

Minutes of the Grateley Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Tuesday 7th of May 2024 in the Grateley Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr Mr K Smith – Chair
Cllr Mr I Wingfield – Vice Chair
Cllr Mr A Bradford
Cllr Mrs P Perkins
Cllr Mrs J Blakeman
Richard Waterman – Parish Clerk
County Councillor Mr C Donnelly
Borough Councillor Mrs M Flood
Members of the Public – 6

Apologies: Cllr Mr M Horne and County Councillor Mrs S Hasselmann.

WELCOME.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair reminded the Members of the Public that there is a slot on the agenda for them to raise issues and to please not interject during the meeting.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

There were no Declarations of Interest recorded.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.

CHAIR – Cllr Mrs J Blakeman proposed Cllr Mr K Smith as Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Mr A Bradford. There were no other nominations. All agreed, Cllr Mr K Smith was elected Chair.

VICE CHAIR – Cllr Mrs P Perkins proposed Cllr Mr I Wingfield as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Blakeman. There were no other nominations. All agreed. Cllr Mr I Wingfield was elected Vice Chair.

Parish Councillors Portfolios.

Finance.

Cllr Mr K Smith and the Parish Clerk.

General Correspondence.

Cllr Mr K Smith and the Parish Clerk.

Grateley Help Network.

Cllr Mr M Horne.

Grateley Highways Sub Group.

Cllr Mr A Bradford and Cllr Mr I Wingfield.

Grateley Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Cllr Mrs J Blakeman.

Grateley PC and Community Assets (including Locke Close Play Area).

Cllr Mr I Wingfield and Cllr Mr K Smith.

Grateley PC Constitution/Code of Conduct and Protocols.

Cllr Mr K Smith and the Parish Clerk.

Grateley PC Website and Social Media Engagement.

Cllr Mr A Bradford and Cllr Mr I Wingfield.

Grateley War Memorial Hall Committee.

Cllr Mr A Bradford and Cllr Mrs P Perkins.

Grateley War Memorial Hall Hub (Resilience Plan).

Cllr Mr A Bradford and Cllr Mrs P Perkins.

Planning.

Cllr Mr M Horne and Cllr Mr K Smith.

CHAIRS REPORT 2024.

The Chair introduced the Grateley Parish Councillors.

Mrs Julie Blakeman.

Mr Andy Bradford.

Mr Martyn Horne.

Mrs Pat Perkins.

Mr Keith Smith.

Mr Ian Wingfield.

Your Grateley Parish Council Clerk.

Mr Richard Waterman.

To contact the Parish Council (PC) please go to our website:

<https://grateley.net/contact>.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all Councillors and the Clerk for their service through last year.

Grateley War Memorial Hall.

The management of Grateley War Memorial Hall (GWMH) has been passed onto the new Grateley War Memorial Hall Committee (GWMHC), whose Chairman Cllr. Mr A Bradford will provide an Annual Report separately.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank those Councillors and residents who took on the responsibility of managing the War Memorial Hall back in June 2018, following the mass resignation of the previous Committee in May of that year.

Annual Precept Charge 2024/2025.

The PC is quite unique as it has no major assets, unlike the majority of Parishes within the Borough, therefore a relatively low Precept has been set over previous years.

There are 261 (based on TVBC 2021) residential households within the Parish of varying Bands A - H that are subject to Council Tax.

It was noted that there were comments posted on social media by a small minority of residents regarding the increase in the 2024/2025 Precept, it is hoped that the following report makes clear why the increase was required.

All financial information can be found within the PC Meeting minutes on our website -

<https://grateley.net/administration/grateley-parish-council/minutes>

Previous Years Precepts.

2013 - 2015 Precept.

Set at £6,200 per annum.

2015/2016 Precept.

Set at £7,700 per annum, an increase on the previous year of £1,500 per annum.

2016/2017 Precept.

Set at £7,700 per annum, no increase on the previous year.

2017/2018 Precept.

