

Minutes of Bergh Apton Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 25th April 2005 at Bergh Apton Parish Hall Commencing at 7.30pm

1 Members

Parish Members present:	Mrs Alison Freeman (Chair) John Ling; Mr Derek Blake Mr Chris Johnson, David Skedje
Apologies	Mrs Sally Leigh, Mrs Jean Bobbin, Paul Butterworth, Rev'd Peter Knight, Neil Henery, Jacqui Hill
In attendance	Mrs P Fuller (Clerk); Cllr Adrian Gunson (County Councillor), Mr John Fuller (District Councillor) and 25 members of the public

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Chris Johnson proposed and John Ling seconded that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14th April 2004 were an accurate account. The Minutes were signed by The Chairman.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Bergh Apton Parish Council Chairman's Report

Edited version of The Chairman's [Mrs Alison Freeman] report

"There is no doubt that the unveiling of the village sign takes precedence in the list of events, achievements during last year. I don't know why village signs are the cause of so much controversy in a village and Bergh Apton was no exception. But we did finally decide to have one (that took about 20 years), we did agree on a wonderful design (4 or 5 years?) and it may have taken a newsletter poll and several months of meetings to decide where to put it, but by comparison it was a mere blink of an eye.

The unveiling ceremony was a very memorable and friendly occasion. It was unveiled by Peter Anniss whose family have one of the longest associations with the village and blessed by Cannon John Phillips. It was very much a communal, parish effort and I hope most, if not all of us agree that the finished sign fully justifies the hard work, fund-raising, financial contributions and the wait.

The Parish council recognize there is a need for affordable housing in the village and a meeting at the village hall in December 2004 to discuss affordable housing proved that there is over-whelming support for a housing needs survey. However, it appears that no-one involved with affordable housing in County or District has been singing from the same hymn sheet and although we are keen to agree a survey, it appears that the goal-posts have changed and we have, to date, been unable to get chapter on verse on just what the criteria are for affordable housing.

We believed that affordable houses in a village were for villagers and those with substantiated links with the village, in perpetuity. Now we have reasons to believe that this may not be the case and may include a right to buy, thus making a mockery of the principle of providing a continuous source of cheap housing for those who need it.

Until we are entirely satisfied that what we will be getting is truly affordable housing for the villagers of Bergh Apton, as well as making every effort to safeguard Bergh Apton from inappropriate development in the future, we will not be happy to support a needs survey. As such, as soon as the County Council election is over, we will be meeting the appropriate councilors and housing officers to get definitive answers to our concerns and questions. I do know that should the criteria be acceptable to the Parish Council, there may well be some suitable land offered within the village for some affordable housing.

Last year we said that we would try and reduce the Precept (£3850). However, the budget was so tight that it was only due to the good will of the then parish clerk in foregoing her salary that we were just able to remain solvent. It would appear that Bergh Apton parish council has always just scraped-by year after year but as the council is legally obliged to remain solvent we agreed unanimously to increase our reserves so that this will not happen (and so that clerks do not have to forego their wages). Next year expenditure is predicted to be £2,690, a reduction of £1,715 on last year's precept and we decided that the reserve required was a total of £1668.00 to be raised over 2 years. Therefore £834 has been

added to the 05/06 precept making it a total of £3,525. The good financial news, is that thanks to the diligence of our clerk, we are now registered for VAT and have received a VAT repayment of £4,400. Since some of this is a refund on play equipment, we propose using some of the money to set up a fund for the maintenance of the play area.

Play area, this has recently been inspected, there are one or two minor things to be done and this work is in progress.

Parish plan - A great deal of time and hard work has gone into this over the past year and Derek Blake will be giving a progress report later this evening.

I would to thank both Adrian Gunson and John Fuller for another year of help and support. They are both a sort of rapid response unit. I would like to thank Sally for another of year of Newsletters. Lastly, a special thank you to our clerk Philippa Fuller who slid into the hot seat vacated by Lorie last September, who has very quickly learnt the ropes"

5 Police Report

There was no police report submitted.

6 Adrian Gunson – County Councillor

Councillor Gunson reported that the PFI had collapsed for Hobart School. but the County Council is looking at alternative ways of delivering the benefits involving borrowing money. Hobart has 800 pupils and hope to have an extension with 8 extra classrooms, a Sports Hall and the all weather pitch – which will be open to the public. Other local schools, like Seething may also be eligible for PFI funding but it will depend on whether there is any money left over when Hobart and other schools are completed.

There is now a 30mph speed limit in Church Meadow Lane. It is hoped to improve the drainage problems in Church Road and Mill Road.

The Clerk at Loddon Police station is due to retire and a paid officer or volunteer is needed for 20 hours a week. The Loddon bypass is due to resurfaced and the Trowse bypass was resurfaced last year. With the opening of the Harford Park and Ride 5,000 cars a day have been kept out of the City . Norwich has the largest park and ride system of any city in the country. The A11 access to the hospital is being paid for by the County Council. The Wherryman's Way is to open with a footpath and cycle path and bird hide and there is also to be a better path to Hardley flood. Whitlingham outdoor centre is to open shortly.

7 John Fuller – District Councillor

John Fuller reported that the application for postal votes at the General Election had doubled, 53% of those who had them used them. 4,200 council houses have been sold to Saffron Housing Association and bathrooms, kitchens and windows are already being replaced ahead of schedule. 70% of bins are now wheelie bins. There should be 30% recycling by this time next year. The District Council is now in charge of alcohol licensing which includes Village Halls.

8 Bergh Apton Village Hall Management Committee

There is a new committee. The Christmas Bazaar on Sunday 28th November at the Village Hall was arranged to help to raise funds for the Village Hall and the Parish Church.

9 Parish Plan

Derek Blake reported that we have had the highest response for a Parish Plan questionnaire in the whole county at 97% response rate. The information is being collated. Now on the final draft of the Plan– photos and maps are still to be added.. Derek thanked Anetta Mann for the enormous amount of work she has done in drafting and redrafting the Plan.

10 Christopher Tenwinter Charity and Bergh Apton Parish Charities

A written report was read from Paul Butterworth the secretary and treasurer. Both charities continue to make donations for the benefit of individuals and associations in Bergh Apton. The finances of both trusts are sound and they both continue, and will continue, to uphold the purpose of their respective trusts. Last year (y/e 31st December 2004) the charities donated, between them, just under £3,000 for the benefit of those that live in the community and parish of Bergh Apton.

11 PCC Church Of England St Peter & St Paul Church

A report was given by Patricia Waters: Services were held in the Church on most Sundays in 2004. The exceptions were when the congregations of the eleven parishes of the Bramerton Group joined together for services when there were combined services for the Thurton Benefice. The average attendance was 16, but that does not include the services of Harvest Festival when 44 people were there nor the 200 plus at the carol service. Special services last year included the service of Christian Unity when we were joined by Roman Catholics, Baptists, the free Churches and the Salvation Army, the Midnight Communion at Christmas and a celebration of Baptism when we were pleased to welcome some of those who had been christened in this church, along with the Rev'd Michael Stedman who was Rector here during the 1970s and 80s. Services were usually led by our Rector, the Rev'd Peter Knight, the Honorary Curate, the Rev'd Richard Collier, our resident Lay Reader, Roy Flowerdew, or Lorna Allies who will be ordained this year. Peter Knight is in Sri Lanka for a month until the 14th May, to help the clergy there who have been over-worked following the Tsunami disaster.

Fund raising events arranged by the PCC included the Horse Show, Quiz and Chips and a concert in Church by the Pulham Village orchestra, and also the fete book sale and Christmas Fair organized in conjunction with the Village Hall Committee. The fete this year is on the 2nd July.

Work days were supported by many people from the village and further afield who helped to spring-clean the church, tidy the churchyard and create an entrance from the church field car park into the church yard. The next work day is 30th April, from 9 o'clock.

A committee is looking into improving several aspects of the church including the electrics and heating. Those of you who are deterred from coming to church by the chilly conditions in the winter may like to know it is much more comfortable at other times of the year – so do come along whatever the weather you will be given a warm welcome..

12 Bergh Apton Bell Ringers

A report was given by Patricia Waters. The Bergh Apton Bell Ringing team was re-formed in 1991. Since then people have come and gone and in 2004 we were a band of 6, augmented by 2 ringers who regularly attend our practices on Tuesday nights to help us, and we were loyally supported by our teachers, David and Sybil McLean from Lowestoft.

In June we hosted the quarterly meeting for the Eastern Branch of the Norwich Diocesan Association of Bell Ringers. The bells were rung in the afternoon and then there was the service of Evening Prayer in which the Rec'd Peter Knight, in a marvelous address, linked them of bells with the anniversary of D-Day being celebrated that weekend. After that we adjourned to the village Hall for tea, followed by the business meeting, and then some members returned to the Church for a final ring.

Our highlights for the year were when we rang a series of call changes for the Wedding of Natasha Daniells and Richard and again, with the bells half-muffled for Bergh Apton's special service on Remembrance Sunday. We were pleased with our achievement to ring in the New Year which was conducted with precision by John Ling.

Unlike most band of ringers, we are not ambitious, we don't follow the normal trend of 'tower grabbing' – that is we don't attempt to ring for the Services in our Parish Church. We can't always achieve this family commitments sometimes cause members to be elsewhere. But the prospects are looking good because 2 people from this village are being trained, Jenny Rackham and Edmund Greengrass, and they will soon be able to ring with us.

13 Bergh Apton Website and Newsletter

In the absence of Sally Leigh there was a written report. Sally thanked Richard and Stephanie Crome for their valued contributions to walks around the area of the village and Bob Fox for his gardening section and Bob Debbage for his gleanings. The front page is usually printed in colour if a sponsor is found. There are 6 editions per year and some go to people outside the village. The website is running very well it can be found on www.berghapton.org.uk

14 Alpington and Bergh Apton VA School

Written report submitted by Neil Henery. The school currently have 103 pupils. Visits have been made to Horstead, Kentwell Hall, John Innes Centre, The Playbarn and Duxford and various visitors have come in to school. The year 6 pupils worked with the Theatre Royal and Glyndebourne Opera Company to put on a mini-opera. This culminated with a performance at the Theatre Royal. French is now taught throughout the school. Staff from Framingham Earl High School have started running after-school sports coaching courses – like basketball, table tennis. The school also plays friendly football and cricket matches against other schools. Maggie Campbell recently came in to school to work with all the children to make a sculpture in readiness for the Sculpture Trail in May. Two staff members are studying for their NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) and one of the teaching assistants has recently passed her NVQ Level 3 exam. One member of staff has also become an ICT 'hands-on' teacher and the Headteacher is supporting three other schools as part of his role as a Primary Consultant Leader.

Rev'd Peter Knight continues to take assemblies on a regular basis. This year the school has raised a lot of money for various charities including Red Nose Day, the tsunami appeal, World Vision and the Diocesan Board's Lent project. Government funding has meant that the school will receive 4 new interactive whiteboards and projectors. The 'Friends' continue to raise a lot of money for the school through fund raising events. The Headteacher also thanked the parents and local residents for all their support.

15 Bergh Apton Tree Warden

Report given by Chris Johnson: Chris reported that this year had been a quieter year with fewer trees and hedging being ordered by the Parish through the National Tree Week scheme. The theme for this year's planting was hedgerow trees and several Ash, Oak and Beech trees were planted and Graham Harber planted a further one hundred and fifty hedgerow plants and several Ash trees on his land that borders Thurton and has provided a good hedge to mark the parish boundaries. The large Oak tree on Sunnyside has been earmarked for surgery to remove the dead branches overhanging

16 Bergh Apton Hedgerow Warden

A report was given by Bob Kerry. Two evenings were set aside for hedge surveying last year, 8 people surveyed Welbeck Road and also picked up much litter. Since 1998 9,750 metres of hedge in 30 m sections have been surveyed. Two hedge planting days were held one in December and one in January. 200 m of hedge was planted along the footpath from Prospect Place to Cookes Road which is the boundary between Bergh Apton and Thurton. Bob thanked the Conservation Trust for spending £240 on new hedging plants, guards and stakes. It is hoped that a new hedge will be replanted along Threadneedle Street in the winter. Bob reminded anyone responsible for a hedge in the countryside that it is not necessary to cut them every year, the bigger and more unkempt the hedge, the better it is for wildlife. Never cut a hedge in the breeding season and cut it as late as possible in the Winter so fruit and cover is available for wildlife as long as possible.

17 Bergh Apton Footpath Warden – South

Graham Harber: No report given

18 Bergh Apton Footpath Warden – North

Stephanie Crome reported that the footpaths she is responsible for are all in a good condition.

19 Bergh Apton Homewatch

Derek Blake reported that there is an email warning system set up and generally people watch out for their neighbours.

20 Bergh Apton Village Fete Committee

Kevin Parfitt reported that the fete on 3rd July had been a huge success with £3,086.68 being raised that is divided equally to meet the costs of running the Village Hall and the Parish Church. That achievement is due to a whole host of people who took part in many roles. Contributors gave goods, cakes and flower arrangements for the stalls. People helped set up and de-rig the marquee, gazebos and stalls. Others manned stalls, parked cars, poured tea and dispensed Pimms. The Guest of Honour was Suzie Fowler-Watt, who opened the Fete. This year Bryan Gunn will be opening the Fete. Many thanks go to Kip and Alison Bertram for allowing us to hold the fete once again in their garden.

21 Bergh Apton Community Arts Trust

Pat Mlejnecky reported on The Little Berghers project when so many local people packed the Village Hall to make a miniature clay model of themselves she thanked Kevin Parfitt for allowing a giant pit on his land to be used for firing the clay. The result was 428 Little Burghers, all to be put on show in May in the porch of the church during the Sculpture Trail. Pat said that many new gardens would be open this year during the trail and she reported that the work shown doesn't have to be sold but if it was 75% of the sale price would go to the artist and 25% to the Trail proceeds. The works of nearly 70 professional artists will be shown in twenty locations around the village.

22 Bergh Apton and District Society

Report given by Lynton Johnston. The Bergh Apton and District Society meet every third Wednesday and the membership numbers are between 30/40. The society has quality speakers and also visits to for example Clarence House, the Houses of Parliament, Cromer End of Pier Show, the BBC at the Forum and Thursford. Christmas dinner has been booked at Oxburgh Hall and also a 4 day break in Yorkshire

23 Thurton & Bergh Apton Players

Report given by Ray Wharton. There are about 50 members of the Players they meet between the months of September and March, taking part in charity shows, game shows and quizzes so far £15,500 has been raised for groups and schools. Already 900 bookings have been made for the next production Summer Holiday and there are social events like a trip to Italy too. New website www.thurtonandberghaptonplayers.com

24 Bergh Apton Christmas Lunch Committee

Kevin Parfitt reported that there had been 84 guests at the very successful Xmas lunch on 4th December. Thanks go to all who help behind the scenes and also to all the organizations for their financial support.

25 Bergh Apton Baby and Toddler Group

No report given.

26 Byrus Youth Groups

10-12 youngsters regularly attend the youth group and there are many trips out for the youngsters but help and support is always needed.

27 Bergh Apton Carpet Bowls Club

Fred Littlewood reported that there are 12 active members and the team is in the Norfolk League and in the Summer there will be one team in the Waveney District League. There is no age restriction and new members are needed and always welcome. The carpet bowls club meet every Tuesday at 7.30pm.

28 Bergh Apton Conservation Trust

Anthony Davy reported that there has been a rabbit plague and a lot of the income has been spent on rabbit proof fencing. There has been an active programme of walks and events and links have been forged with the Blofield Group. The Conservation Trust will be on car park duty for the sculpture trail. It is hoped to purchase some extra land for a nature reserve.

29 Bergh Apton Local History Group

Linda Davy reported that the Book of Bergh Apton is to be published in May with a launch party and the book will also be on sale at the Sculpture Trail. Linda urged us all to keep photos, letters etc. with names, dates and places written on them as it is our responsibility to pass on this information to the next generation – history is living in our attics

Meeting Closed at 9.50pm
Philippa Fuller, Clerk,