**DRAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 14 May 2024 in the Village Hall at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllr R Binks - Chair

Cllr B Davies

Cllr J Garnett

Cllr R Neale

Cllr A Turner

Ian Orton – Clerk

Local Electors: 1

1. Chair’s Introduction:

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendee. Apologies were received from Cllr Jane Markham.

1. Chair’s Annual Report:

The Chair presented the Annual Report for 2023/24 (copy attached to the Minutes) thanking the parish councillors for all their hard work during the year. The Chair also thanked Jane Markham for her 16 years as parish clerk but was very pleased to welcome Jane back to the parish council as a new parish councillor. The Chair thanked the community volunteers within the parish and Charles Burton for carrying out the external audit of the parish accounts. The Chair finished her report with thanks to County Ward Representative Richard Foster.

1. Questions and Parish Matters:

No questions were raised but the Chair indicated that more publicity was needed to attract more members of the public to the Annual General Meeting.

1. Climate Change Project

Councillor Neale gave a detailed presentation on progress with the Climate Change Project detailing the benefits of the project in terms of both supplying cheaper electricity to the community and benefits to offset climate change. The Chair thanked Councillor Neale and the team who had supported the project.

1. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Annual Parish meeting of the Council would be held in the Village Hall on 12th May 2025 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Chairman

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

2023/24

This is my second report to you as Chairman of the Council, and I am pleased that the Council has been able to meet face to face during the whole of the year and our business has proceeded much as it used to.

We certainly seem to be getting busier and busier these days, with a number of projects and activities on the go.

The first thing to mention is that we lost our brilliant clerk, Jane Markham in December as she ‘retired’ after 16 years in the role. We all thank you Jane and are very pleased to welcome you in your new role as a parish councillor. I would also like to thank Ian for stepping in to support the work of the council temporarily, as we go out to recruit a new permanent clerk – if anyone is interested, please let us know as full training will be given!

We continue to utilise our scheme of delegation which means that our clerk can deal with more of the council’s routine business outside of our formal meetings, allowing us to concentrate on all the other work which can sometimes be difficult to fit in.

Luckily, we have an excellent team of councillors on board, and I want to thank all members of our current council, including our new recruit, the aforementioned Cllr Markham, who joined us in January after Toby Coupe had to step down in the Autumn. Everyone has done their bit and worked hard for the village over the course of this past year.

We are always especially grateful to the village hall trustees, who vigorously organise the social events for the rest of us to enjoy. I particularly enjoyed the quiz which I hope will be repeated this year.

There are many others in the village who have volunteered their time and have continued to help us in our work. We are especially grateful to the Draughton Vergers, who cut our village verges for us and keep our village looking so neat and tidy in the summer months. They are ably assisted by Peter Grimshaw, who looks after the grassed areas near the village hall. I want to thank Chris Walker for all he does in helping the Parish Council with feedback on footpaths and bus timetables, and also to thank Denise Hirst for her work in fielding the Neighbourhood Watch notifications for us.

There are too many volunteers for me to name, but I would particularly like to thank Alison Turner who goes above and beyond to keep the village hall running smoothly, Charles Burton for all his help on the financial side of things as our internal auditor and special thanks to Ann Hargate-Ramsden for all she does in keeping the village free of litter and reporting fly-tipping on our behalf. Unfortunately clearing up after careless passers-by is becoming a regular job for us in and around the village, particularly when we have increased traffic due to the A59 closure.

A proportion of the year’s activities have focused on keeping our other regular jobs on the go and key amongst these this year has been looking after the trees in the wood and on the green and have been thinking through how we might replant into some of the gaps, left by the removal of dead and diseased trees.

Another important part of our work is responding to planning applications for developments in and around the village, some of them obviously controversial. We’ve continued to press the planning authority to act in enforcing planning problems such as the action to tidy the railway yard near the beck at Draughton Bottom and enforcement officers visited the site in February.

The new unitary authority has become fully operational and the Parish Council has worked throughout the year liaising on issues arising from the local government reorganisation, and councillor Markham has served on a county-wide working group to help put together the new Parish Charter between ourselves and North Yorkshire Council.

The parish council has an important role in acting as the voice of the village and our communications links both outside and within the village are very important. We are grateful to Vicky Patchett for running the village’s social media Facebook page and Draughton Chat. We continue to build our village email contact list so that we can all keep abreast of local news and will be sending out a Summer newsletter to all household soon. We hope you find it interesting and useful, but please let us have any feedback.

Turning now to our projects.

Cllr Neale and Chris Walker, a village volunteer continue to work on the Draughton History Project and the clerk recently received a request to access the parish council archive to complete the chapter on Chelker Reservoir.

This project has made good progress during the year and should be completed soon with fascinating chapters on the history of the Roman Road, the village pubs, the railway and as mentioned, Chelker reservoir.

The Council’s community climate change project, Draughton Action to Zero (DAZ), has continued and councillor Neale will update us in the meeting after giving Locogen the green light for a feasibility assessment for a 2MW turbine limited to 949kW export.

I finish with thanks to our County Ward Representative, Richard for all his support over the year and I will now take questions on my report.