

GERMOE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Germoe Parish held on Thursday May 5, 2016 at 7.00pm in Germoe Church Hall. Chairman of the Council, Cllr S.Geake presiding, Mr C Chapman (Parish Clerk) in attendance.

Visitors: Cllr D.Blencowe, Cllr Dear, Cllr Mrs K.Doesser, Cllr Mrs Praed, Cllr J Taylor, Mr Francis and two others.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from CCllr Keeling.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Cllr Mrs Doesser proposed, Cllr Blencowe seconded and it was agreed that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday, May 7, 2015 are a true record and the Chairman signed them as such. It was noted that they were signed as being accurate by the Chairman at the Ordinary Parish Council meeting on June 4, 2015.

3 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman, Cllr Sid Geake said:

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to and thank you for attending Germoe’s Annual Parish meeting. In the past I have tried to be as succinct as possible, and it can be said, usually failed. This is my fifth, and final report as Chairman of Germoe Parish Council and again I will try to be as short as possible.

“As in previous years I will try to follow roughly the same the format.

“In the past twelve months there have been again a couple of changes in the makeup of the Council. I must welcome Councillor Georgina Praed, who has been co-opted onto the Council and offer my thanks to Councillor Bob Royds who has recently resigned.

“In last year's report I commented that we felt we had to raise the precept, after some years of no increases, by 1% to take into account rises in overall costs. I wish I could be in the happy position of saying that this year we are able not to raise the precept, or at least by only a small amount. Unfortunately I cannot. I will comment later on the imposition of 'paperless panning' by Cornwall Council, suffice it to say that this has led directly to Germoe needing to raise its precept substantially to cover the inevitable cost implications, notwithstanding a one off grant from Cornwall Council, in connection with this scheme.

“This year we enjoyed reasonable, if somewhat windy weather for the annual Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial on Tregonning Hill. Whilst at the service it was noted that the names on the memorial required some remedial work, and I can report that this has now been completed. Recently the weather was again relatively favourable, if you managed to stay out of a bitter wind, when we lit a commemorative beacon on the Hill to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. I would like to thank Councillor Jim Taylor and his son for the help with this.

“I started the more routine matters for the Council over the last 12 months with a report on the repair of the east wall to the adit on Tregonning Hill and commented that Roger McLean had indicated he would be happy to undertake further works to the west wall as soon as he can slip this into his busy schedule.

Unfortunately to date he has not been able to do this. I feel that one reason has been that I have not been as diligent as I should have in chasing this up. I will certainly try and do so in the near future.

“Germoe is not a large parish and planning in its wider implications does seem to feature highly in our considerations. This year again we have commented on some 20 planning applications, a similar number to last year. I do not propose to repeat what I have said before about the consideration by Cornwall Council, the planning authority, of these comments. I would like, however to comment on two other aspects concerning planning. Firstly, it is no use whatsoever in having a planning system if it doesn't effectively tackle the problem of unauthorised developments, whether it is physical building operations, uses or a combination of both. I understand that the question of whether the planning authority wishes to take enforcement action does hinge on the word 'expedient'. However over the years I have gained the impression that there is a reluctance to initiate, or when action has been taken, to fully carry through the enforcement processes and procedures. As a caring Council, we have often reported, cases where, it has seemed to us, action should be taken. The time taken to consider these cases and sometimes the resultant lack of action can, in the end, only devalue the whole basis on which an effective planning process depends.

“I have commented above on the proposed 'paperless planning' system. Cornwall Council, the planning authority, seems to be bent on changing a system which has worked well for many years, i.e. sending Germoe hard copies of planning applications, the forms, the plans and any relevant supporting information, in order that we, as a Council, can offer considered planning comments. This appears about to be replaced by a system wholly based upon computers and the internet, both extremely important and valued assets of living today. The imposition of this system may work well, and certainly save money for Cornwall Council, and where the Parish Council has an office and base with all the usual facilities. In a small Council, which does not enjoy these assets, and one that tries to utilise fully the available facilities within its area, this scheme can only involve increased work, for the clerk, for Councillors and for any interested parties, who will now become dependent on computer generated information, with all the attendant potential for 'things to go wrong'. I'll only mention a couple of potential problems, computers and or projectors malfunctioning, information missing, a not unknown occurrence with the existing register of applications, problems of scale when viewing plans, I could go on. This will have cost and efficiency implications, implications that will continue and will not be covered by a one off grant. I feel strongly that this is the wrong system for councils like Germoe and earnestly urge Cornwall Council to rethink this scheme.

