

**GREAT GRANSDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

Those present were:

Nick Ginn Chairman;	Andrew Pett Vice Chairman;
Chris Bane Parish Councillor;	Michael Capps Parish Councillor;
James Catmur Parish Councillor;	Cathy Davis, Parish Councillor;
Nigel Day Parish Councillor	Sharon Brown, Clerk;
District Councillor Richard West;	
and 7 members of the public.	

1. The meeting was opened at 7.30pm with a silent prayer.

**2. Apologies.**

None

3. **Minutes** of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022 had been circulated to councillors soon afterwards and were considered at the Parish Council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. The minutes were then approved and accordingly initialled. At this meeting the initialled minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022 were proposed by Councillor Capps, seconded by Councillor Pett, unanimously approved and accordingly signed by the chairman.

**4. Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman began by speaking of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September, after celebrating her Platinum Jubilee in the summer.

The Chairman continued: this year has been interesting as it has been a return to normality after covid, with a particularly wonderful summer. There has been a rewarding increase in the activity in the village, especially at the Reading Room, thanks to the Reading Room Committee.

However, there has been no change to the flooding situation on the Waresley Road, despite notification to the Highways Department. The lack of the village pub, the situation of the Crown & Cushion being uncertain, continues to be a matter of concern. The vast number of potholes that have appeared in the roads over the winter and reappeared after repair are also of concern. More positively a 20mph speed limit zone has been approved to cover much of the village.

Looking at an objective from last year: the inclusive playground development project has been achieved and is very successful, with much positive feedback. There has also been replacement surfacing under older equipment and the train has been repainted.

The Dutton Gardens development has now seen one year with residents and it is hoped that many will attend the forthcoming 'Welcome Event' on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. The problem of excess street lights with consequent light pollution is noted as inconsistent with the planning decision and needs to be looked into.

On a particularly positive planning note, the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, designed to steer the councils and others has now passed through all stages and been made (adopted) by Huntingdon District Council. The Chairman noted that the efforts of all involved over the 5 years, should not be underestimated and were applauded. The Reading Room Cottage and post of Caretaker, however, have produced some challenges over the year but these are being resolved and the post of Caretaker will be taken forward.

The Sport's Field pavilion and car park are future challenges as these need investment in maintenance.

The A428 upgrade will now be going ahead as the judicial review was refused. Traffic levels in the village are expected to increase greatly during the works.

The Chairman concluded by thanking his fellow Councillors, the Clerk, Councillor Davis for her steering of the playground development and success in obtaining funding, Councillor Pett without whom, as Vice-Chairman, 'the Chairman's job would be impossible', and lastly both District Councillor West and County Councillor Ferguson for their continued actions and support.

#### **5. County Councillor Stephen Ferguson.**

In his absence, there was no report from Councillor Ferguson.

#### **6. District Councillor Richard West.**

Councillor West read out his report which is filed as Appendix 1. This covered a) his support of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan and its adoption, but also his concern about future development pressures in the district, b) concern that the situation with the Crown & Cushion pub continues, c) the efforts of the Parish Council to resolve the noise issue of the MUGA, d) concern that a resolution should be reached for the green space NE of Mandene Gardens, e) East-West Rail for which an announcement is expected in May, f) the works for the A428 which will now start soon, g) work at District level and with Councillor Ferguson in particular on the Luton Airport Flight Path Review and h) adoption of the Huntingdonshire Place Strategy and the Corporate Plan 2023-2028.

**7. Financial Statement.** The RFO's summary for the year had been circulated. The summary is filed hereafter as Appendix No. 2.

#### **8. The Poor's Land Charity.**

The Chairman provided an overview of the charity, which was set up to run in perpetuity on the basis of two gifts of money, one from Elizabeth Clifton in 1660 and another from William Discher in 1661. The charity was established for the prevention and/or relief of poverty, with the aim of helping beneficiaries that are residents of Great Gransden only, and who fall into the following categories:

- Children and young people;
- Elderly or old people;
- People with disabilities;
- Other charities or voluntary bodies.

The funds donated were invested and the trustees have the responsibility of managing this investment and the ability to distribute the income from the fund to suitable local causes, but not its capital value.

The Trustees take advice from independent financial advisors. The annual review of the investment is due during April.

The yield from the investment has allowed the continuing provision of winter fuel payments. Other local causes, those in need or organisations can also make application for funding and the charity can be approached via the Parish Council using the email address or speaking to one of the councillors.