Set at £8,000 per annum, an increase on the previous year of £300 per annum.

2019 - 2024 Precept.

Set at £8,400 per annum, an increase on the previous year of £400 per annum.

2024/2025 Precept.

Set at £10,000 per annum, an increase on the previous year of £1,600 per annum.

Following our November 2023 PC Meeting a further 'In-Camera' meeting took place to discuss the forthcoming year's budget and Precept, during that meeting, the following was discussed:

Favourable comments had been received regarding the new Flashing Speed Sign on Monxton Road. Therefore, the PC decided to acquire a further sign initially shared between Cholderton Road and Wallop Road at the Station end of the village, followed by a further to be included within the 2025/2026 budget round completing the coverage of the B3084 through the Parish.

The PC received a request from Grateley Village Friends for a grant to enable them to arrange additional events throughout the year.

St. Leonards Church PCC requested an increase in grant as a contribution towards the upkeep of the Graveyard.

The PC also agreed to increase the grant to the Grateley War Memorial Hall Committee.

With this all in mind the PC agreed that the following will be included in the 2024/2025 Budget:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Purchase of an additional Flashing Speed Sign | £3,000 |
| • Money set aside for Play Area Maintenance/Replacement Fund and increased Insurance cover. | £500 |
| • Grant award to Grateley Village Friends | £500 |
| • Increased Grant award to St. Leonards Church | £250 |
| • Increased Grant award to Grateley War Memorial Hall | £250 |

This being the case the Parish Council agreed to set the 2024/2025 Precept at £10,000 per annum, an increase of £1,600 (17.7%).

Taking Band C as an example this relates to an annual increase from £28.50 to £33.55, which is £5.05 per household per annum, or 50p per household per month based on the set 10 monthly payments.

Further, the 2024/2025 Precept would also allow the PC to continue to support the following local organisations, maintain its assets, and meet its financial commitments:

- Grateley NDP Team in the creation of the Grateley Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Grateley Help Network (GHN) for village events such as 'The Big Lunch.'
- War Memorial Hall Warm Hub project under the Grateley Resilience Plan (GRP).
- Insurance, maintenance and replacement cost of the two Parish Council defibrillators.
- Insurance, maintenance and replacement costs of the three Parish Notice Boards.
- Insurance and maintenance of the Parish Telephone Box Library.
- Insurance and maintenance costs of the two Parish Bus Shelters.
- Insurance and maintenance contribution for the two shared Flashing Speed Signs.
- Insurance, maintenance and emptying costs to TVBC of the three refuse/dog bins within the Locke Close Play Area, one at the Bus Shelter on Streetway Road, and one on Wallop Road near the junction with Streetway Road.
- The PC Clerk's wages.

Locke Close Play Area.

The Locke Close Play Area was originally funded and installed by the PC in conjunction with the landowner, Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), I believe back in the mid 1990's, at a later date swings and goal posts were added. All of the wooden play equipment was being maintained by the PC until the condition of the equipment deteriorated beyond repair, at which point it was decided that the equipment should be removed and disposed of for health and safety reasons. It was agreed that a project should be considered to replace the equipment and associated works. A survey of residents was undertaken to identify what equipment they believe their children would prefer, following which quotations were obtained based on their recommendations to identify the likely level of funding required to undertake the project. With the initial costs determined, funders were sought and approached to establish whether or not the project was viable in its current design. With the required funding in place, it is anticipated that the new Play Area equipment and associated works are scheduled to be installed and commissioned late June, early July this year and is the largest project ever undertaken by the PC.

It has been suggested that an official opening ceremony should be arranged, including the unveiling of a plaque recognising the contributors to the project.

