

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

(to be approved at the Annual Parish Meeting on 25th April 2005)

HELD ON MONDAY, 26th APRIL 2004 AT 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT

Mr Pusey, Mr Broadley, Mr Barnes, Mr Chilton, Dr Grindley, Mr Hockley, Mr Kennedy, Mrs Thake

District Councillor Mrs Deborah Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE

4 members of the public

APOLOGIES

County Councillor Professor Milton and Mr Blakesley

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and briefly described the way it would be run with short speeches, each followed by questions. He said he would take questions on the old school site after the District and County Councillors' reports.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Mr Pusey said the Election of nine Councillors in May 2003 saw five new faces elected. Dave Chilton and he had served on the previous Council, Richard Baker and John Blakesley had been co-opted in 2002, Geoff Barnes was not really a new face as he had served on past Councils.

The council elected Richard as its Chairman and although he was very inexperienced, he threw himself into the job with some enthusiasm. Clearly he had been a little over-enthusiastic elsewhere because when he secured a promotion and Emma became pregnant Richard found himself unable to spare the time to continue in office.

As Vice-Chairman Mr Pusey said he was asked to step up to the Chairmanship rather sooner than expected. Reluctantly he accepted and so found himself delivering this, his first, end-of-term report.

He said the team was taking shape with Dave Chilton as Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee, John Blakesley as Chairman of the Planning Committee, and also acting as the council's link to PC Sutton. Following his elevation to the chairmanship of the council, Mr Pusey said he was very grateful to Brian Hockley for taking over the responsibility for Finance as chairman of the Finance Committee and also for acting as the council's transport representative. This was a growing portfolio of responsibility including amongst other things paths, potholes, parking and public transport.

Mr Pusey said that David Broadley was his Vice-Chairman and had continued to give him good advice and support, usually over a pint. He was working hard to bring about the skateboard development and had more recently taken over from Sally as secretary to the Village Hall Management Committee. He said that Sally Thake is the council's link to the Mums and the youngsters of the village and helps David with Recreation and Amenities. Whilst Colin Grindley did not have a portfolio as such, his input from

sports, management of the pavilion and architectural and local government skills were proving invaluable to the council. As for Geoff Barnes, he said, “Geoff, what can I say? If it happened in the 20th century, Geoff gives us chapter and verse; there is no escape from history”. Mr Pusey said that Mark Kennedy is the new boy and he was grateful to him for stepping into the breach when Richard resigned. Mark had joined the Friends group for the Dovecote/Meadow project.

Mr Pusey said that this had not been a quiet year and that, although former Parish Councillors could look back on their struggles to bring about the wonderful facilities that we were in tonight, and could now enjoy their retirement with some smugness, there are always things left over to be dealt with from such a big development. In addition, the council had several new and exiting projects to concern it.

Mr Pusey said there were some matters that would not come up on later agenda items that he would like to refer to briefly as part of his introduction. If nothing else it would give those present some idea of the range of business the council was dealing with on parishioners’ behalf.

He said that early in the year the council was party to the debate about the future of the A10 rail crossing. Despite a hard push from the council, he said it is set to be a new bridge rather than a less intrusive underpass, and is now included in the County Medium Term Plan.

During the year the council had been asked to consider the introduction of a Mobile Warden Scheme, possibly working with Fowlmere PC. The council had received addresses by Age Concern and Care Network and had consulted the village with very little response.

This scheme was not something that the Parish Councillors felt they could manage, but they would be prepared to consider financial support were such a scheme to be introduced. He said that perhaps Ann Sanderson could add a few comments regarding the need for such a scheme when she gave her Help Group Report.

The Parish Council had declined a request to subscribe to the part time provision of a Police Community Support Officer as it was opposed to this scheme and its method of financing.

Mr Pusey said the council was investigating whether or not it still owned the former clunch pit used as a refuse tip some years ago.

A survey had been carried out last June that had resulted in several stretches of footpath being resurfaced. A few reported potholes had been attended to but the council was still awaiting consideration of further speed restriction measures, including at the beginning of Fowlmere Road. The village now had its first yellow lines in Station Road. in an attempt to deal with congestion at this junction. The council had had no luck in persuading the County to provide a sign to the Village Hall and village car parking and had agreed to provide its own sign. The council was also trying to deal with parking problems in Fowlmere Road.

