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**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ARDELEY PARISH MEETING held on MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023 at 7.00 pm in the village hall.**

Councillors present: Cllr Adrian Waygood, Chairman  
Cllr Jim Egginton  
Cllr Tim Noble  
Cllr Simon Peace  
Cllr Jackie York

Officer attending: Lorna Ewen, Clerk

Others present: 4 members of the public

**1 Apologies for absence:** Cllr Norman and District Cllr Aubrey Holt.

**2 Approval of minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for 2022:** Proposed by Cllr Waygood and seconded by Cllr Egginton as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

**3 Matters arising:** None.

**4 Chairman's Report:** Parish Council review of the year, 2022-2023. The chairman reported as follows: Good evening everyone and welcome to our 2023 Annual Parish Meeting, with an especially warm welcome to our parishioners.

There was a change to the council during the last year; Cllr Andrew Miller resigned due to his move to France and Tim Noble was co-opted to replace him. I would like to thank Andrew for his efforts during time on the council and welcome Tim back on board.

Once again, I am pleased to report that the council finances have remained healthy. Because of a prudent approach to expenditure, the council was able to ensure that, despite the general increases in the cost of living, the annual precept or rates charge levied on the parish remained frozen again at £6000, the same as it has been since at least 2018. Compared to that of many other parish councils in Hertfordshire, this is a very modest figure and it is important to recognize that it could not be maintained at this level without the help and hands on approach of individual councillors together with the voluntary assistance of residents from behind the scenes.

I would therefore like to especially thank Mr Calvin Hawes for his unpaid efforts with the grass cutting of the playground area. However, in addition to this, Mr Hawes also keeps the churchyard grass tidy as well as that on the calvary opposite Ardeley Bury. The council is also grateful to Mrs Jackie Heywood and the other volunteers who kindly look after the defibrillator, the supplies for which are funded by the parish council. Also to the many others, including Mr Bob Vincent, the village hall committee, and all those who quietly help in ways that are outside the remit of the council but contribute so much to the quality of life of Ardeley parish as a whole.

The condition of the roads is an ongoing concern and the council has consistently sought to use its influence, limited though it is, to try and bring about improvements and highlight areas of concern to the Highways Department. This year, there has been the addition of approach gates to Cromer

which are both attractive and will hopefully serve to draw the attention of drivers to the need to drive carefully. These have been generously funded by Cty Cllr Ken Crofton from his amenity budget; originally it was thought that Ardeley Parish Council would have to make a substantial contribution.

This left a surplus in the budget which enabled the council was able to make a contribution to the railings around the war memorial. The bulk of the cost was born by the church and the restoration which was planned to commemorate the coronation has now been carried out. The council continues to ensure that the parish remains attractive and litter free and is grateful for the services of Mrs Jennie Yates in this respect.

With the kind help of local volunteers, Cllr Egginton led a tree planting initiative which saw the planting of saplings in Cromer and Wood End and the oak trees on Moor Green planted last year were replaced. It is hoped that these will thrive and grace the parish for many years to come.

The council is responsible for the playground and equipment inspections are carried out by Broadmead Leisure to twice yearly. As already mentioned, Mr Hawes kindly makes sure that the grass is kept trimmed and a strimmer has been purchased to assist with this.

There have been a number of planning applications and the council is routinely challenged by the need to balance the aspirations of individuals to improve and enhance their properties, with the overall character and ambience of the parish. However, it should be stressed that in actuality, the impact of the parish council's recommendations is only advisory as are the comments submitted by individuals, and in several instances the council's decisions have been disregarded.

It has been a privilege to serve Ardeley and its surrounding villages and hamlets as chairman for another year. Although my fellow councillors and I are all give of our time voluntarily we are here for you around the clock, as and when needed when problems arise. Please do get in touch with me or any of the other councillors if you have a matter you would like to bring to our attention or idea of how our parish could be enhanced or improved. Thank you all for your support over the last year.

**Comments:** There were no comments from members of the public; Cllr Egginton said that he had checked the new trees in Cromer on his way to the meeting and was pleased to observe that they are doing very well.