



PARISH OF RENHOLD



ANNUAL PARISH ELECTORS MEETING OF RENHOLD held on Monday 12th June 2023 at Renhold Village Hall from 7pm.

IN ATTENDANCE:- Parish Councillors Brunsdon, Dean, Gribble, Warwicker, Roberts, the Parish Clerk, Sarah Stephens Borough Council Safer Communities Officer, PC Vito Napoli, PCSO Stephen Tarabella, along with 14 members of the public.

1. Welcome by Parish Council Chair

Cllr. Gribble welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Borough Council Officer Andy Prigmore, Parish Councillor Cardinale and Ligurio, and Teresa Moon, Village Agent.

3. Introductions

All present introduced themselves.

4. Focus on improving antisocial behaviour and highways safety issues in the parish

Following these two items being raised in general by members of the public this item was to help understand more about better supporting residents. Sarah Stephens gave contact details for the local authority, paper and electronic, to highlight the range of different support given to local communities. If patterns are established, part of a repetitive experience the Borough Council can move forwards with using enforcement powers which differ than those used by the police.

Both the police and local authority encouraged online reporting to be done at the time of the incident to ensure the information is logged and registered on the database.

Specific questions received relating to fly tipping and littering and whether safety cameras can be used to deter this behaviour. Details given on access to the deployable cameras, how they can be located and the time period for.

The police encouraged to be informed of information as soon as possible, the local team take a proactive not investigate approach with contact also encouraged directly to Riseley Police Station on 01234 842866 where Officers are on duty daily till late in the evening and will support wherever possible. Reminder given of when to call 101, 999 or the station directly to help get the most effective response.

It was asked if there could be continued discussions take forwards regarding a Water End camera given the number of flytipping and anti social behaviour activities in this area.

PC Napoli outlined that speeding continues to be the biggest focus for the team and the widest issue for the villages they serve. Implementation of 20mph zone in some parishes was raised, and how to educate drivers to raise awareness of the danger of speeding discussed. Nuisance vehicles also are a local issue, video data, vehicle registration details are enough for the police to visit and talk to someone about this anti social behaviour.

NG took leave at this point of the meeting

It was noted that if people are seen trying cars, or there is hare coarsing witnessed than these should be called through to 999 as the act is taking place.

PCSO Tarabella welcomed to run a further Coffee with a Cop event in the village, it was suggested holding it attached to a Parish Council meeting to encourage attendance.

The Police and Sarah were thanked and took at his point of the meeting.

5. Reports from village organisations

Community Speedwatch – Keith Herkes summarised that the group had been re-established in June 2022 with the vehicle activated signs being used to provide the data collected. 60 hours of volunteer time had been given to report a total of 187 vehicles to the police with the enforcement process outlined. More volunteers are always most welcome to join the group. It was added that the Borough Council camera van is regularly seen in the village as well. The Clerk was asked to chase the local authority for the latest average speed camera data.

Womens Institute - Julie Roberts outlined the group have had a number of challenges over the last 12 months but going forwards there are plans for the 100 year anniversary of the group, and the programme of speakers is varied with all genders invites to join the meetings and hear from the speakers, new members are always welcome.

Pudding Club – the group have been supporting family carers, they continue to meet regularly with 10-12 attendees as a group and share recipes, new members most welcome. It is a great way for support to be given to one another and offer advice.

Renhold Church – Rev Smith presented with thanking everyone for the support given to the fundraising for the new Church flooring with it being hoped the work would be completed in the next 2-3 weeks. Roof issues, and the noticeboard are the next projects being looked at along with it being good to see how extensively the Chapter House is being used. The churchyard maintenance work continues to take place, the Christmas tree festival was well received as is the pop up coffee shop. Work is also taking place with the school and care home to refurbish the flagpole.

Village Magazine – Rod Jones presented the report detailing that the publication continues to be delivered free to every home ten times a year, having now been running or 17 years. The co-editors are RJ, AG, IM and deliveries now stretch to 1400 houses every month. The Parish Council thanked for the financial support with the publication.

Reading Group – the group run a number of different options from book swaps, to reading book of own choice to literacy visit in Cambridge, there are around eight members, all are most welcome.

Table Tennis – this group meet in Church Lane, Putnoe three sessions a week and is well supported.

Bridge Club – this group still meet St Marks Church in Brickhill as the village group amalgamated with a local group, but continues to be well attended with Renhold residents.