Mr Pusey said that the council was stuttering into the 21st Century. Richard Baker had set the Parih Council on the right track by creating the website foxtonvillage.com where one could read a few sets of old minutes. Clearly this was not good enough and he said he was grateful for Ian Sanderson’s offer to develop this site further.

Mr Pusey said that the council had been working steadily with its District, and more recently, County Councillors, on the future use of the old school site. Originally the council had wanted a sheltered scheme but District Councillor Mrs Roberts had said that South Cambridgeshire District Council was not prepared to support new schemes, so efforts had been concentrated on affordable housing. The council's plans had recently been interrupted by the short-term need of the County Council to find a home for boys currently attending Littleton House, Girton. Details of the parish Councils' position were recently circulated to all households in the village together with a copy of a letter from the Director of Education setting out details of the nature of this temporary use. Mr Pusey said it was the council's intention to continue to work jointly with the District and County Councils towards a scheme for low cost housing to be developed at the end of the two-year temporary re-use of the site as a school.

Mr Pusey said that, in his absence, he would read the County Councillor's report, and ask the District Councillor to give her report, before taking questions on the matter of the old school site.

THE MINUTES

Mrs Pusey proposed that the meeting dispense with reading out the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th April 2003, copies of which were distributed in the Visitors' seats, and that these Minutes be adopted as an accurate record. All were agreed.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Mr Pusey read Professor Milton's report, as received, as follows:

"It is just six months since I was elected your County Councillor. In that time I have enjoyed meeting with the Foxton Parish Council, which I have found very friendly and helpful. County Council matters, which have come up, have concerned the problems of getting the last few outstanding building matters relating to the school and community centre and the problems of the unincorporated access roads. The signposting for the development has unfortunately foundered on the intransigence of the County Council.

The latest matter of concern is the proposed use of the Old School as a temporary home for disadvantaged children. Here I have had discussions and a meeting with the officers at Shire Hall, and your chairman has kept me briefed on the latest plans.

I wished I could have attended this meeting, however, I am at a memorial lecture in London for a very old scientific colleague."

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Mrs Roberts said it was her third year as cabinet member with the portfolio for Community Development, which included Arts and Sports and Travellers.

She said that the District Council's share of Council Tax had been kept the same this year as last (£70 in band D). There were great pressures on the District Council's budget, so this would probably be the last year that the District Council's share of Council Tax could be kept at this level.

Mrs Roberts said that the introduction of the black and green wheelie bins had gone quite well, although there had been two complaints from Foxton.

Mrs Roberts said that this was the last week the council would occupy the premises at Hills Road before moving to the new headquarters at Cambourne and said she had never approved of the decision to sell the Cambridge properties in order to fund a new building outside the city. She said there would still be an office in Regent Street at Mandela House with a video link to Cambourne. There would also be a new system for contacting officers: this would be via a call centre, and she asked to be alerted to any problems that might arise.

Mrs Roberts reported that council rents would only rise by 50p per week: she thought it was a mistake to keep the rise so low as a much bigger increase is in the pipe-line and she had felt it would be better to taper this in. However, her views had been over-ridden.

Turning to Foxton matters, Mrs Roberts said that Mr Pusey had put in a lot of work on the Dovecote/Meadow project and that she had put in an application for a grant from the SCDC Conservation Department.

The District Council had also been involved in the Skateboard/BMX Bike project with officers visiting the site to assess its suitability and again she was pushing for a grant.

There had been no contentious planning applications this year.

Mrs Roberts said she had been involved in exploring the possibility of a mobile warden scheme for elderly residents.

Mrs Roberts said that the greatest success this year had been the transfer of the council houses in Caxton Lane to Hereford Housing Association and their subsequent refurbishment. The houses, which had been improved to a very high standard, were now all occupied by people with Foxton connections, and this would be a priority in perpetuity.

