

Minutes of the Foulden Annual Parish Meeting

Held at 6.00pm, Thursday 6th March 2025

Foulden Village Hall

Present; Mr S Parker – Chair Parish Council in the chair
Mrs S Hunt – Parish Clerk.

16 members of the public

1. Apologies.
None.
2. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 25th April 2024 were AGREED as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.
3. Reports
 - 3.1 County Councillor Fabian Eagle.

Norfolk led the way last year as a shared economic benefit reason, leading the way and now being emulated by Manchester, London etc and this has raised the profile of Norfolk nationally from an economic viewpoint.

The devolution scheme previously being explored has been withdrawn by Central Government. Currently the plan is a combined mayoral authority for Norfolk and Suffolk, with complete Local Government Reform to follow. There will be a single unitary authority, three separate options are being considered.

Last year the Rural Business Awards were launched in Norfolk celebrating and recognising rural economy contributions to Norfolk.

The Precept for Norfolk County Council was set at 4.99% which is the maximum without consultation. Council has set it at this rate because if a lower rate was implemented there will be no Central Government funding support.

There will now be a County wide funded cut in July of all dangerous junctions and this will not come out of members Highway budgets. The partial cut in the summer will now be a full cut, giving two full cuts a year.

There is an extra hazardous waste day at the recycling centre in Spring, in addition to the Autumn amnesty, dates to be agreed.

Appointments must be booked.

Cllr Eagle is a member of the cabinet for Economic Growth. There is currently 250,000 pounds of funding available to support individual retailers in the market town High Streets from the 'High Streets Matter' funding. Trials and pilots have been undertaken in Breckland, and businesses consulted to ensure that maximum impact is achieved.

Questions:

?Cllr Eagle was asked what percentage of members of staff are still working from home.

He was unable to answer this question but explained that many staff work within the community, and attend outreach appointments and meetings etc and it would be very hard to provide a reliable statistic. It was explained that the member of public had spent a considerable time on the telephone before being able to get through.

This was followed up during the meeting by Cllr Eagle who requested the date and time of the telephone call to allow a specific investigation.

- 3.2 District Councillor Scott Hussey was welcomed and congratulated on his recent election. Cllr Hussey thanked the meeting for the invitation to attend. As a newly elected Councillor he had no report to make.

Questions:

?Cllr Hussey was asked what percentage of members of staff are still working from home.

He was unaware of the statistic.

It was pointed out that the new planning portal utilised by Breckland Council is not very user friendly.

Cllr Hussey confirmed that not all cases are yet onboarded from the original software.

It was clarified by Cllr McMahon that the questions seemed to be focused on how accessible the District and County Council were rather than the location of the staff. That an assessment should be undertaken about the transparency and availability of staff rather than their working location.

- 3.3 To receive reports from any village organisation.

3.3.1 Foulden Carpet Bowls Club - Neil West, Secretary.

The club continues to thrive. Following a recent influx of new members we currently have 14 regular players attending on a Tuesday evening.

The club continues to be represented at district and county competitions. We have three players that regularly represent Norfolk in Eastern Counties League and National Championships.

The club is half-way through a semi-final battle against Runcton Holme in a West Norfolk Knockout competition and goes into the away leg on Monday with a healthy 18 shot lead.

The club plays regularly at the village hall on a Tuesday evening from 7:30 until 9:30 and welcomes new players of any standard.

3.3.2 Village Hall – Bee Parnham, Chair.

Since taking over as trustees on 1st July 24 we have held over 22 events ranging from children's craft sessions and cinema

events to brekkie baps, community bars and race nights. We are working with the local brewery Woodfordes and we invite local catering businesses who provide a varied range of delicious foods and drinks. We have cut the halls running costs by 50% with the providers and groups hiring the hall is growing. we have also introduced the 100 club. If you would like to join and haven't yet please ask for a form and we will get you set up.

I think the biggest thing really we as trustees we would like to say is thank you for all your support the hall is the hub of the community and we couldn't do it without the fantastic support we receive.

Please follow our Facebook page and keep a eye on our coming up banner located at the Foulden village sign post for all information on upcoming events.

3.3.3 All Saints Church – report provided to the meeting from David Cheetham.

If I were to tell you that during the time since Wendy and I took over as church wardens, there have been no weddings, no baptisms, five funerals and one interment of ashes, you could well think it's been a pretty awful time at All Saints. But of course, you'd be wrong.

Because there have also been 13 Sunday services with average collections about £35, including one confirmation service conducted by the Bishop of Lynn, 13 coffee mornings here in this hall, which raised a net average of £175, and the recruitment of a new lead minister, the Reverend Michael Chesher, who has proved to be a great help to Linda. They are both on temporary part time contracts, and we are indebted to them both for bringing us God's word.

I am also very grateful to Jackie and Cathy for letting us share the profits of the bingo sessions with the garden of reflection (more of that in a moment).

At this point I would like to thank the Parish Council for their recent and very welcome contribution to grass cutting in the churchyard.

Also, we held a successful Armistice Day service on November 11th. Thank you Mr. Chairman, for laying the wreath, and for staying afterwards for a hot drink, biscuits and cake, along with about 40 villagers. It was very much appreciated. Incidentally, the war memorial was damaged last year by our grass cutters, and repaired at their expense.

On this Saturday, at and after 1pm, we will celebrate the official openings of both the North Porch and the garden of reflection.

The renovation of the porch was the vision of Nan and Andy Marrs, and they contributed a large amount of money towards it, for which we were able to thank them before their very sad deaths.

The Garden of Reflection was the brainchild of Cathy Earle and Nan Marrs and brought to fruition by a team of volunteers including Catherine Fisk and Keith Woodvine. It will be an area of calm and contemplation next to the churchyard, and again, many thanks to all involved.

In the church itself, two large windows on the south side were repaired in honour of Nan and Andy, the vestry window is about to be repaired, and new infrared heaters are to be purchased and installed.

There has recently been a quinquennial inspection of our church, to identify work that needs our attention. We are indebted to Dennis Clifton for liaising with the architect who carried out the inspection, and for all he has done, and continues to do, to help us with all aspects of the fabric of the building. We are also especially grateful to his wife Sue, who has identified and successfully applied for a number of grants which have enabled us to continue to maintain and hopefully improve the wonderful 700 year old building which is All Saints, Foulden.

The meeting was further advised that the grasscutting quote for the churchyard for 2025 has come in at £3,666.69/year.

The Clerk was asked to send through options for additional quotes.

It was suggested that the PCC contact local parishes and ask who cuts the grass there.

3.3.4 Parochial Church Charities Annual Report.

Income £1,587.50 Expenditure Nil.

During 2024 No requests from Foulden residents were received. In 2025 Mr Stephen Parker replaced Carol Balding as a Trustee.

Public questions:

The Parish Council was asked to review the tree work – in particular the need for work on the Ash Trees on the land where the Village Hall stands.

The Parish Council was thanked for repairing the hinges on one noticeboard, it was identified that there were 3 Parish Council noticeboards in the Parish. That the noticeboard adjacent the recycling containers at the Village Hall could be utilised for public notices.

The meeting closed at 6.35pm.