Renhold Chapel – Albert Browning gave an update including the recent street party for Woodfield Lane in the Chapel, coffee morning and afternoon teas have recommenced for friendship and to enjoy the food. There has recently been a defibrillator installed on the wall outside and it will be the 150 year old anniversary which will be celebrated on 23rd and 24th September. There is also a carol service in the Village Hall planned on 14th December with the school invited.

Nieghbourhood Plan – Amanda Quince updated on the work done since August 2020 which is moving the plan forward and looking to create a parish design guide including important key items like a dark skies policy.

Lunch Club – the group continues to meet, all are welcome to attend on the second Wednesday of every month.

Charity Cottages – Margaret Dean reported on the improvements made to the windows and doors recently, there is also progress with the solar panel scheme which is on the local authority list, noting the AGM is on 26th June.

At this point of the meeting the Parish Council report was shared:

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 22/23: -

The Parish Council have continued to meet regularly over the last twelve months which saw a welcome return to a full calendar of face-to-face meetings during this period, with no meetings traditionally held in August and December. At the 2022 AGM, Nicola Gribble was elected as Chair, and Fiona Cardinale as Vice Chair. Thanks given to Amanda Quince and Ian McIver who dedicated many hours to the benefit of Renhold and stood down during 2022 and more recently Julian Polhill who also committed many hours to support the Council.

The current serving Parish Councillors for 2023 going forwards following the Council elections are: Warwicker, Dean, Brunsdon, Roberts, Cardinale, Gribble, and Luguero, with there being two vacancies at present.

2022/23 continued to be another busy and productive time for the village, with a range of important village matters being dealt with. This has been more challenging as, without a full complement of Councillors, the Parish Council has been at reduced capacity. Ten parish electors called for an election to fill a vacancy for Renhold North in 2022, however, sadly, after repeated notices no one came forward for a long period of time.

Renhold Parish Council continues to work hard on behalf of residents, with attention to detail given to planning matters looking at a range of different domestic applications at every meeting. The Parish Council have remained determined to stay engaged in the important public consultations surrounding key items, which have continued again to be an enormous focus at meetings given the significance of the proposals on the Renhold community.

Most notably these are the Local Plan 2040 planning strategy framework document, and the planned East West rail route, having understandably taken up a lot of meeting time. The Council has, as always, stayed committed to voicing comments to the proposals given the detrimental impact that would result for the parish. Unfortunately, the Local Plan does see a significant area allocated, with an employment site put forward within the village known as EMP6 – Business Park, Land at Water End and St Neots Road.

It takes considerable time on reviewing such associated technical documents for such a proposed development which will have significant impact on Renhold as a rural village, but it is of paramount importance to the Parish Council. Ensuring thorough and robust presentation at all stages of the Local Plan consultation process whilst working hard alongside this to make sure residents are kept informed have been key areas of focus. Engaging with appropriate professional support when needed has also been actioned and presently the Parish Council is making in person representation at the Local Plan public hearing sessions which have commenced today and will run through to September.

The Parish Council is also aware that in other local planning and development matters, it needs to continue to engage in all aspects – an example being the East West Rail proposals. Prior to the final route alignment being confirmed, it is important to recognise the huge amount of work behind the scenes that has been continuing to ensure Renhold remains informed and engaged in such an important item. Renhold Parish Council and the committed community have continued to be exceptionally pro-active on this matter, Council representatives at the local Stakeholders Group, BFARE engagement, along with regular dialogue with Richard Fuller MP, have all been pursued and the Parish Council are most grateful to those Renhold residents who have supported with this.

On every meeting agenda the Parish Council make sure they engage in the range of residential planning applications received - this last twelve months has seen around 55 applications reviewed, with the Parish Council carefully considering each application individually with, where appropriate, objections being made, usually with concerns such as over development or impact on street scene. Again, Renhold Parish Council have a pro-active approach, so not just applications where the Parish Council is a statutory consultee are

considered, but also the Parish Council engage in permitted development and prior notification certificate applications to reiterate the importance of key local features relating to street scene are taken into account by the determining Officer.

Planning enforcement is also an area that is important to Renhold Parish Council, with items being reported where necessary to the local authority, to ensure there is consistency with the local and national planning policies being applied. Residents who contact the Council worried about a local issue, are signposted on how to engage in this area if they have a concern with an item.

Renhold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group is also a valuable asset where a number of dedicated residents are kindly giving up their time to collate a Plan document which sets out the clear objectives for the local community. The Parish Council wish to thank all those who continue to support and engage in this important planning strategy document for Renhold.

