

## ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

### MINUTES OF MEETING 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023

#### MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

#### Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	Heather Salvidge
Dave Verlander	Chris Bush	Diane Bush
Tim Snow	Mike Rea	Margaret Rea
Do Hackett	Trevor Hackett	Brenda Davidson
Keith Hunt	Frances Lambert	Roger Clark
Vic Dowsett	Tim Snow	Phyllis Clark
Brian Tulley	Ian Jackson	Kevin Wood
Anne Player	Therese Clear	John Beeston
Sue Beeston		

#### Apologies:

Tony Bailey	Roger Kendrick	Lynda Jolly
Eileen Kay	Valerie Austin	Tricia Holyomes
Campbell Dunn	Lynda Dunn	Margaret Shaw
Keith Merrifield	Lorraine Newton	Moyra Jackson
Jill Hunt	Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present to the meeting

Nigel Woodbridge was welcomed to the Society as a new member.

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting 09<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### 4. Annual General Meeting

The Secretary opened the Annual General Meeting.

- I. The Chairman presented a review of the Society's activities over the past year.
- II. The Treasurer presented the Society accounts for the year 2022.

Secretary's Note: Copies of the Chairman's Remarks and the Society Accounts will be distributed to members with these minutes.

- III. Invitations were extended for nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

There were no nominations for these posts so the incumbents will serve for another year.

- IV. Invitations were extended for nominations for the Committee vacancies.

In his absence, it was explained that Tony Bailey had sat in on the last two committee meetings and had expressed a wish to carry on. His election was proposed by Chris Bush and seconded by Trevor Hackett.

Following a vote by members present Tony Bailey was elected to the committee.

There were no other volunteers so one committee position remains vacant.

Secretary's Note: To remind members, Officers and Committee members are currently:

Ray Franklin	– Chairman
Dave Verlander	– Vice Chairman
Paul Salvidge	– Treasurer
Mike Rea	– Secretary
Chris Bush	– Committee and Webmaster
Heather Salvidge	– Committee
Tony Bailey	– Committee
Vacancy	– Committee

- V. David Verlander was, with the agreement of members present, asked to continue to serve as the Society's representative to the ECA.

There being no other matters raised by the members present the Annual General Meeting was closed and business reverted to the main agenda.

## 5. Speaker, Chris Bush

Our speaker for the evening was our own Chris Bush who stepped up to present the Story of Park Road which he described as possibly the oldest new development in the village.

He started by thanking present day residents for their assistance with old deeds and documents from which much information was gleaned. The research also involved many hours in the reading room at the Essex Records Office.

Park Road was originally built by Sir Walter Gilbey to house his senior staff on land owned by the Gilbey Estate, this land being part of a larger purchase by Sir Walter in 1893. In documentation the road was referred to as "the intended roadway known as Park Road and the continuance thereof as a horse foot carriage and barrow way".

The Gilbey estate was quite extensive, when it was sold in 1922 it comprised some 2010 acres including nine farms, Elsenham Hall and a Stud Farm as well as the greater part of Elsenham.

But why Park Road? Sir Walter wanted to provide accommodation for his key workers but also a direct route to the station. Construction of the first houses started in the mid-1890s and it was about this time that Sir Walter's wife died and he erected the pumphouse in her memory in 1896.

By 1900, Villa Royale (Later Littleton), No.1 The Cottage, No.2 Millers and Parkdale had been built together with Curmes Rest, Park House and Park View and Chaucer.

Millers was at one time occupied by Arthur Dixon an electrician at Elsenham Hall and we are told that he was responsible for putting electricity into St Mary's Church in 1911.

Gates were erected across Park Road at the limit of the then building, these gates only being opened to allow Sir Walter to drive up to the station. The road beyond this point being known at one time as Park Drive. It may be noted that until the railway was electrified in 1986, the canopy of the waiting room on platform 1 was extended over the rails so that first class passengers could board their train without getting wet. It was cut back to make way for the overhead electric wires powering the new trains.

After the estate sale in 1922, the land north of the gates was purchased by Elijah Smith who proceeded to build a number of houses northwards along the road.