Any further suggestions, please contact the PC: <https://grateley.net/contact>

To confirm, the Play Area Project contributors were as follows:

TVBC Matched CAF Grant:	£25,000.00
GPC Grant:	£15,000.00
'Awards for All' Lottery Grant	£10,000.00
Over Wallop Parish Council Grant	£5,000.00
JJ Acquisitions Grant	£4,723.00
Local group/parents fundraising	£1,403.75
Donation from an anonymous resident	£1,000.00
Total Grant Provision	£62,126.75
Quoted Project Costs	£62,126.85 + vat (£12,425.37)
Total Project Costs	£74,552.22

I take the opportunity to thank all contributors to the fund, and Cllr. Mr I Wingfield for his efforts in bringing the project to fruition.

Highway Issues.

A meeting took place between the local Hampshire County Council (HCC) local Highways Surveyor and several members of the PC back in December 2023 to discuss flooding outside the Plough Inn and Chapel Lane as well as on Wallop Road near the junction with Streetway Road. We also took the opportunity to discuss the failed surface condition on Wallop Road near the junction with Old Stockbridge Road.

The Plough Inn and Chapel Lane.

The HCC Surveyor confirmed that he was aware of the flooding issues at this location which was probably due to root intrusion and level issues. The proposed measures including initiating works to lower the gully at the junction near the Bus Stop to facilitate improved water flow into the drainage system. A survey of the drainage system along Chapel Lane using a high-pressure jetting unit and a CCTV survey to confirm the extent of works that are required. A Temporary Road Closure Notice (TRCN) is currently in place it is assumed that the works will take place shortly.

Wallop Road near the Junction with Old Stockbridge Road, Cholderton Road up to the junction with Grateley Drove.

The HCC Surveyor confirmed that he was aware of the deterioration of the road surface at these locations and noted that certain areas were being classed as at a 'safety' level.

A Temporary Road Closure Notice (TRCN) was served as the works were beyond what the small-patching gangs can address, therefore HCC had decided to initially undertake the minor repairs followed by resurfacing the areas which took place late April through into May.

Wallop Road near the Junction with Streetway Road.

The HCC Surveyor confirmed that he was aware of the flooding issues at this location which apparently were due to an undersized soakaway located in the soft landscaped area adjacent to the road gully.

A TRCN is currently in place and the proposed major works to replace the soakaway with a larger variety are scheduled to be undertaken this year. Jetting of the remaining localised road gullies will take place as part of the works.

Flashing Speed Sign.

As previously stated, the PC intend to acquire a further two Flashing Speed Signs over the period of 2024/2025 to be sited at the station end of the village. The Flashing Speed Signs also provide the PC with valuable traffic movement and speed data which enables us to monitor traffic activity around the Parish. The traffic activity report is tabled at each PC Meeting. The existing shared Flashing Speed Signs will continue to be posted around the Parish.

Grateley Highways Sub Group (GHSg).

The issue with speeding in particular on the B3084 Cholderton/Wallop Road is still being raised at our meetings by some residents. Regardless of the PC's efforts over the years to convince HCC Highways that the speed limit on the B3084 should be reduced to 30mph. HCC Highways remain adamant that there is no justification in reducing the speed limit.

This is an extract from the Annual PC Meeting back in May 2022:

'Speeding through the village continues to cause concern for residents. The PC has stated on numerous occasions that they have made every effort to encourage Hampshire County Highways to install a speed reduction to 30mph on the Cholderton/Wallop Road's however, they have declined to do so as they do not accept there is an issue with the current 40mph limit'.

As the matter is still of concern, the PC are in the process of forming a Highways Sub Group (GHSg) consisting of residents and councillors to continue to review the Highway issues and to identify any possible improvements within the parish. The group will also consider the implementation of physical and visual traffic calming measures, such as village entrance gateways, village entrance bollards, dragons' teeth demarcation, traffic calming signs/posters, hatching and colour definition. An initial meeting has taken place attended by 4 residents and 2 councillors who will in the first instance form the Highways Sub Group, however, should there be any other interest please contact the PC: <https://grateley.net/contact>

Community Speed Watch.

