

GROTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2015

Minutes of meeting held at
Groton Village Hall, Wednesday 13 May 2015 at 8pm

In the Chair: C Fraulo

Present: J Osborne, A Dixon-Smith, R Kelsey, P Roberts (Parish Councillors); J Finch (SCC); A Robinson (Parish Clerk); G Smith, P Smith, R Bowdidge, B Jones, D Lamming and other members of the public

1. The Chairman, C Fraulo welcomed all those present.
2. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 7 May 2014 were agreed, proposed by R Kelsey and seconded by J Osborne.
3. J Finch reported on behalf of Suffolk County Council. A copy of his report is attached to these Minutes. J Osborne asked what grants were recently reported as being given to Norfolk and Essex, but not to Suffolk. He said that these were capital grants for building. P Smith explained that she had been visited by someone filling potholes on behalf of SCC who couldn't work out where the potholes were from his map. J Finch agreed to take the details and investigate. He hoped that in the long term the issue of potholes would be resolved. D Lamming pointed out that the general maintenance of the roads was an issue, particularly the edges. C Fraulo thanked J Finch for his regular attendance of Parish Council meetings and for his assistance throughout the year.
4. B Hurren was not in attendance but it was noted that the turnout at the election in Boxford ward was the highest in Babergh District.
5. Suffolk Police were not in attendance.
6. **Groton Winthrop Mulberry Trust** – R Bowdidge reported that The Croft is looking good as the trees mature. Maintenance has been carried out and an owl box has been fitted. Rescue hedgehogs have been introduced and sightings would be welcome. The Trust is in its 20th year and funds are in good order. He thanked the Trustees and R Kelsey, the new secretary.
Groton Parochial Church Council – D Lamming thanked the Parish Council for the grant towards the maintenance of the churchyard and hoped it was in good order. An area has been left wild and others are cut regularly. They do their best to look after the building and are grateful to Judith for her ministry.
Groton Village Hall Management Committee – B Jones reported that finances were satisfactory, boosted by about £600 profit from the latest Quiz and Curry evening, but all funds are earmarked. Last year the external black timber was repainted and this year, there are 2 projects, first to repaint the external window frames, doors and doorframes – existing funds will cover this. Second to repaint the internal ceiling. This is a major task and grant funding may have to be sought. They have a couple of regular letting clients and the occasional private let, and they rent out tables, chairs and equipment. Receipts are not enough to cover the annual costs, however. They do have a full complement of Trustees but would welcome new blood. The AGM is on 2 July at 7.30 and all Groton parishioners are welcome. R Bowdidge asked whether the roof was in a good state and B

Jones reported that a survey had been carried out and it was fine for a few years. J Finch asked what the cost of the ceiling painting would be and said that he might be able to assist with his locality budget.

Groton United Charities – J Osborne’s report is attached to these Minutes. He said that the annual income of the charity is £617.50. They had advertised for grant applications and between August 2014 and February 2015 were able to make grants for a total of £1300 to individuals for educational purposes, to Groton Village Hall and to Boxford based charities whose activities benefit residents on Groton. This included a grant to Boxford Community Council to help keep the Post Office open. Discussions are still ongoing regarding merging with Boxford United Charities.

7. Financial Report

The Parish Clerk advised that the Council’s accounts had been internally audited and all was in order. The accounts, Annual Return and accompanying documents were about to be sent off to the external auditor. The Receipts and Payments Account were available to the meeting. D Lamming asked if a spreadsheet could be made available showing the funds the Council had available and the Clerk said that this would shortly be on the Council’s website and a short version could be put in the Box River News, but that the Receipts and Payments Account was the document required by the auditors.

8. Chairman’s Report

C Fraulo said that following the election the Parish Council still needs to co-opt another Councillor. She thanked all the Councillors who had attended meetings over the past year, including Gerald Smith who has now retired. Over the past year the new Clerk has been carrying out her duties, money has been gratefully received from J Finch for the 30mph roundels for Groton Street, Slabbs Lane and Church Street and other attempts have been made to slow traffic down. The Council has regularly reported potholes and been critical of the response by SCC and will continue to press for repairs. She said that the police did attend meetings and the Council did their best to hold them to account when they had queries. The new report received from the police includes details of crimes in surrounding villages, for which the Council has been pressing for some time and finds useful. The Council has spent wisely and managed not to increase its expenses. One concern is the increase in litter every year and she would like to initiate a litter pick up in the village. Most of the litter is from fast food outlets, with some bottles thrown by cyclists also causing problems. D Lamming asked whether Groton would join in with Boxford over the neighbourhood plan. C Fraulo said that the Council had discussed this and decided not to do so at the present time. R Kelsey explained that as Groton was classed as open countryside, each planning application would have to be dealt with on its merits in any event so there would be little benefit to Groton to have such a plan and potentially incur the costs of doing so.

C Fraulo presented G Smith on his retirement from the Council with a certificate and a rose bush with the thanks of everyone in the village for his work on the

Council over more than 20 years, and presented his wife P Smith with another rose.

J Osborne thanked C Fraulo for the way she chairs the meetings and her energy and commitment.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm.

Chairman

Date