



**Minutes of the Open meeting held on
Thursday, 14th January 2016 at 7.30pm in
Bulphan Village Hall**

Present: David Gilbane (Chairman), Janet McCheyne (Secretary), Iris Aedy, Alan Cox, Diane Perkins, Bob Shearing, Sylvie Besant, road Addison, Ed Lacy, Marion Chaplin, Cllr. Sue Little, Cllr. Brian Little.

1.	Welcome and apologies: David welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed
3.	Matters arising: the Christmas Eve event had been well-supported - we had 2 bagpipers accompanying the carols at the Christmas tree (thank you Jo Goddard and her friend Chick). Thanks to the kitchen volunteers, especially Alan and Lynda Cox who had only just returned from holiday and to Mardyke Valley Rotary Club.
4.	Treasurer's Report: Ed reported the following balances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current account: £4,047 (of which £635-24 is solar funding to be used for the entranceway and £195 is ring-fenced for the drainage group, leaving £3,223 available to the Forum) ● Cash: £6 ● Expenses since the last meeting had been £41 stationery and £40 Christmas Eve event
5.	Community Cafe and Outreach Post Office: the Community Cafe is increasingly popular, and increasingly busy with lots of activities/facilities on offer. Grateful thanks to Sue Little for enabling donation of a laptop. Iris Aedy will repeat her successful Christmas cards into gift boxes craft workshop. There is a brilliant team of regular volunteers providing cakes and manning the kitchen (thank you Alan and Lynda Cox, Angela and Bob Shearing). The Outreach Post Office will open at 1.30 on Thursday, 17th March 2016: grateful thanks to Merwyn Antony (Post Office field change officer) and the postmaster at Grays Post Office. The Post Office will be open in the village hall every Thursday and Friday, 1.30 - 4.30pm and the Community Cafe hours will increase to those same times/days. Denis Fewtrell, former sub-postmaster at Bulphan, will officiate at the opening ceremony, and it is important for people to support the Post Office in order to retain this service.
6.	Lower Thames Crossing: Lin Carpenter, Chief Executive at Thurrock Council, has arranged an Open Meeting at Orsett Hall on Monday, 25th January 2016, 6.30 for 7pm. Forum members felt that better operation of the existing crossing, once present roadworks were complete and barrier management was improved, would give a fairer test of what was needed for the future. In fact, some Forum members felt that the present barrier management system appeared to be manufacturing traffic jams in order to justify a 4th crossing. The general feeling was that as many people as possible should go to the meeting and make their views known.
7.	Thurrock Local Plan and questionnaires: Kirsty Stokes, Principal Planning Officer at Thurrock Council, will be attending our March meeting and she had sent 8 questions regarding the Thurrock Local Plan, for us to consider and feed back to her. Thurrock Council is also reviewing sports pitches, playing pitches and open spaces across Thurrock. Janet read out the 8 questions and noted the responses, which will be submitted to the council.
8.	Potential S106 contributions: we continue to maintain a list of possible needs within the village to which S106 can be directed. At present, the school extension is a priority.
9.	Current planning applications and decisions: planning for 4 houses at Hatch Farm stables had been submitted.

10.	Village Hall update: the village hall now has a drop-down screen and ceiling-mounted projector; a planning application will be submitted for an extension to the east of the hall, to provide extra storage. The popular Bluegrass Festival would again be coming to Bulphan 14th - 17th July. Forum members said how much they had enjoyed the event. Bulphan in Bloom had welcomed the extra attendance at their Strawberry teas and may consider bearing this in mind this year.
11.	Feedback from councillors: Cllr. Brian Little had been following up a complaint about dirty obelisks on the traffic islands near the A128/Church Road junctions, including a missing light (since November). He would continue to pursue this. Cllr. Sue Little told us that the "cafe" lay-by/loop near the Orsett Cock had been designated a clearway, with no parking allowed - which should alleviate the danger of lorries entering and exiting that loop. The councillors had no recent update on enforcement action at Burrows Farm, and would try to find out. A resident asked that the drains outside Burrows Farm be cleared, as they are blocked by mud dropped by the emerging lorries. Cllr. Sue Little would find out what funding was available to improve the footpaths in Bulphan.
12.	Police matters: a traffic survey was currently being carried out outside the village hall on Church Road; if the results show traffic is speeding, we will be put on a list of sites to be considered for a Vehicle-Activated Speed sign. We were reminded that the police had already judged that there were excessive speeds in Church Road, when they were assessing sites for the Community Speedwatch scheme. Crime rates seem to be very low at the moment. There has been no action from the Neighbourhood Watch.
13.	Community Speedwatch: this is up and running and appears to be having an impact. In response to a recent appeal, 3 new volunteers have come forward, but more are welcome.
14.	Bulphan in Bloom: the next meeting would be next week and the first clean-up of the year would be soon.
15.	Drainage group update: chair David Gilbane confirmed that both pumps owned by the Forum were located at 10 Fen Close, and that emergency contact in the event of flood is . James Brown, who did such stalwart work regarding drainage in the village, has now moved away. Secretary to write expressing our gratitude for his commitment and knowledge which enabled drainage improvements in Bulphan.
16.	Future events: Post Office opening 1.30pm thursday, 17th March 2016 Easter Antics Monday, 28th March 2016, 1 - 4pm
17	Questions from the floor: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Cllr. Pothercary had agreed to follow up complaints at the last meeting regarding lorries breaking up the verge at the layby on the A128 near to 4 Acres. Cllr. Pothercary had not yet responded, but Cllr. Brian Little explained that until Thurrock can provide enough lorry parks, there will not be enforcement of lorries using laybys. b) A Forum member asked for the councillors to follow up complaints that the waste bin by the same layby is not emptied often enough. c) Some residents are having trouble accessing the promised faster Broadband speeds: Janet will liaise with others who have successfully dealt with this issue. d) A resident said that a manhole were lifting in Church Lane during heavy rain: asked if a gully-sucker was needed, the resident felt that the problem was inadequate bore on the exit drainage pipes and that the problem was mostly when there was exceptionally heavy rainfall. e) Complaints had been raised about a taxi parking on the school zigzags. Janet to liaise with Cllr. Sue Little about this.
18.	Next Open meetings: Thursday, 10 th March 2016 Thursday, 12 th May 2016 Thursday, 30 th June 2016 (AGM)