Mrs Roberts reported “on a less happy note” on the Old School site. She said that the Housing Needs Survey, distributed to all households in the village, had an excellent rate of response, and clearly showed the need for more affordable housing in the village. Both the parish and district councils had been working for two years to get affordable housing on the site of the Old School, and, for a while, had the support of the previous County Councillor. SCDC officers had given the scheme their support. However, the County Council had now changed its tactics completely with the very likely use of the Old School for the education of a group of students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems for a period of two years. She said this was a very great disappointment to her as it brought the original scheme for affordable housing back to square one with no guarantee that the situation would be temporary.

Mrs Roberts closed by saying that, because of boundary changes, District Councillors have to re-stand for election. Elections would be taking place shortly.

Mr Pusey thanked Mrs Roberts for her report and invited questions.

Mrs Pick asked where the call centre for the District Council would be.

Mrs Roberts said this would be at St Neots.

Mr Challis asked whether rates could be paid at Mandela House.

Mrs Roberts said she thought this was the case.

Mr Challis asked whether the move to Cambourne would entail travel expenses being paid.

Mrs Roberts said this was the case and that extra buses would have to be provided. She added that the project had a 5.5 million pounds shortfall and that extra costs would include travel, insurance and some staff redundancies.

Mrs Maitland ? asked the reason for the move to Cambourne.

Mrs Roberts said the council had wanted the organisation to have its offices under one roof. However, in the event there would still not be sufficient space for the commercial depot.

Mrs Maitland ? asked whether a decision had been taken about the Old School site.

Mrs Roberts said she didn't know, but that the Director of Education had said the decision rested between two options.

Mr Challis thought there had been a degree of opposition to the County Council's proposals but that Foxton probably would be chosen, and that the Parish Council should use its efforts to get a firm commitment to social housing.

Mrs Roberts said that some of those present at the last meeting of the Parish Council (when the Old School site was discussed) who may have felt that Foxton Parish Council was insensitive about the special-needs students might not have realised just what both she and the council had been working towards. Both she and the council had a duty to get what the village required. Mrs Roberts also said that she did not feel the Old School would provide suitable accommodation for these youngsters – Littleton House had a gymnasium, sports field and Arts facilities etc.

Mrs Maitland ? asked why these children could not stay at Littleton House.

Mrs Roberts said that this was because the children presently at The Lady Adrian School would be re-housed there during work on their present school, as part of the reorganisation of the County's special needs schools.

Dr Grindley said his concern was that secondary school children need a wide range of facilities.

Mrs Howell said that everyone was agreed that the process by which the County Council was making its decision was very poor, but thought that, if it was inevitable that these children come to Foxton, they should be welcomed, with the proviso that the parish was looking for a village use in the end.

Mr Pusey said that if there could be a sheltered housing scheme on the site, the old school building could be retained. He also mentioned that there was a problem with asbestos in the building.

Mr Challis said a figure of £40,000 had been mentioned as the cost of bringing the site into use, but he suspected this could be considerably higher.

Mr Barnes said it could be as much as £100,000.

REPORT OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Mr Chilton, Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee, gave his report as follows:

He said the other Committee members were Mr Pusey, Mr Broadley and Mrs Thake. Dr Grindley and Mr Barnes.

1. Grass Cutting

Every effort had been made to ensure the grass verges and Recreation Ground had been cut regularly throughout the spring and summer months. *Mr Chilton said that after this season, fresh tenders would be sought, as the grass cutting had not always been up to standard.*

2. Mr Victor Mead

Mr Mead continued to keep the play area maintained to a very high standard, as well as looking after Vicarage Corner, keeping it tidy and respectable. He has also continued to look after the litterbins, making sure they are emptied regularly, and has carried out minor repairs round the village when necessary.

3. The Play Area

The annual safety inspection by RoSPA had been carried out and passed.

4. Committee Projects

A number of new litter and dog-waste bins had been installed around the village, including a cigarette bin outside the Village Hall.

The five-a-side goal posts installed on the Recreation Ground last year seemed to be popular and were in constant use. This had caused the grass to wear, necessitating their being moved to an alternative location.

The Skateboarding/Mountain Bike project was now finally on the move, with David Broadley heading a Committee of dedicated residents and the project was moving on. Dr Grindley had produced drawings for the site layout, which had been passed by RoSPA. He said that consultation was taking place with all the parties concerned and affected. Mr Chilton thanked Mr Broadley and Dr Grindley for taking on this sensitive and time-consuming project.

