

Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Recreation Ground Pavilion on Monday 7th April 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs M Paul (Chair), J Fothergill, P Lickert, D Jacobs, J Durrant, J Shaw, A Colvill, L Bullard, D Ward; G Walker (Clerk); Cllr L Reeves (ESC); approx 25 members of the public.

Item No.	Comments	Action
1.	Apologies Cllrs, J Cade; T Hatrick (PTO); S Harvey (Nasau Trust); District Cllr M Ninnmey; County Cllr P Mulcahy	
2.	Minutes of last meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 15 th April 2024 having been previously circulated were taken as read, approved and signed.	
3.	Matters arising Nothing to record	
4.	Presentation: Bentley Community Pub Peter Cross and David Westley explained how the Case is Altered closed in 2013, and by registering a CIP, were able to purchase the pub and have it up and running by the end of that year. They explained how they engaged with the community by means of a survey to ascertain the level of interest, both in terms of helping to finance the purchase, and volunteering to run it once opened. The pub is now open 5 days a week and has an annual profit of around £11.5k. The investment model uses the Enterprise Investment Scheme, which has attractive tax benefits for investors. Cllr Lickert explained that the White Horse pub was currently up for sale for around £350k, plus fixtures and fittings, and had apparently received interest from parties interested in looking at purchasing the pub for alternative use. If there is sufficient interest in purchasing the pub as a village asset, the first step will be to raise a CIP (valid only 6 months from initial decision to sell).	
5.	Emergency Plan Reporting on the Emergency Plan, Cllr Lickert outlined the possible communication difficulties, especially with vulnerable individuals, which will result from the move to Digital Voice by BT. The withdrawal of traditional telephone line services will mean that alternative means, such as mobile phones, will need to be used during power cuts. However if an incident was more widespread, say removing connectivity to the mobile network, a solution using amateur radio might be appropriate. To this end Raynet have been approached with a view to trialling their amateur radio service	

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6.	Annual Report of the Parish Council Cllr Paul gave the Parish Council report for the previous year. He reflected on the fact that there had been no crimes reported for either village, something he hoped would continue. He commented on the increases in residential and industrial development and the pressure being put on an already inadequate road system, and whether the need for a northern Ipswich bypass would become inevitable. The final phase of the Scottish Power EA3 project has now commenced and is planned for completion by December, and it is hoped there will be less impact on villagers as much of the infrastructure is already in place. He also observed the impact of Sizewell C construction in terms of resources and infrastructure, and the ongoing rollout of wind farms along the coast line. He finished by thanking the Clerk and Parish Councillors, and the Tree Warden and PTLO for their help during the past year.	
7.	Presentation of Reports/Accounts a) Parish Council Reporting on the Accounts, Mr Walker (Clerk) outlined the areas where the Council had either significantly overspent or underspent the budget. The largest overspend was the funding contribution to the Kirton and Falkenham Review, and village website, which has now been baked into future budgets. The largest underspends were due to delays in spending on environmental services (such as replacing the Village Green restricted access pole), and reduction in the Clerk salary and associated expenses following a review in November. Mr Walker reiterated the policy from earlier years that a key objective of the Council is to continue to grow the Legal reserves in order to contest any future proposed development of Innocence Farm. A complete breakdown is available from the Accounts section of the PC website. b) Nassau Charity Mrs Harvey (through a report read out by Mrs Walker), reporting for the Nassau Trust, said that they held approx £41k of funds. The interest from these funds, plus income from allotments etc, is available to support those in need. She reported there had been only one funded request for help over the last year. There remain three empty allotment plots, available for uptake by interested parties. c) PTLO No report received d) Tree Warden No report received e) Recreation Ground Mr Beer submitted a written report covering the Recreation Ground. He reported that the Pavilion (now over 20 years old), and generally in good condition, noting that the toilets had been redecorated in July. He says that the boiler will need to be replaced in due course, and reserves are being held for this purpose. Kirton Kestrels Football club remain the main users, spending around £1.6k annually. The football pitch renovation project is continuing (with significant funding from the	

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	Football Foundation towards the £6k cost), this is a five year project which commenced in 2023. The carpark continues to be a problem area, with flooding after rain, unfortunately the required planning permission has delayed the project to improve the situation with necessary groundworks, but will hopefully be completed this year. The other users of the Pavilion include Pilates, local beekeepers, private parties and of course the Parish Council. The usual “big” events took place last year: Kirton 5m race; Scouts car boot; Radio car boot; Tractor rally; Suffolk Day; Village fete, all continuing to prove popular. The Play area is still well used, and the annual inspection revealed no “high risk” problems, however the “log world” apparatus is being to look a little antiquated (around 35 years old) but would cost approx £20k to replace. Mr Beer received a vote of thanks, and applause, from the meeting for the significant contribution he makes to the running of the Rec and Pavilion.	
8.	School Governor's Report. No report received	
9.	County Councillor's Report No report received	
10.	District Councillors Reports Cllr Reeves, ES Council, focused on two key issues. The first relates to Planning and the Government directive to increase the housing supply from the previously agreed 905, to 1,644 per year across East Suffolk, amounting to an 82% increase. Unfortunately because ESC will no longer be able to demonstrate a five year supply from Sept 25 according to the new targets, there is an expectation that we will be subject to “Speculative development”, whereby plans may now be put forward for substantial developments under the presumption of approval, provided they comply with policies under existing local plans. The second issue concerns the anticipated appointment of a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, and the move to a unitary authority, which will see District and County Councils merged into either two or three councils covering the whole of Suffolk. Depending on the approach taken there could be a range of outcomes, from a reduction in Councillor representation per head of population, to a hoped benefit of a having a single authority responsible for resolving issues. Cllr Reeves also highlighted the grant contributions from the Enabling Communities Budget, including locally a £5k grant towards the cost of insulating the main roof of the Village Hall, which still has an uninsulated “cold roof” design dating from over 100 years ago	
11.	The local History Recorder for Falkenham, Cllr Shaw, reported on the pending departure from Kirton of Jean and Colin Shaw, and Colin’s retirement earlier last year following 31 years as Clerk to the PC. Both received a vote of thanks, and applause, from the meeting for the significant contribution they have made during their time in the village. Jo went on to highlight the key things of note over the year including: Completion of electrical installations and pumps for the new reservoir on Drunkards Lane; Various road flooding issues; Northern Lights spectacles; The removal of the Kirton Village Green phone box; New	

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	solar panels installed on Sheepgate Lane; Flooding and resulting mud slide onto the road in Falkenham; Retirement of Andy the postman after 23 years; Falkenham Church snowdrop display. Cllr Shaw also mentioned two published books from villagers this year, the first by Ann Quentin, based on her wartime childhood, the second a poetry collection by Stephen Harvey. She has started sharing excerpts from old newsletters in the Review, and hopes to organise an exhibition to showcase memorabilia from a former member of the Kirton Football team later this year. In closing Jo noted the sad goodbye to several members of the community over the past year including Maureen Pinner, who organised the Thursday Club for many years, and Eric Maule who assisted and served on many committees over the years.	
12.	To consider any Resolutions received No resolutions received	
13.	Any other matters to bring before Parish Council No other business brought forward	
	There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm. Signed..... Chairman Date.....	