

Report of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 20th April 2017 at 6.30pm in The Reading Rooms, High Street, Great Yeldham.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Marlene Broomfield, opened the meeting by welcoming residents, exhibitors and guests. She referred to the Annual Report of the Parish Council, copies of which were available for everyone and which is also reproduced in full on the Parish Council website (<http://www.essexinfo.net/great-yeldham-parish-council/>). The report covered topics as diverse as Highways to Burial Ground, with many stops in between. Actions taken during the last year were reported, and the key actions for 2017/18 include continued improvements to the Recreation Ground and the development of a Neighbourhood Plan – about which, more later. Cllr Broomfield asked attendees to take advantage of the information on display and to enjoy the refreshments that were available (that included healthy eating pieces of fresh fruit as well as the usual cakes and biscuits)!

Later in the Assembly District Councillor Richard Van Dulken and County Councillor David Finch were able to attend and attendees took the opportunity to speak with them.

This year saw the Assembly start with performances from two students of the Sophie Allen Dance classes. Everyone enjoyed these and marvelled at (and in many cases envied!) the flexibility of these young people, as well as the originality of the dancing.

Exhibitors this year included the Ladies' Club, the Cottage Garden Society, the Carpet Bowls Club, St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, the Parent & Toddler Group, Sophie Allen Dance Group and the Yeldham and District Cancer Support Group. Their displays were colourful and informative and members of each group were in attendance to answer any questions from attendees.

The Recreation Ground Management Committee took the opportunity to display proposed plans with examples of the equipment that it hopes to be able to provide on the Recreation Ground over the next year or two. This equipment will include a MUGA (multi-use games area to the uninitiated!), zip wire, skate park, BMX track and tennis courts. Everyone agreed these were exciting and ambitious plans that focus on the young people in the village, but will also provide facilities for the older residents who want to keep fit.

The new Memorial Bench and Plaque Scheme for the Burial Ground was launched. Details of this scheme are available from the Parish Office as well as being accessible on the website.

At short notice, County Broadband was able to attend the Assembly and provided an update on the roll-out of faster broadband to Great Yeldham. As this is a subject of great interest to all residents, County Broadband have agreed to attend the next Parish Council meeting on 11th May just to provide an overview, but as time at this meeting will be limited, they have agreed to hold a dedicated open meeting for all residents on 15th June when they will be able to answer questions from everyone and bring the whole village up to date on developments.

One of the main announcements at the Assembly was the launch of Great Yeldham's initiative to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Rawlinson had prepared a continual presentation giving information about "What is a Neighbourhood Plan" and leaflets were made available for residents to find out more about it and how they can be involved.

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. It provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. A neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the Local Plan prepared by the local planning authority. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the Local Plan and the neighbourhood plan, and any other material considerations.

Many residents have already expressed interest in knowing more about the project and an information event will be organised shortly with an expert from the Rural Community Council of Essex to take us through the process and get us started.

If anyone resident in Great Yeldham would be interested in learning more about the Neighbourhood Plan or taking part in this project, please don't hesitate to contact Cllr Rachel Buckenham, Cllr Philip Rawlinson or the Parish Clerk for further details. Once the information event has been organised notices will be displayed on the notice board and the website with full details.

Finally, the Assembly was well attended by residents, some of whom put forward suggestions for further consideration by the Parish Council. The meeting officially closed at 8.00pm.

The Parish Council thanks all those who took part in providing entertainment, refreshments and information, and looks forward to another exciting year in the history of Great Yeldham.