

METHWOLD
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Draft Minutes

Monday 23rd May 2022 7.30pm – 9.30pm 21 Room St George’s Hall Complex Methwold

Attendance

Methwold Parish Councillors - 6

Members of the public -14

Clerk

Welcome from Cllr R Scott the Chairman of Methwold Parish Council, it is good to see people in the hall at a meeting again after the pandemic.

- 1 Apologies for absence – Cllr D Charlesworth-Smith, A Burbridge - Methwold Bell Ringers, Busy Bees, Methwold Badminton Club, Zumba,
- 2 Approval of the minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting – The minutes were accepted and approved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr. J Marriage, Seconded Cllr D Scott - all in favour.
- 3 To receive reports from:
 - 3.1 Parish Council Report. Annual Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Good evening – good to see you all here. How nice it is to be back after 2 years of Covid!! The government restrictions imposed on village and community halls made for a difficult time in the earlier part of 2021 but with the gradual relaxation of the restrictions it was good to be back in the hall. It was a pity to see the loss of carpet bowls but we were pleased to see the old faithful’s back, joined by some new hirers. There has been a slow pick up in the one-off hires and this is thought to be down to people’s cautious nature, perhaps most noticeable with Mini Methwold where the uptake of Stay and Plays has been low. However, an enthusiastic Mother and Toddler group should lead to a greater take up in the not-too-distant future. Hopefully with the help of the imminent Platinum Jubilee celebration people will get back to a more relaxed approach.

I must thank members of the council who organised a couple of car boots sales and 2 very successful craft fairs before Christmas. We could do with more such events and hopefully there will be a return to “Carols Round the Tree” which always brightened up a cold damp evening just before Christmas.

The year has been very much like any other. We hope that we have attended to the needs of the parish, the Rec grass has been kept cut, as has the cemetery. For those concerned about the hedges there – we are tied by regulations relating to nesting birds. Storm Eunice gave us some clear up issues in the cemetery. Litter bins have been emptied and street lighting attended to. We have used CIL money [community infrastructure levy] to replace the rotten window frames on the south side of the Fenton Room [the car park side] and taken the opportunity to provide deeper windows into the Fenton Room to improve the light and the open aspect of the room. Other Monies from the CIL funding have been ring fenced in support of toilets for the Rec I know there have been some niggles; footpaths are a perennial subject as is the chapel and Fair Hill. We did manage to get a no waiting sign in place at the bus stop outside the chapel for 24hours. Planning matters have generally been quiet except for a proposal to develop the land behind us here, I suspect that that issue still has steam left in it before its resolved!

You may recall the disturbing news that we received about 18months ago from the BC regarding rates for the 2 buildings – they were going to charge £10000 per annum. There was no way out of

this even after contacting our MP – except by transferring the buildings to a Charitable Trust [for which we would receive an automatic exemption of 80% and a further 20% discretionary]. We have currently been issued with a full exemption on the understanding we are awarded charitable status.

So throughout this last year a lot of time has been taken up with preparing an application to the CCC working in conjunction with solicitors. The application was submitted late last year but due to Covid we only received a series of queries in March/ April. We hoped that we had sorted it but subsequently we have received a 2nd tranche mostly relating to a “conflict of interest” between the council and the charitable Trust. With the help of CAN we hope to resolve the issues and provide a satisfactory answer by the end of this week. To mis quote Wellington of Waterloo “it will be a close-run thing”.

And finally, a plea for more members. We have 5 vacancies that need filling which has led to a couple of meetings being cancelled through the lack of a quorum. Please, the parish needs people to come forward to join the council; an ideal opportunity to join in and support the community. The current Chairman thanked Cllr J Marriage for all his efforts during his time as Chairman especially during the Covid pandemic.

3.2 Representatives from some of the organisations will be present to give reports and answer questions:

St George’s Church Tower Bellringers – T Camfield read out an update from A Burbridge - Methwold St. George’s Tower Bell Ringers Report - Covid restrictions have limited our ability to ring our lovely church bells but when full lockdown was announced, the concern among our ringers was that the ringing band should not be allowed to break up. A WhatsApp group was formed which allowed daily communication between ringers and regular online weekly quiz sessions. This proved invaluable, as restrictions eased, in getting our ringers back together again.

During lockdown, use was made of our chiming apparatus which allows all bells to be chimed by only one person. In support of the NHS Clap for Heroes, the chimes were rung and culminated in a 'Guess the Tune' competition for local householders which proved popular.

As restrictions eased, our ringers were able to ring again albeit on alternate bells for Church Services. Now that all restrictions have been eased, all bells are being rung although face masks are still worn for the protection of everyone.

Over the last year, the bells have been rung:

- In celebration of the NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers Day on Monday 5th July
- In support of the Village Fete on Sunday 1st August
- For a Wedding on Sat. 7th August
- To celebrate the life of a young man tragically killed in a road accident
- For the Remembrance Services at both Methwold and Northwold on Sunday 14th Nov.
- To call worshippers to our Church for Services

The bells are maintained on a monthly basis to keep them in good order so they are safe to ring, which is done in-house by our ringers.

