

# **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GISLINGHAM VILLAGE MEETING HELD BY ZOOM VIDEO LINK ON TUESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021 @ 6PM**

**Host:** Councillor Julie Bell, Chair of Gislingham Parish Council

## **1 Welcome from the Chair of Gislingham Parish Council**

Cllr Bell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **2 Presentation of the Watson Bowl**

Cllr Bell advised that the Watson Bowl for 2020 was awarded to a team of people for the first time since it was started in 1984: the Messenger Team.

In addition, Cllr Bell explained that the Parish Council had decided to create a new award to recognise volunteer services within the village, in the form of an engraved silver salver. The first Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Mr Martyn Bryant for his work as Gislingham Footpath Warden throughout 2020. Both awards are currently being engraved and will be presented to the recipients once received back.

Mr Bryant was in attendance and expressed his thanks and appreciation.

## **3 To receive Reports from those within the community involved in Gislingham**

A Report was received from the Gislingham History Recorder for 2020/21 and can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

There being no further business, Cllr Bell declared the meeting closed at 6:10pm

## **Annual Report of the Gislingham History Recorder for 2020/21**

2020 was a year most of us will not wish to remember but will be unable to forget.

April 2020 saw the first lockdown and suddenly the village was stilled, no laughing, chattering children on their way to school, no cars taking people out of the village to work, no church bells. Suddenly it seemed as if everything was cancelled, even our church had to close its doors. Yet already things were in place to help, in April's edition of the Messenger a four-page spread gave information for residents, including a list of people willing to help with shopping, collecting medications, etc. Church services went online and when allowed churches were open for private prayer.

In the weeks and months after, many more people were out and about walking or cycling for their exercise joining the dog walkers. Many meetings went online and many of us learnt to Zoom, the Parish Council and Gislingham United Charities among them. People kept in touch by phone checking all was well with friends and neighbours.

When able many local businesses offered take-away services, and a cake stall for various charities was held monthly out-side when able, with masks worn and social-distancing in place.

VE Day was celebrated although in a more muted way than planned, but the sun shone and many people in the village decorated their gardens and had socially-distanced tea parties sitting outside their houses. The house-to-house collections for the British Legion were not allowed because of Covid-19 restrictions, but ingenuity prevailed and poppies were available from several locations and £1159 raised from this village and Finningham and Westhorpe. Remembrance Sunday was marked as usual with a service outside the church.

Because of the restrictions on singing in church no carol services were held at Christmas, however the church was decorated as usual and services were held, but another lock-down meant they ceased again for a while. Sadly as I write this singing is still not allowed in church although services are taking place again and singing outside the church is allowed.

During this difficult time, people pulled together, helped out and did not forget others less fortunate than themselves. Items for the Foodbanks were still given, money donated for various charities, people clapped for carers and volunteered to help in many ways.

As we continue through 2021 we all hope life will be more normal again and we can get back to the village activities we enjoy.

Jean Archdeacon  
History Recorder