



**Please note that these minutes have been reproduced from hand written notes and reports submitted to the Clerk due to the loss of the original minutes as a result of a technological incident**

## **MINUTES FROM ALTHORNE PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2010**

**Present** Cllr P Davies (Chairman), Cllr Mrs M Davies, Cllr I Drinkwater, Cllr P Burgess and Cllr B Noye, District and County Councillor B Boyce, District Councillor A Cussen  
Michelle Cheatle (Clerk), 6 members of the Public

### **Approval of Minutes from last meeting**

The Clerk, read the minutes of last year's Parish Assembly. The minutes were proposed by Cllr I Drinkwater and seconded by Cllr P Burgess. The Chairman signed them as a true record.

### **Matters Arising**

None

### **Chairman's Report**

This year we have lost three councillors and gained two. Both Doug and Penny Channer and Robin Gill resigned; Brian Noye and Sally Winter filled two of the vacancies but the Council has been running with one less than the required seven councillors since September 2009. Despite advertising we have not been able to fill the position. It is hoped that some public spirited resident will come forward for co-option in 2010. 2009/10 has seen the completion of several projects which the council had been planning for some time ie:

- The Althorne Parish Council Website went live in May 2009
- The completion of the under 12's play area which was funded by grants from MDC "Parish Project Fund", the lottery "Awards For All" and Althorne Parish Council – completed July 2009

To achieve better visibility of events on the recreation ground the council has had the hedge lowered and will continue to maintain it at this level. In order to enhance the appearance the council is also paying to have the grass verge outside the recreation ground cut more regularly.

The Parish Council is grateful to the New Latchingdon Youth Football Club for the maintenance work they have done on the pitches throughout the season, and for the new goal posts and the replacement container. The previous wooden container was leaking and the floor was rotting.

It is very rewarding to see the Recreation Ground being enjoyed so much.

The Speed Indicator Device was finally installed in October and has since been rotated to its second position. There are five locations around the village and it should be rotated to a different location by ECC every three months.

Sadly we lost our battle to retain the 31x on its route through Upper Althorne. However we have gained the twice weekly Community Shopper Bus.

Finally I would like to thank the following people for their support and hard work during the year:

- Our Clerk, Michelle,. For the sterling work she continues to do for the Council, and for achieving the CiLCA qualification
- Ursula Benjafield for her unstinting pursuit of better transport links for the village
- Mr and Mrs Stagg, for cleaning the office and hall
- Linda Keeble, for editing and publishing the AVN
- All the volunteers who deliver the AVN
- Last but not least, all my fellow councillors for their hard work and support.



## **County and District Councillors Report**

County and District Cllr B Boyce gave a report regarding activities of the Maldon District and Essex County Council including; Fiona Marshall appointed as Chief Executive, Hazel Berrett as Director, Alan Storer has left, Jennifer Candler is now responsible for the planning department, Trudi Bragg has left, Robert Long is Chairman of the Council, Andy Cain is Vice Chairman, Penny Channer is Leader of the Council and Bob Boyce is Vice Leader of the Council, Tony Cussen is the Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. There has been two applications for windfarms in the District

## **Planning Report**

The Parish Council have been consulted on 24 applications, 14 of which were approved, 2 have no decision as yet, 7 were refused and 1 has been withdrawn

## **Finance Report**

The total income into the Parish Council Current Account was £47,479.89

The total expenditure from the Parish Council Current Account was £46,583.91

This leaves a carry forward amount of £895.98 and includes £584.76 Transport monies

The Parish Council Reserves are £8,366.27.

## **Health Report**

Cllr Mrs M Davies gave a brief report on health issues that have affected residents in Althorne.

## **Recreation Ground Report**

Everything had been covered in the Chairman report.

## **Police Report**

A report on the activities of the Highways Panel was given

## **Highways Report**

The main event of the year was the installation of a Speed Indicator Device (SID), for traffic calming, initially on The Summerhill location. This reflects the successful implementation of a programme initiated by the Chairman over two years ago. The SID has now been rotated to Fambridge Road, where it will remain until the next quarterly rotation by Essex County Council Highways Dept (ECCHD).

