



*Giving the village a voice*

**Minutes of the Open meeting and AGM held on Monday 29th July 2019 at 7.30pm in Bulphan Village Hall**

**Present:** Janet McCheyne (Chair), Peter Tarrant (Committee), Diane Perkins (Committee), Angela Shearing (Committee), Cllr. Barry Johnson, Cllr. Sue Little, Andrea Nicholls, Barry Sheppard, Bob Shearing, Christine Walker-Hebborn, Corinne White, Dave Gulvin, Dave Hale, Dave Topliss, Dawn McMahon, Denise Wakeling, Gill Miles, Irene Wellman, Iris Aedy, Jackie Sheppard, Jo Goddard, Judy Wright, Keith Blackmore, Kelly Fiford, Kim Towlson (Chair of Horndon Forum), Lesley Naulls, Les Naulls, Lynda Cox, Lynda Robertson, Lyn Topliss, Mark Wellman, Pauline White (LAC), Peter Bennett, Ron Porter, Ron Smith, Roy Thomas, Sandra Thompson, Steve Nicholls, Tracey Potton

No	Detail	Action
1.	Janet welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from several residents, and committee members David Gilbane and Annette Miles.	
2.	<b>Minutes of the last AGM</b> held 9th July 2018 were agreed and signed.	
3.	<b>Matters arising from the minutes not already on the agenda:</b> all agreed actions had been taken.	
4.	<b>Chair's report on the past year:</b> Janet read out her report which detailed the many activities, events and initiatives which the Forum had organised and thanked the many volunteers who had made these possible.	
5.	<b>Adoption of the accounts:</b> the accounts for April 2018 - March 2019 had been independently verified by Margaret Berry and were adopted. The opening balance was £4,584.38 and the balance carried forward was £4,674.91. A resident asked where the pumps bought by the Forum to use in a flooding emergency were stored and whether they are regularly serviced. Janet will confirm, and post a contact number for use of the pumps.	Janet
6.	<b>Sub-committee report:</b> Lynda Robertson, vice-chair and treasurer of Bulphan in Bloom, gave their report, mentioning they have had another successful year, continuing to maintain the churchyard, help at the village hall, planting and maintaining containers throughout the village, mowing verges and litter-picking. They welcomed 3 new recruits. Their plant sale and cream tea was well-attended and raised £692. They were very pleased when the church of St. Mary the Virgin was awarded 1st prize in RCCE's best kept churchyard in Essex competition. A new noticeboard was donated to the church, in memory of Bulphan in Bloom stalwart Alan Cox. Bulphan in Bloom's funds are raised from donations and fundraising events and they currently hold £9,526.36, of which £4,792.68 is ring-fenced for Victoria Road ditch. Bulphan in Bloom were thanked for their work throughout the village but especially for their part in the RCCE competition.	
7.	<b>Election of officers and committee:</b> Kim Towlson, Chair of Horndon-on-the-Hill Community Forum, took the chair and conducted the election of officers and committee. The following were elected: Chair: Janet McCheyne was proposed, seconded and elected unopposed Vice-chair: David Gilbane was proposed, seconded and elected unopposed Secretary: Diane Perkins was proposed, seconded and elected unopposed Treasurer: Annette Miles was proposed, seconded and elected unopposed Committee: Angie Shearing, Peter Tarrant, Lynda Robertson and Jo Goddard were proposed, seconded and elected.	

