

A.G.M. & ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TUESDAY 26TH APRIL, 2016.

PRESENT Cllrs. Barber, Lunken, Roberts, Belson, Kinnair, Bloomfield County Councillor and District Councillor Jessica Fleming and 17 members of the public.

APOLOGIES Cllr. Dunn.

Minutes of the A.G.M. & Annual Parish Meeting held on the 28th April, 2015 were approved and signed.

There were no matters arising.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

As you will see by looking at your Parish Councillors, we have some changes to our membership from last year! As you may remember, John Stebbing and Sue Leake did not wish to stand for re-election. We certainly didn't have a rush of folk putting their names forward to become councillors and, although we were spared the cost of an election, we co-opted two new members, Phyllis Lunken and Brian Kinnair. Other than these changes, your current members of the Parish Council are myself, Richard Belson Vice Chair. Fred Bloomfield, Trevor Roberts and Andrew Dunn. Parish Council meets in the Priory Room at 7.00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month and we encourage the public to attend and raise issues and concerns. Notification of a meeting is posted ahead of time, in the village notice board, by the Clerk. Draft minutes of meetings are always published in the Observer to keep the village up-to-date on matters of interest.

Amongst the chief responsibilities of the Parish Council are the maintenance of the walls, memorials, trees and grassed areas of the closed churchyard which surrounds the Church, street lighting, bus shelters, litter bins, street cleaning, public rights of way, oversight and commenting on planning applications, and having an awareness of any other matters which may impact on our community,

The Community Speed Watch Team, with Paul Leake as its co-ordinator, has been active around the village for most of the past year. He will be giving an update later this evening.

Sue Leake was determined that, even though she is no longer a member of Parish Council she **would** complete the Emergency Plan document and she is here to talk to you about it later this evening.

Some of you may be aware that I have had a number of run-ins with the Community Payback Team over their work on the railings alongside the stream. I have finally succeeded in collecting back the cost of the materials used so far and am still in negotiation regarding the reinstatement still necessary.

Our usual two Litter Picks have taken place during the year, one before Gardens Weekend and one last month. We have nearly 40 people involved all over the village during the course of these weekends and I am very grateful for their ongoing help.

Better Broadband is still an ongoing issue! We have been hoping for a successful conclusion within the past 12 months but even though those lucky folk along

M Barber
25-4-17

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The Causeway have been informed that they are 'getting hitched up', the rest of us are still awaiting those magical moments! I'm sure Jonathan Chowns has come to dread the ping of an email landing in his inbox, accompanied by the dreaded words, Maggie Barber!!

Suffolk County Council Highways completed work on Crownland Road and Four Ashes Triangle but there are still 'follow-ons' associated with this. Josh Kerridge, who is our Highway Engineer, is in negotiation with the contractors about the state of the resurfacing around the Crownland/Four Ashes/Palmer Street area. He also has the problem of the localized flooding at Four Ashes to look into and solve! Ron and I were out checking for pot-holes around the village and entrance roads and Josh is now the happy recipient of a detailed list and map! The issue of the water in Wattisfield Road continues. Apparently Josh believes that this is caused by a broken pipe and he assures me that it will be tackled shortly. You will probably have noticed that we already have the advanced signage, 'unsuitable for' on all the approach roads to the Ixworth Roundabout, thanks to Guy Smith in Western Area. We are waiting for a sign to be made and placed near the church wall to deter heavy vehicles from entering the Ixworth Road from the village end.

Any footpath related issues need to be referred to Richard who is our designated Footpath Warden. This last year, repair work has been completed along Footpath 9, from opposite the cemetery to Betty's Bridge. I'm sure you'll agree with me that a good job has been made of it. We were also promised the replacement of a number of fallen finger posts. We are still waiting for this to be completed, or even begun!

Our budget has been fixed for the coming financial year when councillors decided that there should be no increase to the precept and our outgoings are, top of the list, about £3,500 to maintain the historic setting of our Parish Church and its closed churchyard which includes grass cutting, tree surgery, upkeep of memorials and wall repairs and also £1,100 towards repayment of the £10,000 loan that was taken out 7 years ago for major work on the churchyard wall; £3,000 for street lighting and maintenance, with the certain knowledge that we may need more as some lights are rapidly approaching the end of their shelf life; and £3,000 for the upkeep of the Townhouse Road Play Area, mostly payable to the Play Council, but with some additional money needed for repair to the frequently vandalized fence.

Can I also say that I have been given a copy of the Town Farm Charity Accounts to put on public show tonight. It would appear useful for other village organizations to publicly display such documents, which should be open to public scrutiny.

I wish to close with thanks to my fellow councillors for their support and hard work on behalf of the village. Averil for the time and effort she puts into her work as Proper Officer. Thank you Av. Thank you everyone.

M Barber
25-4-17

ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JESSICA FLEMING.

