

SKEYTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held at Skeyton Village Hall on Tuesday 10th May 2022 7.30.p.m.

Present: Chairman Cllr: M. Hicks, Cllr: I. Stevenson, Cllr: A. Morton, Cllr: G. Berry, NNDC District/County Councillor Saul Penfold and Mrs. D. Fields.

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Vice-Chairman Cllr: J. Hughes, Cllr: S. Bunting and Cllr: H. Randell.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting dated the 18th May 2021 were signed as a true and accurate record of proceedings on the 7th September 2021.

3. Chairman's Report

Ten years have now passed since I first became Chairman of Skeyton Parish Council, so I now deliver to you my tenth Chairman's report and I am pleased to say that the content of the report isn't much different to the last nine that I have delivered, bearing in mind two out of those ten years were quite turbulent due to the Covid-19 outbreak, but with careful social distancing, masks and vaccinations we have appeared to have navigated our way through the pandemic, having said that some of us were unlucky enough to become infected in the later stages, although suffered only mild symptoms.

Planning.

Several planning applications came to us for viewing, mostly small developments which raised no concerns.

Highways.

Potholes, these are reported and usually repaired within a short period of time.

The blocked drain on the bend outside Skeyton Lodge which was brought to the attention of the Highways have now been cleared not by the Highways department, by the landowner, the drain now appears to be working well which have reduced the amount of water laying on the highway.

Thanks to Councillor A. Morton for getting this resolved.

The grit bins were recharged with rock salt in preparation before the winter set in, luckily, we didn't have much of a cold period so all bins are still full. A damaged grit bin on Church Road have been replaced with a new one kindly funded from Councillor Saul Penfold's budget. The new bin positioned further up the hill.

The Causeway which needs urgent attention, this is on the list of repairs by the Highways.

New Village Sign. The brick skin was built around the base and stone slabs fitted to the top also a brass plaque attached to the main post with names of all parties who have funded the project.

The Phone Box. The phone box was refurbished to a high standard by local resident Phil Davison, the defibrillator was installed and a grand unveiling was held. A plaque was fitted with details of all who funded the project.

The Commemorative Covid-19 blue plaque which was given to the Parish Council have now been fitted to the village hall wall.

Finance. The Parish Council has remained at the same figure for many years, being one of the lowest precepts in North Norfolk. It was decided by the Parish Council that it was time for a rise in the Precept.

The Bottle Bank. Still generating some income, although the company that run the bottle bank have since increased their prices which in turn reduced the income, it was decided to carry on with the bottle bank as a little income is better than none.

The clerk's wages are paid periodically.

The Parish Council decided to purchase commemorative mugs to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. A mug will be presented to each child within the village of Skeyton at the Village Hall's Platinum Jubilee afternoon to be held in June.

Neech Loan. Vice Chairman Cllr: J. Hughes to give a report.

Once again, I would like to thank Diane for all her hard work throughout the year and to my fellow Parish Councillors and Council Saul Penfold for their support over the last Twelve months.

Michael Hicks Chairman.

4. Neech Loan Trust Report

Neech Loan Update

After years of trying various options to reinvigorate the Neech Loan Trust with virtually no interest in the fund for the last 3-4 years, the trustee's felt that they had tried every way possible to encourage new borrowers. The structure of the Trust from the outset was focused on loans and with multiple sources available to individuals wishing to start their own businesses, there had been little interest in the Loan and what interest there had been had come from unattractive propositions. It was therefore decided that the Neech Loan had come to an inevitable conclusion and that the funds available needed to be utilised differently and more constructively. The Trustees resolved that this would not be the end of the Neech Loan, just that the funds should be transferred to a different mechanism and hopefully become more useful.

The existing Neech Loan deed 1947 states:-

- Loans to be awarded in the area of North Walsham, Felmingham, Tuttington, Skeyton and Banningham & Colby, extending up to a 10-mile radius of North Walsham.
- Preference being given to agriculture, horticulture, or dairying
- Grants can be awarded from time to time as trustees think fit
- Trustees have full power to alter and rescind the Rules and Regulations & make fresh rules and regulations

The Chairman had approached a similar organisation, the Clan Trust, which was a Charity with a very similar purpose to the Neech Loan. The Clan Trust started in 1968 and has been a huge success. It only gives grants (not loans) to beneficiaries in Norfolk of up to £100,000 a year and has investments of over £1.3m as well as a farm in Norfolk that is rented out. The Clan Trust gives grants to 3 different areas:-

- Agriculture - mostly to young farmers for various different reasons
- Research projects for food and farming
- Caring for the elderly in rural communities

There are 8 trustees, with specific duties; 2 focused on property, 2 on donations and 2 on research.

Following a presentation by the Clan Trust Chairman it was agreed by the Trustees that the aims of the Clan Trust aligned well with the Neech Loan. The Trustees discussed that if funds were transferred from the Neech Loan, stipulations could be made as to what grants would be awarded, with preference being given to agricultural & Horticultural purposes, the area could be kept to within 10 miles of North Walsham to keep everything in line with the existing Neech Loan deed specifications.

The Clan Trust were willing to accept the transfer from the Neech Loan with the view that ring fenced funds within the Clan Trust could be used for grants, rather than loans which had proved problematic for the Neech Loan. It was suggested that the Neech Loan Funds were segregated with specific stipulations of what kind of grants could be awarded. The Neech Loan trustees were invited to the next Clan Trust AGM next on 13 June.

At the last Neech Loan meeting on 9th March 2022 the Neech Loan Trustees confirmed their support in principle to close down the Neech Loan and transfer funds to the Clan Trust. The Trustees resolved to appoint a Solicitor to look at the legal implications regarding a transfer of funds and investments to the Clan Trust and the winding up of the Neech Loan Fund. The clerk was requested to contact a nominated solicitor to explore the matter further.

5. Any other business

Meeting closed at 7.50.p.m.