The Allotments and Recreation Ground extension was moving forward and, once again, Dr Grindley had produced plans for the area. Copies had been passed to all parties concerned for their views and everyone seemed happy with what was proposed.

5. Other Matters

Damage had been caused to the Play Area fence and rubbish bin and this was being dealt with.

A group of youths on Community Service had been employed to tidy up the undergrowth area at the rear of Illingworth Way. They had started off well, but towards the end of the period “went over the top”. This resulted in the stripping of the undergrowth at the rear of the Illingworth Way houses: some new planting was planned to provide a screen for the houses worst affected.

Dog fouling continued to be a problem on the Recreation Ground, despite the provision of additional dog-litter bins.

The council had applied to the County Council for free hedging, and, after an inspection of the proposed site, this had been successful. The new hedge

would be planted, in the near future, along the fence to the Village Hall car park and approach road.

Vandalism remained a problem, with a number of instances around the village and on the Recreation Ground. Every effort was being made to stop this senseless damage and catch those responsible.

Finally, Mr Chilton said the committee would like to thank the growing band of volunteers who help keep the War Memorial/Village and planted areas clean, tidy and attractive. He also thanked his fellow members on the committee for all their help and support over the last year.

Mr Pusey thanked Mr Chilton for his report.

Mr Broadley then gave a brief update on the Skateboard/BMX Project:

The final plan had been approved at a meeting with the skateboarders. Consultation had taken place with parties affected by the proposal, such as the Parochial Church Council. The deadline for response to the consultation letter was 1st May and no objections had been received in this period. He said that Geraldine Hindley was getting the accounts up to date. The skateboarders had so far raised £1550 and with the Police contribution of £300 the total raised was £1850.

Mr Pusey invited questions.

Mrs Howell pointed out that weeds were coming up through the tarmac on the pavement on the approach to the Village Hall.

Mr Chilton was asked to investigate.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Hockley said that members of the Finance Committee were himself as chairman, Mr Blakesley, Mr Broadley and (ex officio) Mr Pusey. The committee's task was to oversee the council's finances, to set the annual budget and the precept.

For the year to 31st March 2004 the precept was set at £12,500. Other income received during the year included £1,115 for the County Council's contribution to grass-cutting (including £101 outstanding from 2002/03), recycling credit from South Cambridgeshire District Council of £326, and £3,700 from the Recreation Ground Trust, which has powers under its Trust Deed to use income to contribute to the maintenance of the Recreation Ground. Finally there was the nominal £5 annual rental paid by the Tennis Club.

Expenditure on administration totalled £3,654, including the Clerk's salary, costs of holding meetings and the parish newsletter. The expenditure on the Recreation Ground and facilities totalled £6,202, including £2,740 on grass cutting and £1,142 on replacement and additional litter and dog-litter bins. The council paid £293 to the District Council for emptying dog-litter bins. Mr Hockley said that significant expenditure of £1,500 for tree and hedge work had been carried forward to 2004/05.

Expenditure on overheads included Public Liability Insurance (£745), membership of CALC and Cambridgeshire ACRE (£309) and £457 for the Parish Council election in May 2003.

£137 payments (payments outside the council's statutory responsibilities) totalled £177. They included gifts to mark the long service of councillors who retired in May 2003 and a wreath for Remembrance Day.

A contribution of £450 was made to St Laurence PCC for churchyard maintenance. £700 that had been allocated to legal and valuation fees in connection with the Dovecote project was not spent in 2003/04 and had been carried forward to 2004/05.

£500 each was contributed to the Dovecote Appeal and to the Skateboard project. The Skateboard project had also received donations of £364.

Mr Hockley said that at the 31st March 2004 the council had a general fund balance of £8,626. The bank balances at that date were as follows:

Current A/C	£373.96
Deposit A/C	£7,859.39
Cambridge Building Society A/C	£6,197.29

The Building Society Account included £4,115 in contributions to the Dovecote Appeal fund, £864 in Skateboard project funds and £500 towards the proposed footpath to the school.

