

GROTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2018
Minutes of meeting held at
Groton Village Hall, Wednesday 2 May 2018 at 7.30pm

In the Chair: C Fraulo (Chair of Groton Parish Council)

Present: J Osborne, A Dixon-Smith, P Roberts, N Cox (Parish Councillors); J Finch (SCC); B Hurren (BDC); A Robinson (Parish Clerk); John Lefever, Land and New Business Manager and Isobel Wright, Regional Development Manager from Hastoe Housing Association; 25 members of the public

1. C Fraulo welcomed all those present. She said that the Parish Council was looking for a new Parish Clerk and invited anyone interested to get in touch. It was agreed to change the order of the Agenda to suit those present
2. The **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Meeting of 3 May 2017 were agreed and signed, proposed by J Osborne and seconded by A Dixon-Smith.
3. **J Finch** (SCC) provided a copy of his Report which is attached to these Minutes. He thanked everyone for their support during his time away due to ill health and for the warm welcome he always receives.

8. Affordable Housing Project

J Osborne read his report which is attached to these Minutes. He also referred to an article in The Times and The Telegraph on Monday 30 April reporting on the All-Party Parliamentary Group on housing and care for older people, which recommended that councils should fast-track small developments in villages so that people could downsize locally and not have to move away from family and friends.

Members of the public asked a large number of questions regarding Groton PC's mandate for seeking to provide affordable housing, and criticising the perceived lack of openness about the way the procedure had been dealt with. They asked why the locations of the other sites proposed by Groton PC to BDC had not been made public, and why more information had not been published in the Box River News, and why mention in the Minutes was only very brief. Criticism was also made of the location due to its historic setting and difficulty of access to Boxford's facilities and transport. Concern was expressed as to the possibility of this small development leading to something larger.

Councillors responded that the Local Housing Needs Survey carried out in 2013 showed a clear need and justification to proceed with the project. As set out in J Osborne's report referred to above, Groton PC worked in conjunction with BDC's Housing Development Officer and provided the information and followed the procedures he recommended. Both B Hurren and representatives of Hastoe Housing Association confirmed that Groton PC had followed the normal and correct procedures. B Hurren said that this would be an exception site for local needs only with no chance of it being made larger. He also pointed out that the issue had been on each of the PC's Agendas and reported in the Minutes but no-one had attended to discuss it until now. Councillors pointed out that no planning application had yet been made and once it had, anyone would be entitled to object to the project to the planning authority in the usual way. Hastoe Housing confirmed that if the planning authority required the properties to be built in local materials, that would be what they would do. When asked if they could provide plans,

Hastoe Housing said that anyone who requested plans in their final form would be provided with them, but they did not release draft plans as this can lead to confusion.

C Fraulo said that she would leave the PC after 10 years, as she felt strongly that she and the PC had acted correctly and resented and rejected the criticisms of the objectors. If someone else wanted to be co-opted on they could deal with the issue. At this stage Cllrs C Fraulo, P Roberts, N Cox and A Dixon-Smith left the meeting. The Chair was then taken by J Osborne for the remainder of the meeting. B Hurren and a member of the public expressed their concern at the criticism shown to the Councillors.

4. **B Hurren** (BDC) provided a copy of his Report which is attached to these Minutes. He thanked J Osborne for his work as Chair of the Parish Council over the last few years and the Parish Council for their friendship and support.

5. **Suffolk Police** were not in attendance and had not sent a report but had advised that they would try to attend a Parish Council meeting later in the year.

6. **Report from local organisations and charities**

Groton Educational Foundation – A Scriven had provided a written report which was read out by the Clerk and is attached to these Minutes.

Groton Winthrop Mulberry Trust –J Osborne as a Trustee read his report on The Croft which is attached to these Minutes.

Groton Parochial Church Council – D Lamming as PCC secretary had given his apologies and provided a written report, read out by C Blackmore, which is attached to these Minutes.

Groton Village Hall Management Committee – B Jones said that the Village Hall is keeping its head above water financially, due to the recent Quiz and Curry Evening, and not having any major bills to pay over the last financial year. They had purchased new china and the cost of this had been covered by the Groton Educational Foundation, to whom thanks are due. They have improved the electric lighting in the hall and have made an application to Groton United Charities for a grant towards the cost. There have been 2 changes to the trustees as they have welcomed D Wills representing the Parish Council and S Watkins. The regular lettings to church events and Boxford Study Group bring in a regular income though the hall is used less than in previous years.

Groton United Charities – J Osborne read his report which is attached to these Minutes.

Boxford Playing Fields – H Phillips as Treasurer had sent his apologies and provided a written report which is attached to these Minutes and was read out by the Clerk.

7. **Financial Report**

The Parish Clerk read her Financial Report which is attached to these Minutes, and provided copies of the Receipts and Payments Accounts and the Income and Expenditure Accounts which had been approved by the internal auditor.

9. **Chairman's Report**

J Osborne had prepared a report which is attached to these Minutes.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

Chairman

Date