As well as the Plan Working Group, Parish Councillors also kindly volunteer their time, to support improvements, and make sure Renhold's voice is heard. This is done in a range of ways, such as representation at Bedford Borough Council led events. In addition to planning and development, Councillors have engaged with: Town and Parish Council Network meetings, meetings with Richard Fuller MP, CPRE training events, Bedfordshire Association Town and Parish Council training events, Local Plan consultation briefing session, meetings with Borough Council Officers on local projects in the parish, bus service operator, Anglian Water, Aspire walk round plus liaison with Orbit homes, website development, village asset inspections, and when opportunities arise, engaging with Bedfordshire Police on a range of local matters. Plus arranging drop-in sessions for residents to find out more on key consultations such as the Local Plan 2040 document.

Renhold is fortunate to have so many dedicated individuals who share their ideas on parish improvements, act as critical friends when needed, and enable democratic decisions to be made. With there continuing to be a good level of residents attending Parish Council meetings and engaging in the Open Forum, which is always encouraged and most welcomed.

The Parish Council have continued with raising the profile of Renhold, whether it is securing safer highways for road users through to having more effective communications with residents. Renhold Parish Council does not stand still.

The Council have remained prudent with the precept calculations over the last few years, looking to maintain a low per household contribution, yet also being mindful of moving forwards with village improvements.

The following are just some of the recent achievements:

- Donations made to the British Legion for Remembrance Day, along with support for the village to mark this important occasion
- Coffee with a Cop meeting supported
- Wild flower planting at two roundabouts in Water End
- Dropped kerb arranged at War Memorial to make it more accessible following Neighborhood Plan survey feedback
- Maintaining regular and ongoing communications with Anglian Water during the water pipe replacement works including engineers attending a Parish Council meeting
- Village grass cutting
- Jubilee village event financially supported
- Engaged in the village Christmas tree festival
- Various village asset maintenance and repairs as required
- Support provided to All Saints Church Rural Grant application for new floor
- Financial contributions to support Renhold Magazine, Renhold Churchyard maintenance, Renhold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, commemorative items for Renhold Primary children to mark the coronation and a grant to enable a defibrillator to be back in service

- Funding of the Parish Council website development to improve accessibility of information
- Installation of further Speed Indicator Devices in the parish to promote highways safety alongside signage to highlight the active Community Speedwatch

Do remember the Parish Council have a formal application process for organisations requesting financial assistance which is available to anyone wishing to apply for help.

The Parish Council are continually striving to ensure Renhold remains a village with a rural feel, reporting highway issues and maintenance needs within the village as and when they arise, and supporting suitable planting schemes as well. The logging of these issues often take time to be followed up: Borough Councillors, Parish Councillors and the Clerk, remain persistent. There have also been regular communications and on-site meetings with various Borough Council Officers to highlight the local issues. Whilst Bedford Borough Council are the local highways authority, the Parish Council remain focused on improving highways safety so dialogue is frequent with Officers as well as the local Police.

The Council receives updates from the Police and works with them in efforts to reduce crime and traffic speeds in Renhold. This is an endless task but there have been several successes and positive outcomes over the year through collaborative working. This passion in Renhold to improve highways safety and to slow vehicle speeds down extends past the Parish Council to the many volunteers who kindly give their time with Community Speedwatch. Thanks to all those involved with the various activities that support many different initiatives to raise awareness of the speeding issues experienced, from downloading the Speed Indicator Device data to standing on the roadside.

As another busy year passes it has also seen the new Borough Council ward boundary change come into effective which meant that Renhold moved from being served by four Borough Councillors to one. The Parish Council worked alongside Borough Councillors Tim Caswell and Christine McHugh, as well as Stephen Moon and Phillipa Moran-Bryant Martin. The Parish Council were saddened by the passing of Stephen who was an exceptionally dedicated and passionate Councillor and is greatly missed. The Council will now be working alongside Nicola Gribble the recently elected Borough Councillor for the newly formed Ravensden and Renhold ward.

As the Parish Council stay busy with the current Local Plan public hearings, the ongoing East West Rail alignment consultation, plus the Anglian Water improvements taking place, on top of supporting residents throughout the parish, there remains a lot for the Parish Council to get stuck into, so if you are interested in joining the Parish Council it is great time to come forwards.

6. Summary of grant monies available

Information was provided on the range of opportunities available relating to grant monies, which the Parish Council offered support with for any local group that would benefit from accessing.

7. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from the 2022 meeting had been circulated and were agreed as a true and accurate record.

8. Close of Meeting -

Everyone was thanked for attending, meeting was closed at 9.20pm