“Again there have been comments this year about the state of the public highway, both vehicular and pedestrian, i.e. the roads and footpaths. We are not the highway authority and complaints and comments on roads are passed to Cornwall Council, who is the relevant authority. I still think that on balance, where the comment has been warranted, the suitable action has been taken. Public footpaths are the legal responsibility of the highway authority, Germoe has again entered into a maintenance agreement with Cornwall Council, which means that we do have some control over these. The usual trimming and maintenance has continued, and is likely to do so. The footpath on Tregonning Hill, 'in the dip' on the way to the War Memorial has been improved. Complaints about the unauthorised use of footpaths by horses, cycles and motor bikes have continued, these are forwarded to the relevant authorities for action. This is made harder by there normally being no direct evidence to identify the offending person or conveyance. It has also been made harder by the decision by the police to no longer attend our monthly meetings. (Another symptom of the scarcity of public funding.) This year there appears to have been no action on the outstanding Modification Orders with Cornwall Council.

“There are other aspects that are not statutory ones, and in some ways these are the more enjoyable part of our operations.

“We still continue to be as supportive as possible to our local school, church and chapel. Arrangements have been made to access funding for the maintenance of the closed churchyard at St. Germoe. Donations have been made towards the maintenance of graveyards at both Germoe and Balwest. The £500 promised towards the repair of Germoe Village Hall has been paid. The repaired and renovated hall, as you can see, is of great benefit to the village. With this now open we have returned to the practise of holding our meetings at Germoe and Balwest. Donations and relevant support have been given to the Christmas and May celebrations in Germoe village There continues to be liaison with Germoe School, who are now in

federation with Boskenwyn School. Academy status is being investigated. We still continue to help with the children's reading practise on a Monday morning.

"Considering our other home at Balwest there has been an investigation into the potential future uses on the local Methodist circuit. Germoe wrote strongly in support of both Balwest Chapel and the Sunday School.

"Donations have been given to Cornwall's Air Ambulance, Helston Food Bank and to the Royal British Legion.

"We are always looking to see if we can identify any small local projects that might be of benefit to the Parish. The main one this year was the provision of a defibrillator at Balwest Sunday School. This project did take longer than anticipated, but it is now in situ and live. Training has been given to Parish Councillors and local residents in its use. My thanks go to County Councillor John Keeling for financial support from his Community Chest and to Balwest Methodists who allowed us to install the equipment on their property. Currently we are investigating the potential to install another defibrillator in Germoe village

"Staying in Germoe village, at a recent council meeting the repair and future maintenance of St. Germoe's Well was raised, I am certain that we will endeavour to support this project as far as we can.

"The owner of the old china clay dry at Tresowes attended one of our meetings when she outlined her hopes for this site. Again, wherever possible, I'm sure we will try to be supportive in improving this important site.

"Whilst I might have been perceived to be somewhat reluctant to embrace modern day living in my comments on 'paperless planning' I do not live solely in the past and must express my thanks to Bernie Doeser for creating the Germoe PC facebook page.

"There are regular and informative reports of the Council's meetings in the local press, thanks to Councillor David Blencowe for these.

"I would like to thank Cornwall Councillor John Keeling for the results he has been able to achieve from Cornwall Council. I said last year that of the Councils within John's ambit, we are certainly not the largest, and I suspect probably not the most worrisome for him. He has continued to support Germoe financially, an example being the defibrillator already mentioned, and, where possible, in our comments on both planning and highways.

"Lastly, again, I would like to thank Colin Chapman, our Clerk. I said last year 'his continued hard work, sound advice and necessary sense of humour are most appreciated by myself and I firmly believe the other Germoe Councillors' I have no reason to depart from this view this year."

4 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented the unadopted Financial Report for the year 2015 – 2016. In brief, this showed that Germoe Parish Council had started the year with a reserve of £7,905.13 and ended it with a reserve of £6,726.92.

Agreed for accuracy at the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting on June 4, 2016

Chairman

Formally adopted at the Annual Parish Meeting on May 4, 2017

Chairman