Mr Hockley said that the precept for 2004/5 had been set at £11,900, and this was a small reduction from the precept the previous year. He said the draft annual accounts made up to 31st March 2004 would be presented to the Parish Council by June 2004. They would be displayed publicly after audit.

Mr Pusey thanked Mr Hockley for his report and invited questions.

Mr Challis said that from hearing the monthly financial reports at Parish Council meetings, he thought the Finance Committee was doing a good job. He also thought the precept had been set at about the right level.

Mr Pusey said he had asked the Finance Committee to review the Clerk's and Mr Mead's pay.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

In the absence of Mr Blakesley, Mr Hockley gave the Planning Committee's report as follows:

Mr Hockley said there had been a steady flow of minor planning applications through out the year - plenty of extensions and porches and, unfortunately, the unavoidable loss of some trees and some need for enforcement. The Committee had endeavoured to hold public meetings where all applications can be discussed. On occasions this had meant holding public planning meetings in between regular FPC meetings, brought about by the need to reply to planning applications normally within 21 days of the application being sent to Foxton Parish Council by the District Council. There had been no major developments, although permission to build a house at the eastern end of the village at the rear of a house in Fowlmere Road was recommended for refusal, whilst permission had been granted to build a bungalow in Caxton Lane and replace it with two new bungalows on the same plot.

Mr Hockley said that one of the most important current issues was the use of the old village school site. A Housing Needs Survey revealed, not unexpectedly, a very real need for affordable housing in the village and the village had expressed its wish for

sheltered housing on the site – this had been covered in detail earlier in the meeting. Any proposal for the development of the old school site would need planning approval.

Another, potentially much more important issue, was the East of England Planning pressure for a significant increase in housing in the M11 corridor. This issue had not gone away and the council was watching things very carefully. It was hoped that the rumour of a Milton Keynes sized development adjoining Foxton was less likely than a similar sized development elsewhere. Whilst the time for this plan to come into force is 2016 it could well be earlier, and any developments would be closely watched.

Mr Hockley said it was likely that the need for housing in the region would put pressure on Foxton to accept more housing and the planning committee would do its best to ensure that, if this happens, it is measured and appropriate, with the need for affordable housing being a priority.

REPRESENTATIVE TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS' REPORT

Mrs Pick said that the number of children attending Foxton School was 104, with about 20% coming from outside the village, and several of the year groups actually full.

The school had welcomed Katherine Mottram as teacher to Class 2 as a result of Sue Pietrzak's departure to become Deputy Head teacher at another school. All other staffing remained the same.

In December, the school had its second OFSTED inspection and the report showed that "Foxton is a good school". Mrs Pick said that this relatively bland statement meant that the tests had all been passed, and this came as no surprise to anyone involved with the school. She said that inspectors only come into the school for a few days, so they only have a snapshot of what really happens on a day-to-day basis. As with any inspection, they had to find some things to criticise: these were very minor, and some points had already been identified and were in the Strategic Management Plan. One of the minor points raised by the inspectors was that absences had been recorded as a total number and not as a percentage. She said it seemed very sad that the inspectors have to raise such minor points but she supposed they had to justify their salaries somehow.

The school gardens were gradually evolving and were giving the children extra opportunities outside the classroom to do gardening themselves. A garden club called Foxton Ground Force had started for the older children and had proved very popular. Mrs Pick said that many people might not realise that in the old school, during the 1930's and 40's, gardening lessons were part of the curriculum. Today, there was little time to include some of these practical lessons, as so much time was needed for Maths, English and Science in order to comply with Government requirements.

Mrs Pick said The Friends of Foxton School continued to organise fund-raising events to buy additional equipment for the school that the budget could not stretch to, and that the school was lucky to have so much support from the village. She said the Staff and Governors of the school would like to thank everybody for their support.

Mrs Pick said this would be her last report to the Parish Council as the Minor Authority representative for the last 16 to 17 years, as her term of office would expire

in October. She said the Government had changed the composition of governing bodies and there would no longer be a Minor Authority Governor. In future, there would be Community Governors, who would be appointed by the governing body of the school, and not by the Parish Council. The new constitution stated that Community Governors “can be persons who live or work in the community served by the school, or persons who do not live or work close to the school but are committed to the good governance and success of the school”. Mrs Pick said that the new constitution must be in place by 1st September 2006. This allowed a transitional period, as the number of governors in each category will change.