	Janet again took the chair and thanked Kim. The AGM being concluded, the Open Meeting followed.	
8.	<b>Minutes of the last Open meeting</b> held on 9th May 2019 were agreed and signed.	
9.	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p>a) <b>Letter box:</b> Royal Mail have confirmed that they will relocate our existing letter box in a new brick pillar, outside the village hall. Janet has asked for a likely timeline, and will persist.</p> <p>b) The <b>Mardyke Way Interpretation board</b> will be ready by the end of August and installed soon afterwards. An opening ceremony and celebratory event will be held.</p> <p>c) It had proved impractical to move the <b>concrete table tennis tables</b> we had been offered.</p> <p>d) Janet had as yet been unable to find out who was responsible for clearing the <b>ditch</b> between the Recreation Ground and the Albert Road back gardens.</p> <p>e) The school and Scouts are unable to take on the project of taping plastic bottles containing <b>dog poo bags to the lampposts.</b></p> <p>f) The application for a grant for a <b>monthly skip for Bulphan residents' excess waste</b> had not been successful.</p>	<p>Janet</p> <p>Janet</p>
10.	<b>Treasurer's report:</b> the current balance is £5,718.41, of which £111.24 is ring-fenced for the entranceway and £195 for the drainage group.	
11.	<p><b>Planning updates:</b> Cllr. Barry will speak on our behalf at the August planning committee when the 2 Peartree Lane applications will be discussed and decided. Officers are recommending refusal because it is green belt land.</p> <p>Janet showed the plan which indicated how many green belt sites in the area had been offered for development. In answer to a resident's question, both councillors confirmed there were lots of brownfield sites in Thurrock which were suitable for development, but that developers were waiting for house prices to rise.</p> <p>Janet pointed out that as chair, she sometimes has to respond on behalf of Forum members, and asked residents opinions on various applications which had been approved, and whether they were acceptable in design. Forum members agreed that maximum 2-storey houses with a chalet-type design were much more acceptable than 2-storey with loft accommodation, 3-storey, balconies, sheer facades and urban design were far less acceptable. The design, size and incongruity of the spa building on the Harrow Inn site was considered particularly unacceptable. Residents also felt that sites should not be overdeveloped, with houses being too close together. Forum members also felt strongly that S106 or similar funds should be used in the community directly affected by the development. It was agreed that a letter be sent from the Forum to the council, pointing out that should there be any S106 or similar funds to be allocated, that a local councillor for the area concerned should sit on the panel making the decision. It was also pointed out that Bulphan School has received none of the S106 money from existing developments, and they would need to fund improvements should any future developments be approved.</p> <p>Kim pointed out that, as in the case of Little Malgraves, the number of houses approved could later be increased. Kim also suggested that a discussion on CILL (Community Infrastructure Levy) be put on the agenda for our next Open meeting.</p>	<p>Cllr. Barry</p> <p>Janet</p> <p>Janet</p>
12.	<b>Village Hall report:</b> Dave Hale, village hall chairman, said that the Bluegrass Music Festival was again very successful, and has been booked for next year. Saturday evening bookings provide valuable income for the hall, and we could do with more. The floor will be refurbished week beginning 5th August, which is costly but necessary. A vacancy for a trustee has arisen, and Dave would like to hear from anyone with finance/VAT/tax knowledge who would like to volunteer. The trustees meet once every 2 months. The bar has made £620 profit since January 2019. Dave thanked Angie Shearing for planting and caring for the lovely hanging baskets at the hall. Finally, he mentioned the Band night to be held on 21st September, to raise funds for the hall/shop building.	
13.	<b>Suggestion that the Forum consider contributing towards the admin costs of the shop build:</b> Janet had sent out an explanatory document, detailing the extensive professional fees that had so far been incurred for the shop build, some of the potential costs, and the fact that although 4 village organisations would benefit directly from the eventual profit from the rent for the shop, the village	

	<p>hall had so far borne all the admin costs. This was unsustainable and those present considered the matter carefully. After discussion, it was proposed and agreed unanimously that the Forum contributes a £4,000 loan to the shop-building account. Bulphan in Bloom agreed to take a similar proposal to their next meeting.</p> <p>Several villagers had previously pledged interest-free loans, and Janet would follow up these offers.</p>	Kelly Janet
14.	<p><b>Bus users group:</b> Judy Wright reported that John Pope, Thurrock Council's Public Transport Manager, had responded to their queries by test-riding the 1 and a half hour bus route (on the hottest day for many years). He agreed to investigate ways to shorten the route, and also to ensure that Bulphan buses are allowed into the safe bays at Grays Bus Station. Janet thanked those who attend the bus-users meetings.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Police liaison:</b> there would be a Coffee with Cops session from 2 -4pm at the Community Cafe on 9th August when residents will have the opportunity to speak with our Neighbourhood Police Officer, Laura.</p>	
16.	<p><b>Feedback from councillors:</b> Cllr. Little has as yet been unable to find out about the status of the extension to Atwal Villa.</p> <p>Cllr. Little had followed up the complaint by a resident that online payments only were being accepted to remove bulky waste. As a result, Bulphan residents who are not online will in future be able to pay by card over the 'phone. The Cllr. was thanked for this.</p>	Cllr. Sue
17.	<p><b>Thurrock Association of Forums (TAF):</b> Kim explained there should be 20 active Forums, but there are currently only 14. He is spending time supporting Forums to reopen, and helping those who are struggling.</p>	
18.	<p><b>Thames Crossing Update:</b> Kim reported that 28,000 responses had been submitted to the last consultation. The preliminary results do seem to point to the fact that one question in particular was very misleading. Highways England have recently appointed a new lead, and we also have a new Minister for Transport. Highly contaminated land has been found in East Tilbury which may have some impact on crossing proposals, but of course has serious implications for the East Tilbury residents.</p>	
19.	<p><b>Bulphan in Bloom future plans:</b> these include ongoing tidying, weeding and maintenance of existing projects, including infilling of lavender beds; helping with village hall grounds maintenance; new barrels, new signage; refurbishment of vintage farm machinery (sand-blasting and repainting); a Magic Night on 28th September: tickets £10 and winter-planting. Kelly will contact Anglia Water to discuss the idea of installing permeable pipework in the Victoria Road ditch.</p>	
20.	<p><b>Questions from the floor:</b></p> <p>a) A resident asked about footpaths: Cllr. Sue and Kim explained about reporting "lost" footpaths to Paul Wakeling; Janet mentioned that The Land of the Fanns are engaged in a project to make footpaths more accessible. Residents asked that the footpath from the church to the old Harrow Inn site be made accessible, the bridle way from Kings Farm to the Dog &amp; Partridge improved and the footpath from Bulphan to West Horndon Station made passable. Janet will pass on these requests.</p> <p>b) The meeting then went on to discuss pavements and whether more pavements could be provided. Cllr. Sue pointed out that many of the Bulphan roads are lanes and not wide enough to allow for a pavement. Also, many roads in Bulphan are unadopted.</p> <p>c) There was a lively discussion about unadopted/private roads and their status and legal implications. It was confirmed that the council has no obligations regarding these roads, and that householders should be aware of Easement notices and also the relevant extra insurance needed.</p>	Janet
21.	<p><b>Future events:</b> the next event would be the opening and celebratory event when the Interpretation board is installed.</p>	
22.	<p><b>Next Open Meetings:</b> September 12th and 14th November, both 7.30 - 9pm at Bulphan Village Hall.</p>	