Over the past year Suffolk County Council has continued to trim its budget, make changes to local services and engage with the devolution project. The County's share of council taxes has remained stable (with the exception of a 2% government recommended increase for health & social care integration). Some examples of changes at the Council over the past year follow.

Community Transport – The County has re-tendered the primary community transport contracts which will terminate in June, and selected five new providers. The new system starts on 13th June and promises to be simpler to use and more consistent while retaining the capacity for local volunteer groups and good neighbour schemes to participate.

Schools: The need for more investment in education is clear and necessary to support economic growth. Lobbying by councillors and MPs is starting to be noticed and the per-pupil funding for Suffolk schools has started to increase as a result. Results from OFSTED are very encouraging but there is much work to be done to secure the space and conditions for local schools to thrive as the population grows, and to manage the academisation programme.

Railways: Plans to improve speed and frequency on the Norwich to London line are progressing but a bit more slowly than anticipated. Network Rail has prepared a Level Crossing Reduction Strategy for East Anglia which is likely to recommend closing or modifying some highway, rights-of-way and agricultural crossings. I will keep effected parishes informed of the content when available. I attended the Anglia Rail Conference just before Christmas about the new franchise to replace Abellio's contract later this year, the tender includes a requirement for some trains to make the journey from Norwich to London (and the reverse) in 90 minutes as well as additional freight capacity and better east-west linkages.

Roads and infrastructure – Suffolk Highways is the new integrated name for the joint County Council/Kier MG partnership responsible for Suffolk's roads. Following great efforts on behalf of Suffolk MP's the government has promised funds to start work on the Lowestoft 3rd Crossing and the West Dock Crossing in Ipswich. Work is ongoing to obtain support for improvements to the A12, known as the Suffolk Energy Gateway.

The environment and Sizewell C: As member responsible for 'Creating the Greenest County' I have been promoting environmental awareness within County Council procurement, policy making and strategic planning. I sit on the Joint Local Authority Group (JLAG) responsible for preparing for Sizewell C construction for which the Phase 2 public consultation is expected to take place later this year along with details of the proposals.

Devolution: Devolution proposals have been under discussion since July 2015 and important decisions may be made about the future of local government in East Anglia; a combined authority (the 'Eastern Powerhouse') is envisioned which may include Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire (although the latter has most recently opted out of the deal) and an elected mayor. The project is at early stages and would need ratification by all participating local authorities to go ahead.

H B Barber
25-4-17

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ANNUAL REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR JESSICA FLEMING,

Over the past year the main actions at the District Council have focussed on planning, the Council's strategic direction, and devolution. The District council tax has been raised by just over 2%, and continues to identify better ways of working together with Babergh and other local authorities.

New Enterprise Zone Parks in Mid Suffolk – A rural Enterprise Zone for Norfolk and Suffolk has recently been launched consisting of 10 business parks, two of these developments are in the Mid Suffolk and Babergh districts and include:
Stowmarket Enterprise Park – 17 hectare site located on Mill Lane, near the Tesco A1120 roundabout. The main theme of the Park is agri-tech, food, health digital and media based businesses. The site has Outline Planning and anticipated start on site is summer 2017.

Sproughton Enterprise Park – a 14 hectare site between the A14 and Sproughton Road on the former British Sugar Corporation regeneration site.

Planning information – The District is working with groups of villages and communities that can together host new housing supported by facilities such as health care and schools.

Walsham is likely to be working with neighbouring Gislegham and Finningham but these clusterings are still be decided and consultations will follow.

Work is also ongoing to strengthen protections for cultural heritage and the environment with new policies. The Mid Suffolk and Babergh Joint Local Plan is under review.

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging is in effect – The CIL came into force in Babergh and Mid Suffolk on 11 April and for the most part replaces Section 106 Agreements as a way of obtaining money to support new development. CIL funds which will be shared between the District County and parishes to provide infrastructure. CIL partially replaces section 106 agreements.

First Council Houses in 20 years – Mid Suffolk will open its first self-built council house in Thurston later in April. Additional building is ongoing.

The Chairman gave a vote thanks.

Richard Martineau spoke regarding Church finances and was then joined by Ian Campbell when they spoke regarding the future of the Recreation Ground Trust. Sue Leake followed and gave a presentation concerning the Community Emergency Plan.

M Baber
25-4-17

Following on the Chairman announced that prior to the meeting invitations had been extended to all village organisations/charities to select a representative to speak on their behalf outlining who they are, what they do and their aims for the future. There had been 9 responses and the organisations/charities were as follows:-

- COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH**
- WALSHAM OBSERVER**
- WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**
- HORTICULTURAL SHOW**
- COFFEE SHOP & VILLAGE HALL.**
- WASHAM WILD WOOD**
- ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**
- ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**
- GARDENS WEEKEND.**

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

M Baines
25/4/17