

as the £350,000 raised represented £600 for every person in the parish. The 09/10 precept of £475 against costs of £4,400 represented a deliberate policy to reduce reserves as we entered a recession. The corresponding figures for 10/11 will be £3,720 and £4,400+contingencies. The WCC funded lengthsmen continued with his specific highway's duties.

Cllr Meikle reported that flood work worth £2,500 to help water drain away in the culvert near Patty's Farm (Willow Tree removal, bend modifications and open ditching) has been agreed with WDC and it is now up to obtaining agreement with the local landowner. Further funds of £1,050 are also held for related flood work if identifiable. Planning continued at a low level with mostly alterations and garages however lately a major moorings development opposite Fladbury (but in Cropthorne Parish with Jubilee Bridge access) is being dealt with. The Parish Plan has been adopted by the Parish Council and should also be adopted by WDC on 22/04/10 as an information source.

Since joining the Parish Council, Cllr Segar has also joined the Village Hall Management Committee and has been very successful in obtaining grants towards replace old swings and providing new play/exercise equipment for the Sheppey/east. The whole exercise is currently going through public consultation with a planning application expected in due course.

8. Footpaths – Hilary Hall (860212) reported, “My apologies for absence. All footpaths have been walked this year. They are all clear although there was a great deal of bramble growth last summer. The worst footpath 513 from the main road past the old police house. I usually take my secateurs with me. Path 508 leading through a field to Cropthorne Heath has been cleared of brambles and a fallen tree, and self-closing gates installed each end of the field. Way mark signs remain a problem and are often broken or disappear altogether. I will be most grateful to anyone who finds any difficulties would let me know and I will do my best to rectify.”

Charities – John Ayliffe (860011) reported, “Randolph Meakins, Patty's Farm & Widow Lye's Charity Annual Report 2009-10. As most of you are aware, the charity is a small village charity used for the benefits of the parishioners of Cropthorne.

- The income of the charity has once again been affected by the recession that has restricted funds available, although there are signs of this improving.
- The charity this year has seen a major change with the retirement of Gordon Cropper as a trustee. Gordon was one of the original trustees of the charity, which was set up in 1982, and was a co-opted member. In his time as a trustee, he had held the position of Chairman for several years. His knowledge of the village, which will be irreplaceable, has been invaluable. Mrs Sheila Castle who has become a co-operative trustee of the charity for the term of 4 years has taken his place on the committee.
- As in previous years, Tesco vouchers totalling £1,880 were distributed to the senior residents over the age of 70 years who have resided in the village for a minimum of 5 years. This again proved to be very popular. At last years AGM the Chair of the PC thought the term of residency to be 'potentially divisive' and as Chairman of the trust I said I would take this back to the committee to discuss. The result of which is that the trustees decided to leave the qualification requirement as it is, stating that the

charity is a small village one and although it would be preferable to widen the scope by bringing the qualifying period down, there would not be sufficient funds to support it year on year and other possible beneficiaries would lose out. However, the trustees did not rule out revisiting this again in future years.

- The trust also distributed a total of £450 to 15 students who approached the charity, and are in full time further education. Each received a cheque for £30 towards the cost of books.
- In June, £362 paid for a trip for senior citizens to the Butterfly Farm in Stratford upon Avon by coach returning to the village hall for afternoon teas. This was well received although the numbers were slightly disappointing. Residents who were not able to go on the trip were invited to the village hall for afternoon tea. As stated in previous reports, this is a bi-annual event.
- Several residents who were unfortunately hospitalised were given a small suitable gift. The welfare and another grant totalled £557.
- As you can see, the charity has distributed over £3,240 to several individuals and groups of residents, and although the charity is not immune to the financial problems of the world, we will endeavour to provide support to the residents of Cropthorne wherever we feel we can help.”

Walkabout – Recent meeting indicated all was in place and only the potential weather was a concern.

Village Hall and Sheppey – Cllr King reported that Paula Stride has been lost to Australia but the (Cllr) Jane Segar had joined the committee and has not stopped working tirelessly for the Sheppey play area for the youth of the village. Neil Fairburn had returned to Northumberland so Marion was maintaining the tractor for the six new volunteers, including 3 PC councillors, to mow the field, which would probably require remedial work this year. This will be investigated after the walkabout usage. The tractor is old and temperamental and will need eventual replacement. Junior football makes good use of the free facilities whilst the two fee paying adult teams appear to be almost more problem than they are worth with complaints regarding litter, language etc needing to be addressed.

Refurbishment is fully funded and builders move in on 19th April to start work on 26th. The community shop aspect is dependant on someone reforming the steering group. The new hall will have 3 independent activity spaces and will be up to villagers to make use with existing and new activities as the committee provides the facilities. New funding via 200 club (ticket still available) and Xmas raffle well supported by local businesses raised £3500. Villagers’ support at the AGM on Tuesday 20th April in the School (Hall Shut!!) is welcomed. The re-opening of the hall is scheduled for 22/10/10, communication with the village via a newsletter/ web site connections also requesting ideas for expanding usage is planned.

9. As there was no other business raised Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.05pm

Signed: **Date:**

Chairman