## **Bulphan Village Community Forum Chair's report for AGM July 2019**

It is much appreciated that people give up their time to attend Forum meetings and events. The percentage of residents who attend Bulphan Village Community Forum meetings and events is still the highest in Thurrock - which shows what an enthusiastic and supportive community Bulphan is.

The Forum has been in existence for 13 years - what have we been up to this year?

We held 6 Open Meetings, attended by many residents and also others including PC Laura Brady, Angela and Kim, the chairs of Orsett and Horndon-on-the-Hill Community Forums, Laura Blake of the Thames Crossing Action Group, Rob Groves of the Friends of Hardie Park, and our councillors Barry Johnson and Sue Little.

In September, we were awarded a grant from the Land of the Fanns, to erect an interpretation board at the Harrow Bridge, which marks the start of the Mardyke Way. This will be ready to deliver and install at the end of August: we will then agree a date for the official opening and celebratory event.

In December, Peter Tarrant again sourced a handsome, yet reasonably-priced Christmas tree for the village and the cost was shared between the Forum, the Community Cafe and village hall.

We liaised with Mardyke Rotary Club to make sure Father Christmas toured the village on Christmas Eve on his sleigh, and refreshments were served at the village hall.

In March, we joined forces with Bulphan in Bloom to take part in the Great Spring Clean: 37 volunteers took part and at least 67 bags of waste were collected.

In April, we hosted the annual friendly charity football match between The Swan and The Bell, the 2 Horndon-on-the-Hill pubs. The Swan won 4-0.

We also enjoyed the Easter Antics event, with 37 children taking part in the egg hunt, and Chuck-a-chicken proving even more entertaining than usual: possibly fuelled by Prosecco, one lady was very enthusiastic and the chicken ended up on the village hall roof.

In May, we were successful in our campaign to obtain agreement from Royal Mail to have the Victorian letter box removed from outside the old shop and sited in a new brick pillar at the village hall. We hosted a Land of the Fanns project walk around Bulphan: thank you to Denise Wakeling for leading the walk, and to Peter Tarrant for interesting stories about the area. Also in May, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Friends of Thurrock Parks group, representing Orsett and Horndon Forums as well as our own.

In June, Barry Johnson and I spoke at the planning committee, reflecting the objections to the planning application for 116 homes on Blacksmith's Field and the application was refused.

Apart from these individual events, Forum representatives regularly attend Lower Thames Crossing meetings, Thurrock Association of Forum meetings, Orsett and Horndon-on-the-Hill Open Forum meetings, Thurrock Road Users Group, the bus-users group and also circulate relevant planning applications, and often respond on behalf of Forum members. I'd like to thank Judy, Iris, Jenny and Palo for attending bus-user group meetings, and a big thank-you must go to Kim who often represents Bulphan and Orsett at other meetings.

And we mustn't forget the cafe and Post Office which have been open twice weekly for the whole year. We have welcomed people of all ages from Bulphan and from other areas. We have hosted consultations on libraries, Coffee with Cops sessions, we celebrated the cafe's 3rd birthday in September, the Highways England mobile exhibition came in November, we opened for another celebration on New Year's Eve, the Local Development Plan Roadshow came in February, as did the Thurrock Partnership Board. In April, the Community Environmental Development Fund attended to give advice on applying for grants, and on Good Friday, church members were welcomed and we joined them in a hymn and a prayer. At the end of May, we hosted a farewell do for Fiona and Dave Bowman, who have moved to North Yorkshire.

In June, we held a "Great Get Together" in memory of Jo Cox, the theme was "kindness" and those who attended wrote a message about kindness on a tag and hung it on our kindness tree. Thank you to all our volunteers: Angela Shearing, Lynda Cox. Steve Saunders, Peter Tarrant, Pat Rampling, Iris Aedy, Karen and more recently Amber, Lynda's daughter and granddaughter and Anu, the Bishop's daughter. And I mustn't forget the barman and general very useful person, Dave Hale.

I must also express thanks to our local councillors, Barry Johnson and Sue Little, who always listen and do what they can to support all 3 villages.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my fellow officers Diane and Annette, and committee members Angie, Peter and David for always being willing to put in their time to make it a real team effort.

Bulphan Forum exists to give the village a voice, and, to that end, we are always willing to listen and to represent the views of the community of Bulphan to the statutory organisations. Thank you all for the support you have given me as chair over the past year.

Janet McCheyne  
29/07/2019