The new make-up of the Governors would be:

- Parent Governors (at least one third of the total)
- Staff Governors (at least 2 places, but no more than one third, including the Head teacher)
- LEA Governors (one fifth)
- Community Governors (at least one fifth)

Mr Pusey, on behalf of the council, praised Mrs Pick’s efforts over all the years of her service as the council’s representative on the School Governing Board. Mr Barnes said that Mrs Pick deserved congratulations from both the Parish Council and from the village. These remarks were received with applause.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE RECREATION GROUND TRUST

Mr Pusey said he had taken over as correspondent for the Trust from Sue Collins at the beginning of the year, and Chairmanship from November. Brian Hockley was now Treasurer and David Broadley was Vice-Chairman.

He said that all Parish Councillors are automatically Trustees and responsible for that part of the Recreation Ground held in Trust. This is roughly all the land West of the line represented by the Bowling Green fence, to include this site and part of the roadway. It excludes the land to the East of that line. So the bowls club, tennis club, most of the football pitch and the children’s’ play area are all in the legal ownership of the Parish Council. In practice the Parish Council manages the whole of the Recreation Ground through the Recreation and Amenities Committee

Mr Pusey said the Trust funds stood at nearly £420,000, generated mainly from overage on the new development. Trustees were constrained in the use of this money in several ways. Expenditure had to fall within the objective of the Trust ie the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground; the funds have to be unrestricted; and lastly, not required for the purpose of a sinking fund to meet future capital payments on these buildings as defined in the lease.

Trustees were working slowly towards changing the Trust Deed to reflect changed circumstances. He said the Trust had agreed a draft, prior to submission to the Charity Commissioners, but, before it could be submitted, the Trust needed to complete the registration of land owned by it. For this the Trust needed an accurate plan. Mr Pusey said he had managed to persuade officers at the County Council to produce a plan and this is currently being worked on.

The sinking fund had yet to be valued, and Trustees continued to push for this exercise to be completed, particularly as it is needed for the 2003/4 accounts.

Draft accounts for year ending 31st March 2004 are subject to audit and show a balance of unrestricted funds available of just under £5000.

In 2003/4 Trustees were able to make a contribution towards the maintenance of the Recreation Ground of £3700, and it was planned to increase this to £4000 in 2004/5.

Mr Pusey said that Trust funds had been safely invested with £291,000 in a Portman Building Society Account and £118,000 in the Skipton Building Society. These accounts were expected to earn around 4% gross in 2004/5. The balance was held from time to time in a Barclays Premium Account, and a Barclays Community Account was used for making cheque payments.

Trustees had agreed to the purchase of the land to the south of the existing Recreation Ground for £5500. Unfortunately the County Council was proving desperately slow in progressing this sale, outline Heads of Terms having been agreed some time ago.

The plan was to use parts of this land for allotments, and part for a cricket net and a plan for a children's garden and public recreation area had been prepared. This plan would be on display at the council's Public Open Day next Saturday, 1st May. Mr Pusey urged everyone to come along.

Mr Pusey then invited questions.

Mrs Howell said that she thought there was about £25,000 in the sinking fund.???

REPORT ON FOXTON COMMUNITY PROJECT

Mr Pusey said that although the new Village Hall was completed in 2002, the small matter of the Millennium Commission Grant towards the project was outstanding at that time and the **Councillors/Trustees ?** were all in the process of being sued by the County Council in the event that the grant was not paid. It did not seem to matter to them that, as was eventually proven, the Millennium Commission was short of information, which the County, as our agents should have provided. New Councillors had to be reassured that they were not in danger of losing their homes on this, it being so important. Mr Pusey said that he was pleased to say after much effort the grant was eventually paid and the council had heard no more from solicitors. "But then come to think of it" he said, "we have never been told that the action against us has been terminated!"

