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**OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**10th May 2022**

**PRESENT:** Parish councillors John Gale (Chairman), Alan Johansen (Vice-chairman), Sylvia Pettitt and Chris Ridge.

**Also present:** Joanne Kirk (clerk), District Councillor Mike Chester, Chris Ingham and Jessamy Saltmarsh (Ousden Village Hall) and two members of the public.

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from County Councillor Bobby Bennett and Helen Gale (Neighbourhood Watch).

**The meeting was chaired by Parish Council Chairman John Gale.**

All the reports presented at the meeting are available on Ousden Parish Council's website at <http://ousden.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/annual-parish-meeting/annual-parish-meeting-2022/>

**1. Approval of the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were confirmed and signed as correct by the Chairman.

**2. County Councillors report by Bobby Bennett**

Bobby Bennett's report is available on the Parish Council website. She also sent an update about flooding on The Hill. Suffolk County Council has already attended with the new 'combi unit' to CCTV, root cut and jet the system from The Old Rectory to Hall Farm. Most of the system is now clear and working but the crew identified a section of pipe between Brook Cottage and Hall Farm which is cracked and broken along most of the length which, if not the only reason, is likely to be a main contributor to the water issuing onto the road. Highways has agreed follow up work which will involve making this section of pipe redundant by capping it and piping across the road to a new catchpit/chamber feeding into the working south section of pipe. This will hopefully solve the issue of water running onto the road. Bobby Bennett does not have any dates yet but the Highways team is keen to start the work as soon as possible.

**3. District Councillor's report by Mike Chester**

The full report is available on Ousden Parish Council's website.

Mike Chester spoke about the following local issues

- Drainage on the Hill. He will arrange for the drains to be cleared in November 2022.
- The Anglian Water pipeline. Work is due to start in summer 2022.
- Fly tipping along Hargrave Road. He is trying to establish ownership of the land.

**4. Village Hall Report**

The full report is available on Ousden Parish Council's website.

Chris Ingham spoke about the following:

- Last year was quite successful in spite of the pandemic. Some events were arranged virtually including a wine tasting in November and a quiz in March.
- Although the Village Hall was closed for a considerable time, by July they were able to fully open again and the committee has tried to keep things on track as much as possible.
- In mid- July they held an enjoyable Village Open Gardens and also helped out at Ousden House when they had their NGS opening at the end of June.
- Their popular Pop- up Café opened in May until September and was well supported. This is entirely run by volunteers and raises money for the new hall. Funds are slowly and gradually being raised for the new hall but Covid has impacted hugely in terms of building costs and they have had to review their plans. At present the architect is redrawing the plans for a smaller building on the existing site.
- The Ousden Lottery also brings in some funds each year, once again going into the coffers for the new build.
- Their largest summer fete, yet, happened at the beginning of September. The Mad Hatter's Tea Party took a great deal of time to organise but they had plenty of volunteers in the end and it turned out to be a most successful event.

- Bowls, yoga and cricket continue but there has been a reduced number of lettings this year. Fortunately, they have been busy applying for small grants to keep the village hall going and West Suffolk County Council has supported all village halls and businesses throughout the pandemic.
- They welcomed a couple of new members to the committee whilst 2 others have taken a back seat due to work commitments this year. It is still difficult to recruit volunteers. For the past 2 years they have had a cleaner and booking clerk helping out but, sadly, she has now resigned and a replacement has not been found yet.
- A Jubilee picnic is planned on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## 5. **Neighbourhood Watch Report**

This has been a good year with no crimes reported in Ousden. Online fraud is a serious issue though with very sophisticated scams taking place.

## 6. **Chairman's Report**

The Parish Council Chairman, John Gale presented his report. The full report is available on Ousden Parish Council's website.

He spoke about the following:

- The Parish Councillors remain the same going into 2022. Silvia Pettitt now holds the post of vice- Chairman.
- The Parish Council managed to carry out its normal duties and meetings during the last twelve months both virtually and more recently face to face.
- He thanked his fellow councillors, the clerk, Joanne Kirk, Bobby Bennett (Suffolk County Council) and Mike Chester (West Suffolk Council) for their support.
- The 'Ousden Village Hall Management Committee' and the 'New Build Committee' are still working very hard to get into a position to build a new village hall but work to secure planning permission is proving very difficult. The task has been made much more difficult recently by the considerable hike in all building materials making a like-for-like building almost impossible to afford so other options are presently being investigated. The Parish Council remains fully supportive of the project.
- Speeding remains a problem in the village. The village now has a further VAS post to allow the monitoring of traffic coming into the village from Hargrave. This road is particularly bad with vehicles entering the village at speeds in excess of 50 mph despite the 30 mph signs and not slowing until the 'S bends' at Pound Green.
- The village has signed up to use a camera capable of capturing the number plate details (ANPR) of offending vehicles which may then lead to prosecutions and reduced speeding. However, these cameras are few and far between and have to be shared by villages all over Suffolk and will only get used in villages and towns where speeding is the worst which means Ousden will probably never get the opportunity to use one. The Parish Council is committed to addressing and reducing speeding and will continue to look for other opportunities to reduce the problem.
- Suffolk County Council have begun an initiative to allocate certain small roads and lanes as 'Quiet Lanes' which is designed to encourage drivers of motor vehicles to respect and give way to more vulnerable road users. Lords Lane, Back Street, Wickhambrook lane from Lady's Green to Genesis Green and the little lane from Lady's Green to Hargrave Road will be included in the scheme and later this year should have signs erected to show where these areas start and finish. Sadly, the designated 'Quiet Lane' areas don't come with a reduction of speed limits from 60mph to 30mph which is of great disappointment but hopefully most drivers will join in the spirit of the scheme and give vulnerable users the right of way.
- During the winter period villagers would have noticed the continuing problem with the road drains all the way from the top to the bottom of Front St despite a deep cleanup of the drainage system carried out during 2020 and continuing into 2021. The defects in the system resulted in thousands of gallons of water running down large distances of the hill and covering large areas of the road and for many weeks at a time. There is a possibility that the drains system towards the bottom of the hill will now be completely blocked or even damaged which will require proper repair work in addition to normal road sweeping and jetting which will be done on a regular basis now.
- The Ousden phone box has had its first full year of use as a book exchange/village library and reports indicate it is a hit. John Gale thanked Sophie Mitchell for continuing to keep an eye on the phone box as well as other villagers who tidy up when passing.

- Anglian Water Major Infrastructure Works. The residents in and around Ousden especially those who live along Dunstall Green Rd, In Lady's Green and to the south of Littly Woods and Back Street will soon notice major water pipe laying for Anglian Water. There will be a very large pipe running north to south which will cross the Hargrave Rd near Lady's Green and run on towards Depden, and a smaller spur which will run along the south of the village from Lady's Green to Lidgate which will cross Wickhambrook Lane, Lady's Green byway, Lords Lane, Back St and onwards to Woodditton water tower.

These works are proposed to take place this summer but due to complications with plans for a pumping station near Lady's Green there could be delays.

**7. Financial Report 2020/21**

The full report is available on the parish council website as detailed above.

**8. Any other issues or concerns which residents would like to bring to the attention of the Council**

The Ousden News is now produced on a quarterly basis. Residents present felt that Ousden needs a more efficient way to share information. Chris Ingham agreed to raise the possibility of setting up a community email group with the Village Hall Committee.

There is growing interest in an Ousden Wildlife Project following the distribution of seeds to residents. John Gale thanked Sylvia Pettitt for getting the project up and running.

**The meeting closed at 7.50pm**

Signed .....

Dated.....