

**Minutes of the Toft Annual Parish Meeting  
held on Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 7.00 pm in the People's Hall**

Present: 7 Parishioners including Parish Councillors, County Cllr M Atkins, and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services).

Cllr Yeadon presided.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from District Cllr Grenville Chamberlain.

**2. To approve the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 4 May 2021**

The minutes of the meeting on 4 May 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unopposed)

**3. Matters Arising**

None.

**4. Report of the Parish Council for the year**

Cllr Yeadon explained that the Parish Council meeting would normally follow the Annual Parish Meeting, but there had been insufficient candidates at election. A new election was to be held on 16 June and anyone interested in becoming a Parish Councillor should submit their nomination forms to SCDC by 18 May.

Councillor Yeadon presented his report, which is appended in full to these minutes. The report covered:

- Thanks to the Parish Councillors for all their hard work during a very busy year.
- The East West Rail proposals. The Parish Council had responded to the consultation regarding the route options, some of which came within 500 meters of the village; it had carried out a letter drop to encourage residents to respond. The results are expected in the summer. East West Rail have set up groups consisting of representatives of the affected parishes and Toft has been represented at these groups and also been active in the Cambridge Approaches group. The Parish Council is doing all it can to influence the outcome of the proposals.
- Cllr Tall had been leading on highways matters with the County Council. He had applied on the Parish Council's behalf for funding to reduce the speed limit in School Lane to 20 mph, the outcome of which was successful. The costs may have risen and this will be the subject of further discussion.
- The Parish Council had supported a Private Highways Finance Improvement application to progress improvements to the verges by the Church which had been damaged by parking. A scheme and costs are being drawn up by CCC and will be considered in due course.
- The Local Plan beyond 2031 being prepared by the District Council. No significant developments are proposed close to Toft.
- Planning applications received during the year.
- Cllr Popat's role chairing a group focusing on the Climate Crisis and Green Issues, and writing articles for the Calendar.
- Cllr Ellis-Evans had arranged working parties in Lot Meadow, maintained oversight of the Defibrillator, and arranged training in its use, as well as amending the grass cutting specification to reduce the amount of verge mowing. She had also been involved in the preparations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.
- Cllr Miles had been monitoring the condition of the local footpaths and had been involved in Operation London Bridge planning. She had distributed Welcome

Packs for new residents and been involved in efforts to have The Birdlings incorporated into the village.

- The Parish Council had agreed to undertake repairs and maintenance to benches, signs and play equipment. Regular play inspections had been made.
- Funding had been provided for the Jubilee celebrations, and the very successful Community Café. Thanks were extended to Steve Pugh and the volunteers for their efforts. A donation had been made to the Woodland Trust in recognition of the value of Toft Wood to the village.
- The increase in the precept this year. This was necessary to fund a possible election, to meet increases in electricity, insurance and grass cutting costs and contributing to a fighting fund regarding East West Rail. Cllr Yeadon highlighted that the precept had been steadily decreasing over the last eight years when it was higher than it is currently.
- Posting a summary of the minutes of meetings on Facebook and in the Calendar to ensure residents are kept up to date.
- Thanks were extended to all the Councillors and to the Clerk and RFO and her team.
- Cllr Yeadon explained that the four year term of the Parish Council was drawing to a close and he and Cllr Miles had been elected uncontested. However further members were needed to form a Council. He asked to be informed of any interested parties.

Questions were invited.

A resident reported that a footpath in the village was affected by overhanging vegetation. The Chairman suggested that this be reported online.

Steve Pugh, Chairman of the People's Hall, requested that a representative of the Parish attend People's Hall meetings, and asked to give a short report.

He referred to the grant funding provided by the Parish Council to set up the Community Café, of which the first tranche had been spent. The Hall had been redecorated and a serving hatch created in the kitchen door to provide service to the new tables outside. New cupboard space and access doors had been created upstairs. Referring to a second tranche of funding agreed in principle, he explained that the plans had since changed and it had been decided to extend the kitchen as a priority. To do this it would be necessary to change the position of the front door to the Hall and create an entrance which would lead straight through the entrance lobby to facilitate wheelchair access and allow more space for the kitchen.

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council was expecting funding by way of an S106 agreement which could be used for improvements.