The PC is also supporting the Community Speed Watch (CSW) initiative which will enable residents to become police support volunteers and take action against speeding on the roads of concern within our parish. Volunteers use equipment that can monitor the speed of passing traffic and then record the details, later adding them to a database. Vehicle checks are then undertaken by the police and letters are

then sent to the registered keepers advising them of their speed and reminding them of why it is a community concern.

Should there be any interest please contact the PC: <https://grateley.net/contact> who will pass their details onto Over Wallop Parish Council who organise the required Police led training.

Defibrillators.

The PC have acquired and installed two defibrillators which are available for use through the emergency services, one is located on the outside of the Grateley War Memorial Hall, the other outside the Plough Inn.

There is also a further defibrillator provided by Grateley Business Park (GBP) located on Cholderton Road to the right-hand side of their access gates, it too is available for use through the emergency services.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank GBP for their community spirit.

Grateley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) group led by residents together with support from the PC are in the process of producing the NDP. The NDP will ensure that residents have an input on any future development within the parish with particular interest in the proposed minimum requirement of 10 residential units to be provided as identified within the Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) Draft Local Plan 2040.

Mrs Jane Lynch has advised that the original enthusiasm had fallen off and she was having to 'kick start' the process again, however, following advice from TVBC a local Specialist Consultant has initially offered free consultation to assist in the restart.

Should there be any interest please contact the PC: <https://grateley.net/contact> who will pass on their details.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mrs Jane Lynch and Cllr Mrs. J Belbin for all their efforts in setting up and promoting the NDP.

Neighbourhood Watch

The PC are still looking for a volunteer to take over the responsibilities of our Neighbourhood Watch representative.

Should there be any interest please contact the PC: <https://grateley.net/contact>

Community Internet Access.

Internet access is now available to residents within Grateley War Memorial Hall.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Grateley War Memorial Hall Committee Chairman Cllr. Mr A Bradford for arranging the installation of this community service.

Community Asset – The Plough Inn.

The Plough Inn (Gurkha Baynjan Nepalese Cuisine Restaurant) is now registered as a Community Asset, the Parish Council is also considering seeking the registration of the empty shop in Campbell Close. Should the PC be successful in registering the shop as a Community Asset, if there are any residents interested in becoming engaged in managing and running the project, please contact the PC:

<https://grateley.net/contact>

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Cllr. Mr I Wingfield for his efforts.

Natural Grateley.

Natural Grateley is a local Environmental conservation organisation, which in conjunction with Community Rail Network has "Adopted" Grateley Station and undertakes work to actively manage the site to promote wildlife. It also aims to promote and highlight local wildlife and how to manage for it to commuters using the station. The PC has agreed to support Natural Grateley Group (NGG) in its endeavours to improve our local environment.

To contact Natural Grateley:

email - naturalgrateley@hotmail.com

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/NaturalGrateley>

or Chat on WhatsApp - 07485 433815.

County and Borough Councillors.

It is to be recognised that the PC had built up good and positive relations with the current County Councillor Mr C Donnelly, and Borough Councillors Mrs M Flood and Mrs S Hasselmann.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the County and Borough Councillors for their continuing support.

Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) Draft Local Plan 2040.

The consultation period under Regulation 18 Stage 2 has ended on the draft document and the process continues; however, it is noted that within the document a minimum 10 units of housing have been identified within the Parish. With this in mind it is essential that a Grateley NDP is produced to ensure that the views of the community are taken into consideration for any future developments within our Parish.

Drew Smith Developments Update.

I am sure that we all recall that the developer Drew Smith had identified two sites within the parish in which they had acquired an interest. One to the rear of Wallop Road and Old Stockbridge Road the other off Streetway Road both were submitted to TVBC under the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELLA). The Parish Council invited Drew Smith to make a presentation to the Parish Council and its concerned residents at one of our meetings that was dedicated to the possible developments. However, neither of the proposed developments were included within the Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) Draft Local Plan 2040. However, it is understood that Drew Smith have appealed against the decision. The PC will continue to monitor and report on any development activity identified within the Parish.