There was also rather a long snagging list and Tessa as Colonel in Chief of the Village Hall Trustees, and Colin Grindley as her equal for sports, had worked very hard behind the scenes to get the County Council, as the council's agents, to take effective action to deal with the snagging list. Mr Pusey said that he was pleased to say that after many meetings and exchanges the snagging list was nearly completed although some noisy hatches, **unlocated ?** water supply, light pollution and, yes, unfinished roads and pavements remained to be dealt with.

Mr Pusey said that from the outset the external light fittings were wrong, and when all on, lit up the whole village. They spread light out from the building and into the eyes of those approaching the building. Some did not mind, but as letters of protest and threats of prosecution under lighting regulations came in, the council was minded to

fight to have the fittings changed before it would accept responsibility. So far as the Community buildings were concerned, the County have agreed to replace five fittings facing the Recreation Ground, but the council was still awaiting the identification, by an independent lighting engineer, of a suitable fitting which can also cope with the emergency back-up battery requirement.

Mr Pusey said, “So we are really nearly there and from now on everything is our responsibility. We now proceed according to the terms of the lease between the Recreation Ground Trust as landlord, and the Village Hall Trust as tenant”.

As an example of that relationship, Mr Pusey said the landlord would pick up any cost of replacing gale-damaged tiles, if any, after insurance. It had been agreed that the landlord, working through the Parish Council’s Recreation and Amenities Committee, would take responsibility for that part of the car park and paved areas not owned by the school. At the boundary, the council had agreed to cut all of the grass, and in return the school had agreed to apply weed killer to all of the paved area.

Mr Pusey said that last but not least there was the failure of the developer to complete the surfacing of Hardman Road and the nearby footways. He said that Meldire, the developers, are required to prepare an adoption plan to the standards required by the adoption authority - that is, the County Council. The developers were also required to prove title to the land to be adopted. This was not happening. and Mr Pusey said he had managed to bring things to a head in early February, when he arranged a site meeting with the County officers attended by our new County Councillor. Fortunately a trip to Peterborough Land Registry by Colin and himself gave the council enough solid evidence to eliminate most of the land ownership problems. It came down to a sliver of land in front of numbers 40 and 40A High Street, which had not been retained by the developer, only their interest showing in the deeds as a covenant. Mr Pusey said he was able to persuade the County’s solicitors to take a more flexible approach and accept a change in this covenant to the benefit of the County Council. Since then a plan had been submitted by the developer, amended, and re-presented to include, amongst other things, the council’s request that the footway be resurfaced as far as the end of the Church wall. An inspection team from County Highways had assessed that a minimal amount of remedial work was required. Various other visits had been noted by neighbours, so the village was really entitled to look forward to the imminent arrival of the contractors.

Mr Pusey said that perhaps this item need not be on the agenda next year and invited questions.

Dr Butler asked when Hardman Road would be completed.

Mr Pusey could only say “We are nearer than we were”.

?? praised Mr Pusey for unravelling the problems that were preventing the completion of the road to go ahead.

DOVECOTE/MEADOW PROJECT

Mr Pusey said that the honour of making this report should really go to Catherine Cairns who, as secretary to the group, was expertly pushing this project forward. The Parish Council had decided to invite a group of interested residents - now known as the “Friends of the Dovecote Meadow” to come together to work on this project. The

council was very lucky to have secured so much relevant expertise in a local group. He said there was no separate constitution, that two Parish Councillors were involved, and that Minutes and proceedings were reported to the Parish Council. Earmarked funds were held on deposit by the Parish Council and the Parish Council also approved payments.

The Parish Council was applying for a grant from the Countryside Agency through the Local Heritage Initiative and was in the process of making a case for further funds from South Cambridgeshire District Council with the help of its District Councillor, Mrs Roberts. The group had begun the assessment of the existing distribution of plants and species. Also, working with the Green Belt Project team, the beginnings of meadow management. Considerable historic and archaeological research including further resistivity work had taken place.

Mr Pusey said that the one sticking point had been the desperately slow pace of the County Council in completing the terms of the lease and the legal process. He said he was still hopeful that the County Council would let the council have a version of what had already agreed, and that is suitable for the Open Day on 1st May.

Given the recent gale damage to the roof, Mr Pusey said that further delay could prove tragic for this 300-year-old building.

