

Assington Parish Council

Clerk Christine Hargan 4 Northfield Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket IP14 3HF –
Telephone: 01449 674727 Email: assingtonpc@yahoo.com

Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 27th March 2023 at 7pm in Assington Village Hall.

There were 11 members of the public present

1. Apologies for absence

There were none

2. Chairman's welcome

Nice to see a good crowd

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 28th March 2022

The minutes were signed by Mr Simon Thorogood

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

5. Mr J Finch (County Councillor) report written by Cllr Georgia Hall

[County Councillor Report](#)

6. Mr L Parker (District Councillor) [District Councillor Report](#)

7. Mr S Thorogood (Assington Parish Council)

What a year we've had. We bade a sad farewell to Cllr Kevin White, whom I wish to thank for all of his work within the Parish, and welcomed Cllr David Wiles to the team.

Thanks to the hard work of the Parish Councillors:

- Our Neighbourhood Plan is active, which is an enormous help with planning and means that we now gain 25% of CIL (Community Infrastructure levy) on new build properties.
- We have responded to Planning applications on 15 locations within the village.
- Work on the Speed Reductions has been completed and has been successful in reducing speeding through the village. Thanks to Cllr Hill for leading the project and my fellow councillors and the parishioners for their work
- The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations were a huge success. It was a long time since the community had the opportunity to party, and we thoroughly enjoyed the celebration throughout the weekend, culminating in the barn dance that was not only well attended but self-funded. Thank you to Cllr Stacey and her team of volunteers for organising such a successful event
- Following the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen in September, May marks the coronation of His Majesty King Charles, which will warrant another celebration, this time organised by a different committee. We really look forward to sampling the fruits of the labour of Cllr Wiles and team.

I would like to once again thank Lee Parker and James Finch for their attendance at our meetings and for their willingness to offer help and advice when needed.

I would like to thank the Clerk and all the Assington Parish councillors for their help and support over the last year.

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And finally, my thanks to Simon White, our internal auditor, for ensuring that we comply with legislation.

8. **Mr B Cowlin (Treasurer Assington Association)**

AA is the not-for-profit organisation which funds our village magazine, the Assington News. Our editor Bronwen Stacey again published 10 editions through the year. Each edition is also published on the Parish Council's website in full colour.

Thanks to our advertisers and generous contributions from individuals, the Parish Council and organisers of the Horticultural show, our finances remain in reasonable order. The books have once again been ably audited by Ian Clark.

Thanks are due to all the contributors of articles and reports for the magazine, our advertisers and donors and the volunteers who deliver each edition freely to every household in the parish. As ever our editor Bronwen Stacey looks forward to receiving your articles and reports please by the 15th of each month.

9. **Mr S J King (Assington Village Charity)**

At the beginning of the 30th Anniversary Year since the opening of the Village Hall I am pleased to report that the assets are in good condition, together with the more recent addition of the Children's Playground. There are ongoing challenges facing the Charity to convert the oil fuel heating in the hall to a more sustainable and environmentally beneficial system, but the existing boiler is in good working order, together with the fabric of the building. However, the Charity needs new volunteers to take on some of the tasks.

Claire Osborne, Secretary, is standing down. She has been able to give her professional skills and cheerful approach to the Charity for the last three years, while at the same time holding down a full-time job, but her own workload has recently increased and she finds it impossible to give the Charity the attention it deserves. A successor is being sought through advertisements in the Assington News and by word of mouth. The role is an essential one as the Secretary acts as the official Charity address, receiving and distributing information for the Trustees.

Sue Sadler-Brunning, Treasurer, is standing down after many years of invaluable service. She joined the committee in April 2006 and despite living in Sudbury kept in touch with the village. Her financial knowledge and business acumen were a tremendous help to me in taking over the chair from my predecessor in 2015. She masterminded the changeover to an online banking service with Lloyds in 2021 which has speeded up the processing of our transactions, and she made successful applications for grant aid during the pandemic. She leaves the accounts in a healthy position for her successor with £6K+ in the current account and £18K+ on deposit. The Investment Portfolio managed by Colin Hyoms of Birkett Long IFA continues to provide a steady income despite the vagaries of the stock markets. On 30th January 2023 the fund stood at £135,642 generating £2,608 for the year. We are very pleased that **Katerina Hronova** has volunteered to take on the position of Treasurer.

Louisa Symons, Lettings Secretary, has had to relinquish her position due to ill health. She took on the job in 2014, becoming the welcome face and voice for many hirers of the hall for family events, parties and meetings. Her phone was the first contact for enquiries about

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the hall and playing field and she handled the various hirers with equanimity. We are pleased to say that she remained on the committee as a Trustee. Her husband, **Dr John Symons**, is the longest serving member of the committee with 24 years under his belt. He is also a Trustee. We are pleased to welcome **Karen Wiles** as Louisa's replacement. Lettings are down on previous years reflecting current financial restraints, but Karen is working hard to redress the balance.