## **6. Other reports**

### **6.1 District Councillor**

District Cllr Grenville Chamberlain's report (appended), covered:

- Cllr Chamberlain was not seeking re-election and thanked everyone for their support.
- Council Tax and a Government Energy Bills rebate for some people.
- The District Council's finances.
- Planning and work on the next Local Plan.
- Transport projects including East West Rail; a proposal for additional slip roads at the Girton interchange; the two proposed busways; a possible future congestion charge for Cambridge.
- Environment including Zero Carbon initiatives, the Shared Waste Service; a solar farm at Waterbeach; and recycling targets.

## **5. Presentation of the Council's audited accounts (ending 31 March 2021) and financial report**

The audited accounts for the Financial Year ended 2021 were available on the website at the following link: <https://tpc.toft.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TPC-FY21-AGAR-AND-SUPPORTING-PAPERS.pdf>

The accounts for FY22 would also be published on the website once they have been approved by the Parish Council.

Steve Pugh questioned why the precept had been reduced over the last few years. The budget setting process was outlined. Provision was made for anticipated expenditure and included in the budget, which determined the level of precept after consideration. The Council had also been seeking to strengthen the level of its reserves.

Mr Pugh asked whether the Parish Council was concerned about the highways improvement costs, as he felt there must be a cheaper solution. The Chairman explained that the contribution was not yet known but costs had risen and it would be necessary to approve any changes. It was anticipated that the verge works by the Church would cost considerably more, and as this was CCC's responsibility, the project would be managed by CCC to their specification but funded by the Parish Council. The Chairman explained that the project was still in the early stages and information was awaited.

Another resident asked whether provision was set aside for the People's Hall. Cllr Yeadon responded that this was not done now, as whilst the Parish Council was a Trustee, the Hall Committee had responsibility for managing its finances. Steve Pugh commented that the People's Hall had made an application for building works. Cllr Yeadon explained that some funding was available under S106 agreements due to new developments.

A resident asked who used the car parking area at the church. Cllr Yeadon responded that this was used by church goers but mainly by dog walkers during the week. The Church had been involved in the discussions regarding the improvements. The resident reported that there could be up to 10 cars parked there, forcing grain lorries to drive onto the verge. Another parishioner observed that cars also parked at the top of the hill where the verge was very churned up.

Steve Pugh asked whether there was a way of improving the route from the High Street to Lot Meadow, as this was inaccessible for wheelchairs. Cllr Miles replied that the Parish Council had looked into this in the last couple of years, but the wheelchair gates would need to be very wide and there was a risk of animals escaping. The resident asked whether the path could be upgraded to level and widen it; there were lots of tree roots.

County Cllr Michael Atkins arrived during this item.

## **6. Other reports**

### **6.2 County Councillor**

County Cllr Atkins's report (appended), covered:

- The new administration and his committee roles.
- County Council finances.
- Adults and Health.
- Children and young people.
- Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion.
- Environment.
- Transport.
- The District Council May elections.

Cllr Atkins highlighted the extent of work to be done on highways and the huge network of rural roads and footpaths which had not been well maintained. One significant area of work involved looking at the gully system across the county, as considerable flooding, including on roads, had taken place. All gullies had been mapped and two thirds of them cleared using modern technology.

Other areas covered were: the effects of Covid; the environmental agenda to decarbonise and the need for more efficient sorting of black bin waste; the submission of

a balanced budget this year; the Household support Fund and small environmental schemes.

The Toft LHI application for a 20 mph speed limit in School Lane had been successful. Most villages were seeking to introduce speed limits.

There had been a good turnout in the District Council elections. Lina Nieto was the new District Councillor for Hardwick and Toft. Cllr Atkins had also been elected District Councillor for other villages.

Questions were invited.

The Chairman raised the issue of car parking on Church Road and expressed concerns about the costs as the Parish Council would prefer a scheme where the costs were in line with the needs. Cllr Atkins undertook to take a look at the location.

Cllr Miles asked whether there was any news of East West Rail. This had not been mentioned in the Queen’s Speech. The Government had been asked to publish the business case for the proposals but had not responded. Meetings with parishes had been arranged.

7. **Any other parish matters including any resolutions which have been received**  
None.

8. **Closure of meeting**  
There was no further business and the meeting closed at 7.55 pm.

Signed .....Chairman .....date.

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