There were no questions.

FOXTON TOWN LANDS TRUSTEES' REPORT

Mr Challis reported that the Charity began the year with £1384.35. There had been no payments or expenses and the rent for land of £300, plus interest of £5.60, had now brought the amount in the bank to £1689.95.

The Trustees, who were responsible to the Charity Commissioners, remained as himself, David Boreham and Nigel Oakley.

He also mentioned that the rent would be going up this year to £350.

Mr Challis said that the last expenditure by the Charity had been the purchase of comfortable chairs for the new Village Hall.

FOXTON HELP GROUP

Mrs Sanderson reported on behalf of the group as follows:

Mrs Sanderson said that, like many surrounding villages that have similar schemes, Foxton offered assistance to members of the village who needed to travel to the doctor, dentist, chiropodist or hospital. In some cases, the very infirm had been given help to get to the village shop from Hillfield.

She said that Mrs Heather Neill, with the assistance of Roger Pepper, co-ordinated requests for help and telephoned round to the drivers who have volunteered to drive parishioners to their appointments or to visit relatives and friends in hospital.

Mrs Sanderson said that there were 10-12 voluntary drivers who receive 20p a mile from the passenger at the time of the journey. A visit to Addenbrookes costs £5. Once every three months, the drivers submit a claim form to Geoff Houghton who summarises the claims and sends them on to Shire Hall and the County Council refunds the drivers a further 14p a mile, bringing the total to 34p per mile. The Inland

Revenue would tax any mileage above 35p. However, until recently, the County Council did not refund drivers for journeys to Addenbrookes – the reason being that the hospital itself would collect patients. Due to complaints from various village organisations that the journeys to the hospital and back took a very long time going round the villages, the County Council had relented and now refund hospital journeys at the 14p per mile rate.

Mrs Sanderson said that the frequency of trips varied. A few months ago, an elderly lady needed to visit her husband three times a week either in Addenbrookes or at Brookfields. Sadly he died and this had reduced the calls on drivers. As stated earlier, she said the demand was variable. During the three months from October to December 2003, 7 drivers made 19 journeys with a total of 216 miles, whereas in the next three months, January to March 2004, 9 drivers made 43 journeys with a total of 626 miles.

Mrs Sanderson said that the refund in no way repaid the drivers for their time and expense. However, the volunteers wanted to offer their services. She said the Help Group Committee feel that it is important that the drivers should claim their mileage so that the service is not abused.

Mrs Sanderson said that in 2003 the Help Group's remit of providing social events had continued in its usual pattern of coach trips and afternoon teas. A springtime afternoon tea in April was followed by a visit to Hampton Court in May. The autumn coach trip to Waddesdon Manor was followed by the usual Christmas social, when the children from the primary school sang carols. She said the Help Group organised bookings for senior citizens' Christmas lunches at the pub, and, more recently, senior citizen school lunches had been established on an occasional basis. Last year the Group had also arranged two London theatre trips to "My Fair Lady" and to "Anything Goes".

Mr Pusey thanked Mrs Sanderson and asked for the Group's thoughts on the possibility of a mobile warden scheme for Foxton.

Mrs Sanderson said that the Group did have a meeting with John Blakesley with a view to putting out a letter about such a scheme. It was suggested that the help Group's mailing list could be used for this.

Mr Hockley said that his wife, Jill Hockley, had raised the matter at a meeting of the Women's Institute and this had resulted in one response from someone who might need help in the future.

Mrs Roberts said it was interesting that Foxton had a database. She said that older people are reluctant to ask for help. Mrs Roberts said that in Fowlmere, after individual interviews from Parish Councillors, there were 13 people receiving help in the form of call-buttons.

Mrs Pick said that going back to a time before the Help Group was formed, she and Mrs Ward had gone round the village to identify actual need, and that even then there were very few people who felt any need.

Mrs Sanderson said that the main thing, before going any further was to establish an actual need and agreed with Mrs Roberts that interviews were the only satisfactory way of doing this.

Mr Pusey reminded those present that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be the **Annual General Meeting, which would be held on Monday, 17th May 2004 at 7.45 pm in the Village Hall.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.35 pm.