Stephanie Gould, Cleaner, stepped down in August after five years' service. She was extremely helpful during the Covid-19 restrictions, keeping the hall clean and safe for the eventual return of hirers after lockdown. **Alison Mills** responded quickly to our advertisement, taking over immediately, for which we are very grateful.

Paul Battle, Caretaker, has been giving his time for seven years and is looking forward to finding a replacement. This important role covers day-to-day oversight of the hall and playground. The Committee have been very supportive again. **Nigel Finch** and **Mark Hemingway** restored two picnic tables donated by The Shoulder of Mutton. **Zoe Laughton** investigated hiring rates in similar village halls.

In summary we have recruited three admirable new volunteers but we need another three for this coming year. I hope the village will rise to the challenge and attend the AGM at 6 p.m. on Wednesday 17th May at the Village Hall, at which point the term of office ceases for committee members. All residents of the village aged 18 or over can attend and vote. Members can be re-elected.

10. **Bronwen Stacey (on behalf of the Parochial Church Council)**

Having managed with visiting vicars the new Vicar Daniel Whifflin is now firmly in situ. Over the last year there have been one or two weddings and funerals. Just recently there was a quinquennial inspection of the church building which needs to find about £15,000 for urgent repairs. The stonework to the front porch has disintegrated and therefore repair is needed. The fundraisers are steadily working on installing a toilet in the church tower. The first application was received by the DAC who will take a view on it by 30th May, followed by further consultations, estimation of costs and an application for grant funding.

11. **Rev T Box (Baby and Toddler Group)**

We meet twice a month on Thursdays during term-time from just 9.30 – 11 and have a regular group of about 15-20 parents, nannies and grandparents, with a maximum of 25 toddlers and a few babes in arms. They are a really friendly crowd, very inclusive and nobody is left on their own for very long. Most travel in from the neighbouring villages, but there are about 20 Assington families who have been through our doors since we opened (and closed) before Covid. The Village Hall Trustees are very supportive and have provided us with great toy storage below the stage. As well as playing with toys, we gather for story time, snack time and lots of action songs. Juliette Morrison, co-leader and music teacher, often hands out finger puppets to add to that fun. My husband, Barista Bill, serves great coffee and flapjacks to all the adults. Locals from the church help set up every time and often visit and chat too. Father Christmas (alias Dr John) paid us a visit and we've just completed Mother's Day crafts.

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12. Mrs J Cutts (Allotments Association)

From the weather perspective we had it all, storms, drought, extreme heat and some of the coldest temperatures recorded. The combination of these impacted on harvests in varying degrees.

A memorial tree to the late John Pinto was sourced and is now in situ.

We have some new plot holders and have had to bid farewell to David Collins who vacated plot 12 following a house move and health issues.

As you are probably aware, plot 7 was left in a fairly untidy condition, and there was a good deal of rubbish to be disposed of. My thanks to Graham, Sean and Bryn for their help in getting this cleared and to the Parish Council for removing the rubbish. Plot 7 has just been let.

The Parish Council have continued to provide the water to the allotment garden and are currently funding the extension of the water provision via the CIL fund. This is much appreciated. The Parish Council are also organising and financing the works to replace the fence posts that have worked loose over the years.

It is lovely to see the allotment garden being prepared for the coming season. Happy digging everyone.

Claire has decided to stand down as Secretary and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her once again for the service she has given the Association over the last few years. Her input will be missed.

Officers elected at our AGM were as follows

Secretary – not appointed. This voluntary post is to be advertised in the Assington News and is open to interested parties outside the allotment community. Our thanks for the ‘no charge’ for this advert

Treasurer – Lisa Brooks – unopposed

Chair – Jenny Cutts – unopposed

13. Mr P & Mrs C Hollingsworth (Footpaths Warden)

Our annual report concerning footpaths:

Footpath 010 – The way-marker post is rotten at the base. Requested 05/03/23, action has been chased up.

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Footpath 012 – Hand rail was sawn off at the bottom of each post. As Suffolk council were unwilling to commit further expenditure, the Parish Council kindly agreed to cover the cost of a new metal handrail.

Footpath 012 – One of the 4 signs (a plastic finger) on the post had been severed. Requested 21/12/22, action has been chased twice.

Footpath 015 – The post was rotten at the base. The post was replaced and re-positioned as requested, so that it was not hidden by the hedge.

Footpath 018 – The finger post was damaged and broken at the bottom, in addition a dog bin was attached. This was repaired and the bin replaced.

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14. **Mrs H Wallace (Neighbourhood Plan)**

Neighbourhood plan was adopted in 2022 and has resulted in an increase to 25% in CIL on new housing built in the community, and in addition has greatly assisted with planning.

Last report was in February last year and it was adopted by BDC in May 2022 copies have been printed and are available to view at the Village Hall or via the Clerk. The team has stood down until the preparation for a review, possibly in 2024 because the Plan has to be live and relevant. Assington is situated in the first full ward to have Neighbourhood Plans in place for all of the parishes.

15. **Any Other Business**

There was no other business and the meeting was closed at 7.48pm