That concludes the May 2024 Chairs Annual Report which will appear within the May 2024 PC Meeting minutes that will be posted on our website and on our notice boards.

END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT – Parish Clerk.

1ST April 2023 to 31ST March 2024

RECEIPTS

Precept	£ 8,400.00
GVF Deposit for Bank A/C	£ 1,623.90
TVBC Coronation Grant	£ 500.00
Play Area Funding/Grants	£ 17,126.75
Bank Interest	£ 2.24
	<u>£27,652.89</u>

PAYMENTS

Administration	£372.75
Clerk	£3,545.00
Dog Bin Emptying	£435.87
Kings Coronation Party	£430.18
NDP Expenses	£350.50
New Flashing Speed Sign	£2,339.99
Flashing Speed Sign Maint	£640.36
Website	£505.20
Village Hall Grant	£829.92
Graveyard Maintenance Grant	£600.00
Grateley Village Friends Grant	£500.00
Village Maintenance	£53.21
Insurance	£689.64
VAT on Payments	£631.15
Return Money for Bank A/C	£1,623.90
	<u>£13,094.46</u>

RECEIPTAS AND PAYMENT SUMMARY

Balance BFW 1 st of April 2023	£23,827.65
Add Cheque 904 written back	£180.00
Add Receipts	£27,652.89
	<u>£51,660.54</u>

Less Payments	£13,494.46
	<u>£38,166.08</u>

These cumulative funds are represented by: Balances 31.03.2024

Lloyds Bank Account	£38,433.98
Less Cheque 007 Not presented	£ 267.90
31.03.2024	<u>£38,166.08</u>

The Parish Clerk explained each item. There were no questions. The Clerk explained that as the turnover was over £25,000 this financial year the Parish Council will need to submit an Annual Government and Accountability Return for 2023/2024.

CONFLICT OF INTREST WITH BDO LLP.

There were no conflicts of interest recorded with BDO LLP.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/2024.

The Clerk read out the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement was approved by the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Mr K Smith and seconded by Cllr Mr I Wingfield. All Agreed.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2023/2024.

The Annual Accounting Statement 2023/2024 was approved by the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Mr K Smith and seconded by Cllr Mr I Wingfield. All agreed.

Grateley War Memorial Hall Annual Report – Cllr Mr A Bradford - Chairman Overview.

Having been run entirely by Grateley Parish Council since 2018, a new dedicated Grateley War Memorial Hall committee was reintroduced at the start of the last hall financial year to continue to run the Village Hall and to upkeep this Grateley amenity for the benefit of all Grateley residents.

At the first Hall committee meeting on 2nd May 2023 Cllr Mr A Bradford was elected as Chairman and Mrs L Griffith was elected as Treasurer while Mr R. Waterman agreed to continue as Secretary for the Committee all assisted by additional new Committee members Cllr Mrs P Perkins, Mr R Elliott & Mrs C. Wilson.

Main Issues.

Electricity forms a major proportion of the hall expenses. The hall has been shielded from the recent global energy price rises by a fixed rate tariff which ended in this financial year. Thermostats have been turned down a couple of degrees which has shown about a 25% reduction in the halls electricity consumption, but we are still waiting to see how this reflects in the financial difference with the inevitable price increase.

With the expected rise in fuel prices coupled with the high recent inflation, a decision was made to increase the hall hire charges. We have increased the rates for hire of the hall from £8 per hour to £12 per hour but have introduced a regular booking discount which means that for bookers with regular weekly or monthly bookings, the cost is unchanged. While we recognise that Grateley Village Hall is one of the smaller halls in the area with only basic services, our hire rates remain very competitive.

WiFi has now been installed and is operational in the hall. This service will hopefully be of a benefit if the hall is to be a warm hub in the Resilience Plan. However, on this issue it has been recognised that provision of a back-up generator for electrical power in a warm hub has additional difficulties as the electrical heating would mean some rearrangement of the electrical installation, plus an alternative and temporary heating infrastructure would also be required in the hall.