#### **9. The Parish Council Cemetery.**

Councillor Day, Cemetery Manager, presented the report that is filed as Appendix No. 3. At this meeting he summarised the key matters for the cemetery over the last year. Repairs to the capping stones on the brook side wall still need to be put in place. In

the meanwhile, excessive movement of the wall is monitored. At the Memorial Garden attention is needed to hedging. Over the winter there was no tree damage. Grass cutting has proceeded well during the year, at a cost of £1320 inc. VAT. Concerning burials, the Church Authorities have been made aware that double burials, that is, one above the other, cannot be accepted, although plots side by side can be purchased.

An approach for a memorial bench has been received and permission given by the Parish Council. Placement needs to be discussed.

Fees for plots remained unchanged and revenue was mainly from interment fees and approval of memorials, as only one plot was purchased.

### **10. Reading Room Management Committee.**

Anne Constantine, Chairperson, summarised the Committee's Annual Report, which is filed as Appendix No. 4. Cathy Davis has been elected Secretary and is also the Parish Council representative. Thanks were given to Peter King who has previously filled the latter role. Key considerations and decision making during the year have included Health and Safety, Safeguarding, HM the Queen's Jubilee, caretaking, furniture, Reading Room extension and maintenance.

Usage of the Reading Room has been high throughout the year, although not yet quite reaching 2019 levels. Despite losing the 'Evergreens' to Little Gransden where there is a larger space, Barneys After School & Holiday Club is very busy. Private children's parties are frequent and there have been four fund-raising events, as well as fifty Friday mornings in 2022 with the very successful Reading Room Café.

Lettings have been reviewed and the decision made to increase fees by 10%, the first time in many years.

The Financial Review shows reserves of just over £81,000. Maintenance required has included two new water-heaters and a heating programme unit. Gable end fascia boards, three windows and front and side doors were repainted and some minor repairs undertaken.

The Reading Room extension project has been taken forward with commission of architects for drawing and costings. A village consultation has also now taken place. Formal training for one or more trustees has gone forward in matters of safeguarding, Health and Safety, use of the defibrillator, energy efficiency and for volunteers at the Reading Room Café, in food hygiene.

Members of the committee were thanked for their valued input, and especial thanks given to Sally Alderman, Peter King and Irene Cooper who are standing down.

Thanks, was also given for Parish Council support and to all users for 'bringing life to the Reading Room'.

### **11. The Gransden Sportsfield and Recreational Association.**

The Gransden Sportsfield and Recreational Association use and manage the Sportsfield. Councillor Ginn summarised the main points taken from the minutes of the AGM of the GSRA held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. These minutes along with the unaudited accounts are filed as Appendix No. 5.

The nursery using the pavilion is thriving. The pavilion however, needs upgrading, as it was originally designed as a sports pavilion only. The changing rooms also need to be redesigned so as to manage children's and adult events more easily. Fundraising will be required.

The car park is also in great need of repair. The cost is likely to be £60-100,000 to complete adequately. Solutions are being sought. The use of the new locked gate has worked well.

It was noted that the sports field was recently cut when the ground was saturated and this has only exacerbated the general deterioration of the surface.

The nursery is now represented on the GSRA Committee which a great benefit.

Thanks were given to John Smith, the Treasurer and Chris Butterworth of the tennis Club.

Councillor Ginn concluded by describing the GRSA and the sports field as important assets to the village.

**12. The Gransdens Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Society.** Councillor Pett read out the Allotments AGM Report of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The report is filed as Appendix No. 6.

In summary, this noted: full occupancy and a waiting list; a reasonable financial situation; the drought of the summer 2022 which was challenging, but all new trees in the orchard were watered and survived; the apiary which is running well; the wildlife pond which was dry for the first time since its creation in 2011, although orchid flowering around has been a feature this year. The wildflower meadow provided a good range of flowering species between May and August and cowslip planting in the orchard produced a good show.

Maintenance of the site has been carried out through work parties and with the wildflower mowing by Michael Capps and general grass mowing by Des Merrill, who were thanked. The apiary users are also grateful for the regular guidance from Bob Mitchell.

There have been a number of events such as the Apple Day and the purchase of shelters and a fruit press have proved their worth.

Thanks were given to the committee and all allotmenters who make everything happen.

### **13. Any Other Business.**

There was discussion about the playing field surface. The history of the allotments site was also noted. Councillor Capps elaborated that village allotments were originally provided for at the time of the enclosures, to the extent of approximately 4 acres. During the World War II half was used by the army. The area had then been rented out, but was taken back a few years ago, with half becoming allotments and the half which had had wartime buildings given over to a wildlife pond and orchard. The Parish Council is the landlord and there is peppercorn rent.

This meeting was closed at 8:10pm.