Your Council has been in negotiations with the ECCHD regarding the re-instatement of the Althorne Village sign on the western parish boundary at Riverview Park; extension of the 30mph zone westwards and eastwards on the Fambridge and Burnham Roads; cutting the hedge at Mansion House corner for safety/ visibility issues; various road signs which have been knocked down; the condition of the footpath from the 3 Horseshoes to Mansion Corner; various potholes in the road; and the potential collapse of the road adjacent to the War Memorial, following the emergence of a 15m crack in the tarmac (this could lead to water ingress and consequential undermining of the carriageway); it was agreed that the verge by the Recreation Ground should be cut by the Council; the verge around the War Memorial was trimmed prior to the Armistice Service. Many of the proposed initiatives are being affected by budgetary constraints on ECCHD, but your council will continue to press for improvements to the parish infrastructure.

The Parish footpaths have been walked and monitored by councillors acting as P3 Reps. Particular emphasis has been placed on improving the river wall section of Footpath 12. Here there are issues relating to the quality and accessibility of the stiles and also those surface sections which became nearly impassable due to animal traffic. ECCHD has now declined to fund replacement of the stiles with kissing gates, but your council has initiated negotiations with the land owner. It is also understood that the Environment Agency intends to undertake works, which may lead to an improvement in the footpath surface quality. Your council continue to monitor the situation.

## **Transport Report**

Mrs Benjafield reported the following: I have attended rather fewer meetings than in the past. These included the twice-yearly Parish Passenger Transport Reps meetings organised by Essex County Council to inform parishes about bus services, several meetings of the Accessibility Working Group for the Maldon District LSP (Local Strategic Plan) as the Dengie transport rep, and meetings of the ESSCRP (Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership). This does not mean I have been less busy.

## Rail

The major gain at Althorne Station was getting the fence in the car park repaired and getting the chain link fence at the entrance replaced by a set of decorative railings. The CRP has been taken over by a new Rail Partnership Officer, Lynda Stone, who is an ex-National Express East Anglia station manager. This has had the advantage that she knows what is and what is not possible – for example, she has arranged for the problem of trains not whistling at Cliffords Farm crossing to be put on the briefing session for drivers at Southend Victoria Station.

### Withdrawal of the 31X bus service from Althorne

This is the one event during the year which has been horrifically time-consuming, including telephone calls, emails and correspondence with ECC Passenger Transport, with district councillors, John Whittingdale MP, Euro MPs, the Transport Minister, RCCE, First Bus in Chelmsford and Norwich, First Group in Aberdeen, newspapers, radio and TV, the Traffic Commissioners and Passenger Focus, the rail and bus service watchdog. I was interviewed on Saint FM and have discussed the subject with everyone and anyone who would listen.

To date, we have lost the 31X and with it we have also lost the bus buddy scheme which would have been piloted in Althorne. This was a scheme, the groundwork for which was laid by Janet Cloke as chair of the Accessibility Working Group of the Maldon district LSP with support from the Chief Executive of Broomfield Hospital, to show people how to get to Broomfield by bus.

So far we are making little progress in the struggle to get the 31X bus back. The campaign has spawned the Dengie Hundred Bus User Group which will be inaugurated on 27 May. A small chink of hope is that BBC TV are planning to make a programme about the loss of the 31X and will be filming next week. The filming process will cover part of the bus user group meeting, so we are hoping for a good turn out. Maybe this might help draw attention to our loss. I have told First how good they could look if they bowed to public pressure!

The only other avenue I can think of exploring at present is to look for European money to support our community as part of the SAIL initiative (Schéma d'Aménagement Intégré du Littoral) which was formed "to help manage the issues affecting the coastlines and communities bordering the Southern North Sea", although I would not hold my breath in the current economic climate.

### **Matters From The Floor**

Not available

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm

