

East Donyland Parish Council
Annual Parish Assembly – 27th April 2017
St Lawrence’s School, Rectory Road, Rowhedge starting 6.30pm
NOTES

37 members of the public attended along with Cllrs Phil George, Richard Helliwell, Peter Case, Doug Clay, Jamie Gledhill, Tony Pullon, John Rowland & Colchester Borough Cllrs Mike Lilley, Adam Fox & Lee Scordis. Also present was the Clerk, Nicki Matthews.

Welcome address by Cllr Phil George, Chairman of EDPC:

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and being part of an active community. He explained the format of the evening, and proposed that the minutes of the 2016 Parish Assembly be approved. The minutes were duly agreed by majority vote of those present.

Chairman’s Report:

Cllr Phil George reflected on the strong and active community in Rowhedge, which is key to living in a positive environment. He noted that the majority of parish council meetings in the borough attract very few attendees, but that residents in Rowhedge care about the village, and this is evidenced by a regular good attendance at council meetings.

He highlighted some of the key achievements of the previous year, not just from the Parish Council, but from the community as a whole:

- The community campaigned most effectively against the proposed Gladman development on Rowhedge Road - although the fight is unlikely to be over, had we not worked so hard as a community, the planning application might not have been rejected. The Parish Council, the Residents Association, the Borough and County Councillors, two key residents – Phil and Daisy - and the community worked as a whole to achieve this. We should congratulate ourselves on this.
- The Community Day of Action in October - we had a good many volunteers to help with activities such as litter picking and painting of the playground fence plus we had practical demonstrations from the fire service and St Johns Ambulance and others. Thanks to the Safer Colchester Partnership for putting this event together.
- Heath Road Garden - with the help of volunteers we have also created a fantastic new garden on Heath Road. If anyone can spare an hour or two to help with weeding then please speak to Cllr John Rowland! Once established, the garden will require little or no maintenance and will provide a great space for people and wildlife to use.
- The reinstatement of the Parish Path Partnership - we are very grateful to Paddy and his team for the work they do in keeping the footpaths up to scratch.
- This year has seen a change at Borough Council – we now have 3 Borough Councillors: Mike Lilley, Lee Scordis and Adam Fox. We are very fortunate that they all show a good deal of interest and support for our village. Amongst the many other good things they help us with, they have provided us with additional funding to purchase more Christmas lights. Back in December we installed Christmas lights on the Holm Oak on Lion Quay providing a bit of festive cheer in the long evenings!
- The Parish Council has been working closely with the Borough Council to secure funding for our village through the Hills/Mersea Homes Development and we have been successful in securing £285,000 of sport and leisure funding.

Cllr George concluded by noting that it’s been a very active year for the Parish Council, which has hopefully benefitted our community.

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Parish Council Maintenance Update:

Cllr Richard Helliwell, Chairman of the Maintenance Committee, thanked the committee for their hard work, in particular Cllr John Rowland, Water Bailiff Dave Slavinskis, and Elizabeth Trellis for her staunch support. Cllr Helliwell then gave a report on key works undertaken in the parish within the last year:

- Development of Heath Road Community Garden
- Provision of two new bus shelter seats
- Redevelopment of Shipyard Corner, led by Elizabeth Trellis, including the provision of a new boat by Simon & Dawn Taylor-Williams, which was refurbished by Graham Oakley.
- Installation of a sculptural memorial bench on Lion Quay
- New festive lighting on Lion Quay, with £2,000 funding secured to increase this for 2017
- Major tidy up of the paths in the Burial Ground, with thanks to Dave Myers
- Repair works to the memorial plinths in the Recreation Ground
- Two silt clearance days at the Ferry Hard, with thanks to the RCRC
- Full inspection and maintenance repairs to the pontoon
- Installation of three new dog bag dispensers
- Replacement of three litter bins on the Recreation Ground

Upcoming works include the repainting of the village sign, and work to eradicate the moles in the Burial Ground.

