we hold meetings, the focus of our activities, the use of our facilities and the links and communications we have across the village and beyond.

A heartening and rewarding feature of the last year for me, has been the way residents of Ellington pulled together and organised themselves into a support network to provide help where needed throughout the village.

From the initial coordination led by Councillor Porter to organise a vegetable box to help those with limited means to access transport, elderly occupants without local support and other vulnerable groups - to volunteer led home shopping support and Prescription Collection by villagers.

Whilst the Parish Council applied for, and received a limited grant for providing cooked meals, we found that it wasn't something that was needed and we were able to return the grant.

As restrictions and stay at home orders prevailed, we moved to online meetings. This has remained and has been our MO for continuing the operations for all meetings, whether in lockdown or not, for the past year.

One positive from the online meetings has been the increased engagement and attendance, something that I hope will continue as we move back to physical meetings.

Aside from the meetings many other activities and facilities have been impacted. For example, the village's play areas were temporarily closed, both on the field and the green. This included the tennis court to observe social distancing guidelines.

Many cornerstones of Ellington village life have been impacted. The Gala, sports day activities were cancelled; as was the Flower Festival.

The Church has been unable to hold in person services and events and the Village Hall has not been able to provide its normal services and entertainment.

This has impacted the abilities of these groups to raise the funds they need to deliver future events and their ongoing activities.

During the year there have been a number of issues that many parishioners have held strong and often differing opinions on. As well there have been differing opinions on how we as a PC respond and handle these areas, as well as frustrations over decisions made locally and at district level – for me this is just one area that demonstrates the important role of the Parish Council and something that I believe should be encouraged and welcomed.

However, many positives have also emerged.

Residents have been spending far more time in and around the village using the many footpaths and walks that for many were unknown and undiscovered by them.

Pop-up events on the Green were a feature of the summer months when allowed.

Father Christmas was able to visit the village and we were able to celebrate the turning on of the Christmas tree lights. Despite the fog and cold, it was amazing to see almost every resident on the Green.

The neighbourhood plan team have continued their research and published their results and draft plan.

These initiatives and programmes would not be possible without the dedication of the organisers, often volunteers, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a massive 'Thank you' on behalf of myself and the Parish Council, to all those who have given their time and energy to help others through the last year.

Looking towards the future, we will continue to work with our District and County Councillors.

We look forward to seeing the Neighbourhood plan be adopted and we will work to take forward the many initiatives, plans and suggestions.

Going forwards I am keen to grow the excellent work of those across the village and wider to try and enhance our village.

Financial Report.

The Clerk presented the financial report for 2020/21. There had been fewer major purchases during the year, other than repairs to the village hall roof (£5,700), a new bench which was installed next to the village sign (£1352), and some additional bark for the playing field (£2,572), which was mostly covered by a grant from the playing field committee. The PC received CIL monies of £6947 which must be spent on eligible projects within the village. The precept remained unchanged from the previous year at £9,270. The COVID grant of £1000 was repaid as it was not required or transferable for another cause.

Date of Next Meeting: 16th or 23rd May 2022 (depending on election dates).