Plans to refurbish the toilets which were being prepared by the Parish Council have been rethought. The disabled toilet is now planned to be left unchanged (just redecorated) and the tiny ladies toilet plus the gents toilet will be combined into a larger 3 cubicle Unisex toilet. We are currently waiting for quotes for this alteration.

Bookings.

Regular bookings have suffered from the loss of a couple of regular bookers but equally, we have gained a couple of new bookers with the recent addition of Yoga classes on Tuesday evenings, at least when there are no council meetings taking place.

Bookings are also currently benefiting from the current rebuilding of Monxton Village hall with several bookings coming in from Monxton residents.

Bookings are now being made on-line using the new Hall booking site and calendar, accessible from the Grateley.Net website. This is proving much easier to administrate than the previous site and although some bookers have issues, most are managing quite well. Facility to pay on-line by Paypal has now been removed due to the costs associated with this service. Direct payment by bank transfer is proving totally acceptable to bookers and is free of charge on both sides.

Hall Bookings are down at 960 hours this year compared to last years 1081 hours. This was mostly down on the first half of the year with bookings recovering for November through to March

Takings for the financial year were £7,170, up from £6,599 the year before due to the increase made in hire rates.

Finance.

The approved accounts for the hall are currently being prepared and so unavailable here for review.

The charity savings account is now being used and this has raised £100 in interest for this financial year.

The bank accounts were showing balances of £16,099.97 for savings and £3,141.18 for Treasurers account on 31st March 2024.

We finally recovered hall takings of £3,925 from last year being held in a Paypal account which we were being denied access to. These funds have now finally been added to the savings account and are at last earning a reward.

Summary.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to somewhat belatedly thank the present and previous members of the Parish Council for their efforts in running the village hall in the absence of a dedicated committee, the healthy financial state it was left to us in and also for the ongoing support which the Parish Council continues to provide to the new hall committee. Thank you.

GRATELEY VILLAGE FRIENDS. – MRS LINDA GRIFFITH.

Mrs Linda Griffith gave a brief summary of the Grateley Village Friends. The GVF have had a successful year with a full programme of events. The Bank Account is healthy with a balance of £2,269.90. Fund raising continues to support the members subs. A jumble Sale held last year raised £881. GVF have a current membership of 35.

Mrs L Griffith wished to thank the Grateley Parish Council for their financial support.

PLANNING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

PLANNING.

2 Hawthorn Close – NO OBJECTION

Pennwood, Cholderton Road – NO OBJECTION

NDP.

Mrs Jane Lynch reported that the NDP group have had a very successful meeting with a Local Planning Consultant and the way forward is very positive. It is planned to hold a public meeting to discuss the Grateley NDP and a questionnaire will be distributed to every household. At present there is still no funding available from the Government to progress the NDP.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR MR C DONNELLY.

Unfortunately, Cllr Mr C Donnelly had to leave to attend another meeting.

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR MRS M FLOOD.

Borough Councillor Mrs M Flood reported:

- TVBC are hosting a Landlords Forum.
- Southern Water, the Environment Agency and TVBC are working together to tackle water pollution.
- The Pan Parish Forum has worked so well that TVBC are looking at expanding the scheme throughout the Borough.
- May is Local History Month and there are many walks planned – details are available on the TVBC Website.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

Items raised by Members of the Public included many Highways issues:

- The road surface sinking in the layby on Wallop Road.
- A Loose drain cover on Wallop Road at the bottom of the Locke Close Pathway.
- An area of road that is breaking up already after the recent repair works on Cholderton Road.
- It was reported that Highways have still not contacted residents regarding the problem soakaway on Wallop Road.

The Chair will contact Highways to report these issues.

CLOSE OF THE MEETING.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

4th of June 2024 at 7pm in the Grateley Village Hall.

WEBSITE.

www.grateley.net