Parish Council Financial Update:

Cllr Tony Pullon, Chairman of the Finance & Personnel Committee, gave a report using figures taken from the unaudited draft accounts for EDPC for the year 01.04.16 to 31.03.17. The full accounts will be published for public scrutiny once they have been finalised and agreed:

The precept (parish tax) collected for us by Colchester Borough Council for the financial year 2016-17 was £53,976. Additional operating income was £13,121, giving total receipts of £67,097. That income was made up as follows:

- £5,549 Local Council Tax Support grant
- £59 interest received
- £1,627 rents received
- £4,802 burial income
- £1,084 moorings income

Total payments for the year were £73,509, giving a closing balance of £67,656 general reserves. This represents a total decrease of £6,413 from the opening reserve balance. The largest item of expenditure in 2016-17 was the 10 year maintenance work required to the pontoon, which cost £9,450 and accounts for the decrease in reserves. The investment in the pontoon means that a much loved and well used facility remains for people to enjoy for the foreseeable future.

In January 2017 EDPC resolved that the precept per household for the financial year 01.03.17 to 31.03.18 should not be increased. However, because the number of properties in the parish eligible to pay council tax has decreased, this actually means that there is a small decrease in the total amount of precept the parish council will receive. Combined with the decrease in government funding for parish councils, the current budget forecast for 2017-18 is that £3,839 from reserves will be required to meet planned expenditure.

Cllr Pullon noted that the management of the council’s financial accounts is done by Nicki Matthews, who is the Responsible Financial Officer. Independent audit has underlined that the council has sound financial management practices in place, which means that the council has certainty and clarity regarding its financial position and are able to plan and make decisions more easily as a result.

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Community Awards:

The Chairman explained that these awards were set up to recognise positive contributions to the community, and that this year the council is making four individual awards. These awards were reintroduced by Cllr Pullon three years ago, and are a celebration of what people in our community do for one another.

Cllr Pullon read out the following list of nominees with a testimonial for each person, detailing the reasons for their nomination:

- Roger Gooding
- Clare Bush
- Emma Potter
- Daisy Knights
- Phil Appleton
- Lucy Szmyr
- Tim Page
- Chris Clay

Cllr George then announced the winners of this year’s awards as follows:

- Emma Potter
- Clare Bush
- Roger Gooding
- Chris Clay

The winners were invited to come to the front for photographs and applause; each winner receives a £50 donation from the Chairman’s fund, to be given to the group or organisation of their choice within Rowhedge.

Open Forum:

The following groups and organisations gave reports about their previous years’ achievements and ongoing activities:

- Mariners Chapel
- Friends of St Lawrence Church
- Rowhedge Under 5s
- Rowhedge Allotment Association
- Parish Paths Partnership Group
- Rowhedge Residents Association
- Scouting Groups, including cubs, sea scouts and explorer sea scouts
- Rowhedge Coastal Rowing Club
- Rowhedge Juniors Football Club
- St Lawrence Primary School
- Rowhedge Moorings Association

All those who spoke gave thanks to the residents for their support throughout the year, and to those who have helped and been involved in making these community groups a success.

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Questions and comments:

- Ron Chandler spoke about a new initiative called My Rowhedge, a volunteer service aimed at matching those who have skills to offer with those who are in need of support. Please contact Ron for further information.
- Archie Howie gave thanks to all the people of Rowhedge, the parish council and Colchester Borough councillors for their support regarding Battleswick Farm and the planning proposals. Although it is not over yet, we are in a much better position than before.
- Ken Jones thanked the parish council for their hard work over the years, as part of a very active community, and noted the high level of involvement from CBC ward councillors and ECC councillor as well.

Closing summary by Chairman:

Cllr George thanked everyone for coming to the assembly, Kerry Malcolm for the use of the school hall, Doug Clay for the use of the Football Club, and the Clay family for providing the refreshments. He closed by saying that Rowhedge is a great place to live because of its community, not just its location, and invited everyone to stay for refreshments and a chat.

The meeting came to a close at 7.45pm.

Signed.....26th. April 2018
Phil George