On part of this land lived Harry Lodge. Harry had a smallholding and was recorded as a market gardener on this site and was well known for his "Railway Carriage Bungalow". He lived here with his wife Edith Mary who

died in 1978. Following a fire he left the property and for a time lived at Redbond Lodge care home in Dunmow he died in 1992 aged 88

He was also said to be a skilled upholsterer and being a bit of a character, many are the stories told of his exploits.

The last bit of Park Road to be developed was Coriander Drive which became available for occupation in 1995.

Chris spent some time detailing the development of the road and telling the stories of some of the people who lived there.

He went on to say that Park Road was famous for it's potholes being an unmade road. In 2018 a residents association was proposed and after extensive research into possible outstanding ownership issues came into being. Following the creation of the association a contractor was employed to properly resurface the road. This made a great difference and the several speed bumps installed with built in "cats eyes" at night made the road resemble the landing approach to Heathrow.

At this point Chris concluded his talk and there followed a lively question and answer session.

## **6. Open Forum and Any Other Business**

### **6.1 St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival**

This years tree was decorated with photographs of St Mary's Church, some dating back over a hundred years. It elicited much interest and our thanks go to Heather Salvidge and Brenda Davidson who did a grand job of decorating the tree.

### **6.2 Visit to Saffron Walden Museum**

We have now received current prices for a tour of SW Museum and the Shire Hill Store as follows:

Museum tour (for up to 20 people):	£25 + VAT = £30
Shire Hill Store Tour (for up to 20 people):	£25 + VAT = £30
Refreshments (for up to 20 people):	£25 + VAT = £30
Plus museum admission.	Adults: £2.50 Concession: £1.25

If we could raise a party of twenty people then the individual cost would be £5.50, a party of ten £8.50 per head, still a good deal.

Heather Salvidge pointed out that the tours visited parts of the Museum not normally seen by the public. Typically, a museum displayed only ten percent or so of it's collection at any time so a visit to the store at Shire Hill would be of particular interest.

Please think about it and let me know if you would be interested and we will arrange a tour later on in the Spring.

### **6.3 Teas and Coffees**

Our thanks go this evening to Sue & Chris Waite who kindly brewed the teas and coffees.

### **7. Date of Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 . Our speaker will be Tony Wellings who will tell the "Story of the Stansted Windmill".

**ENDS**

Minutes Agreed: ..... June 2023  
Ray Franklin – Chairman

## **A.G. M. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

A year has passed since the Talk by "Raking Light" on Church Graffiti on March 9<sup>th</sup> and we held the 2022 A.G.M.

Despite the return to a "new normal" there has still been some totally understandable reluctance to attend meetings. But the attendance still continues to be good. I feel the main attraction is the high quality of our Speakers. Here I must thank Mike Rea for the hours of work involved in the Secretary's Job and obtaining our Speakers.

We have enjoyed, "A history of Newport," "The 100 Parishes Society" and our last meeting "The Cutlers of Thaxted."

Our truly magnificent Web Site continues to attract hundreds of hits. It is an extremely valuable resource. Chris Bush spends much of his time updating and adding to it. Thanks Chris for all of your endeavours. Here I must Ask Mr Bush to pass on our thanks to the other unseen Chris. Chris Powell moved away from the area many years ago but his long-standing friendship with Chris Bush continues. Chris Powell is the unseen force behind our Web Site.

The Web Site, not only a place to go for fascinating facts and local information ALSO is used for requests.

Over the past year in addition to family history requests we were asked for help from a Nathan Towers who is researching Elsenham during the WW2. Being particularly interested in Horse Units attached to Elsenham Hall. We were pleased to help where we could. I have asked him to pass on any information he gets to us.

We continue to record persons who live within Elsenham or in some cases have left the village but were residents for many years.

The Club is still going out and giving talks to other organisations. We go back to the Women's Institute (Ugley Branch) later this year. Now behind this Society is a small but hard-working committee, I thank them all. But I feel I must pay a special thanks to our Treasurer Paul Salvidge who maintains our financial security and prevents me from fleeing abroad.

But finally, my thanks to you all your attendance makes it all worthwhile.