There are currently three Weddings booked for this year with bells being requested.

The bells will also ring out in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Thursday 2nd June, followed by the lighting of a beacon in our Churchyard.

We have a thriving, keen band of bell ringers who were all eager to return to bell ringing. The camaraderie and friendship within the group is fantastic and is to be admired. We are always keen to have new ringers though, so if anyone would like to give it a try then come along to any of our practice nights on Wednesday evening from 7.30 – 9.00pm. Whether on your own or in a group then you will all be made to feel welcome. Alan Burbridge Tower Captain

- 3.3 New Methwold Ladies Group – a small group have formed the new group, their first function was very successful and they are hoping to be able to run a varied programme during the winter, they meet every second Wednesday of the month in Peggy’s Room. To contact the New Methwold Ladies Group please call R Stone 01366 728478
- 3.4 Methwold Theatre Club-apologies from the Chair of the Theatre Club who is not well enough to attend this evenings meeting. The Theatre Club get together to perform plays, murder mysteries and other events throughout they year, they meet in the 21 Room every Tuesday evening. They hoped to run a production in 2021 but this was not possible due to the pandemic but did manage to hold a Murder Mystery in November based on Alice in Wonderland which everyone enjoyed. There was a race night in April, a Tea Party 1950 Radio Play to celebrate the Jubilee. The club welcome new members and are looking for a sound engineer and volunteers. To contact Methwold Theatre Club please call R Gibson 01366 727526
- 3.5 Methwold Sewing Group – R Gibson wishes she could be at the meeting this evening but is unwell, we are a small group who meet fortnightly on a Monday for a natter a cup of tea and to sew, all skill levels are welcome and there is always someone willing to help with ideas, and we welcome new members. To contact the Sewing Group call R Gibson on 01366 727526
- 3.6 Methwold History Group – we are very lucky after Covid to welcome new faces and now have between 32 and 40 members. Being able to use Peggy’s Room as the History room has meant that a lot of those who were unable to manage the stairs and older members of the community are now able to join in and help especially with identification of names and places in and around Methwold. We have a fantastic room and would like to make some changes to furniture. The parish council have agreed to white boards being installed and we have decided to purchase a simple white board for use with a projector, this has been ordered and we would lie to put them up as soon as possible. The book of Brookville is available to purchase. Do you know anything about Methwold Hythe, we are thinking of doing this, but it needs researching. There are lots of things historical in the parish, it is fun to look at the artifacts and we are very lucky to have a village archive which not many villages have and this is due to the generosity of the villagers donating items to be archived.
- 3.7 Methwold Community Action Group – this group was initially formed to help set up the Post Office. We run 9 clubs and intend to see if the Methwold Bowls Club can be resurrected, not just to play bowls but so as people can get together for a cup of tea and a chat. Last year there was a strong message that MCAG was in trouble because less and less volunteers were coming along to help, this along with Covid and founder members getting older has meat that the future of MCAG will be discussed at the AGM on June 30th, it may cease to exist if new volunteers don’t come forwards. It would be good to continue for the 9 groups which are covered by the MCAG communal insurance and we also do the banking for some of the groups. Last year the Carols around the Christmas Tree was difficult to hold and we ran a childrens party which 40 signed up for but only 14 attended, this was a great shame and meant we ran at a loss. Elderly people got together for a Christmas lunch organised by L Strutt, Covid restrictions were applied, we are hoping to run a similar lunch to celebrate the Jubilee in June 2022. The group has new Safeguarding Regulations in place. Jubilee Celebrations are coming up over 4 days, please look in the Methwold Times for details. To contact Methwold Community Action Group please call C Stone 01366 728478

3.8 Any other groups - None

3.9 To discuss any other business

Resident said they were new to the village but were concerned about the speeding on the Main Road, can there be more speed notices displayed?

Community Speedwatch – ideally there would be enough volunteers to run a team in each village, the requirement is for three people per team, one to use the gun and two to record make, registration and speed.

Speedwatch used to cover the three villages but has ceased due to lack of volunteers, if you would be interested in volunteering please contact the Clerk who will put you in touch with the co-ordinator.

The parish council have a SAMs2 sign which needs volunteers to site and maintain, this is a 2 man job, there are six locations in the parish where this can be sited for 28 days at a time. Data is available from the machine when working but at this time the Police don't have the facility to process this data. If you would be interested in volunteering, please contact the Clerk.

The permanent speed signs are within Highways remit.

Can Highways and the Police be asked to authorise more sites if required?

Methwold Parish Council have thirteen seat and currently there are five vacant, if the number attending a meeting is less than five this means the parish council cannot hold the meeting, in the event of too few councillors, the Borough Council will put their own officers to run the council.

Methwold is not unique and other parish councils have the same problem and Methwold Parish Council are looking at ways to encourage people to fill the five vacant seats.

The Jubilee Celebrations are in a few weeks, it is hoped these will bring some community spirit and we wish everyone the best of luck with their plans.

Meeting ended at 8.20pm