

A.G.M. & ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TUESDAY 25TH APRIL, 2017

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

APOLOGIES Cllr. Dunn.

Minutes of the AGM and Annual Parish Meeting held on the 26th April, 2016 were approved and signed.

There were no matters arising.

CHANGE OF BANK SIGNATORIES

It was unanimously agreed by all Councillors present that Susan Ann Leake and Averil Daphne Clancy be removed as cheque signatories and Frederick Bloomfield added on account no. 412752905 and Averil Daphne Clancy be removed and Frederick Bloomfield be added on account no. 03668495.

At this point the Chairman announced the retirement of the Clerk after 36 years and she was presented with a gift of a garden seat and a card which had been signed by all the Parish Councillors.

CHAIRMANS REPORT

“As you will see our Parish Councillors have all stayed in post during this year. So your current members of the Parish Council are myself, Richard Belson Vice Chair, Fred Bloomfield, Trevor Roberts, Andrew Dunn, Phyllis Lunken and Brian Kinnair. Parish Council meets in the Priory Room at 7.00pm 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. Under the requirements of the Transparency Code, this publication in the Observer is not enough and we have had to clamber onto the World Wide Web. We are now the proud possessors of our own website where you may find us on <http://walshamlewillows.suffolk.cloud> where there are details of all meetings, finances, standing orders and other regulations required by law.

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, with Paul Leake as its coordinator, has not been so active around the village this year. He will be giving an update on the current state of the team, later this evening.
- Some of you may be aware that I have had a number of niggles with the Community Payback Team over their work on the railings alongside the stream. I did finally succeed in collecting back the cost of the materials used by them but am still nagging and awaiting costs towards the reinstatement that is 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. At the most recent, it was amazing that we even had fly-tipping on top of the collected rubbish at the Village Hall, so much so that the men responsible for removal of our ‘pickings’ had to make a second visit to remove wood and metal! They did also clear two major lots of fly-tipping from Holeywall Lane leading down to Badwell Ash from West Street. Their haul included loads of paint tins, brushes, thinners, car tyres, three bags of assorted household rubbish and a microwave!
- Better Broadband is still an ongoing issue! We have been hoping for a successful conclusion within the past 12 months but, suffice it to say, our wait continues!! Apparently the Telephone Exchange is not

being updated and therefore those of us who are routed through the exchange are likely to be waiting another year to 'get hitched up'. Whilst 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, I do urge you too to write in and ask him the question related to your connection!! The more of us make his life uncomfortable, the more likely he will be to get into gear!!

- Our sagas with Suffolk County Council Highways continue! Rob and I went out checking for pot-holes around the village and entrance roads and Josh Kerridge, who was our Highways Engineer, was the happy recipient of a detailed list and map! However, few of them have been rectified and our roads remain in the sad state that we know all around the county. White lines were due to be replaced last year once the roads had been surfaced dressed but neither of those issues was addressed! You will know that last year we had the advanced signage, 'unsuitable for' on all the approach roads to the Ixworth roundabout, thanks to Guy Smith in Western Area. We now have our own sign 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 we were promised the replacement of a number of fallen finger posts. We are still waiting for this to be completed, or even begun! The signs that we had made for Gallant's Meadow are hopefully encouraging dog owners to control them when crossing the meadow.
- Our budget has been fixed for the coming financial year when councillors decided that there should be a small increase to the precept as the cost of services continues to increase. We have held it steady for a number of years, even reducing it once or twice! Our outgoings are, top of the list, about £3,000 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; nearly £3,000 for street lighting and maintenance, with the certain knowledge that we will 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. This may well prove insufficient this year as we now know that there could well be major work to both the hedge and ditch.
- Councillors have been aware that the adoption of Neighbourhood Plans is currently an ongoing topic and they attended a meeting at Rickinghall where the matter was being discussed. It is believed that it is better for a number of parishes to join together to facilitate this. We will be considering this further during the next year.
- And finally, you may have been aware that there was an advert in the Observer for a new Parish Clerk and Proper Officer. Averil decided that she was no longer able to continue in her long-standing role and tendered her resignation. She has been in post for over 36 years and has seen the job change beyond all recognition in that time. We held interviews and Kevin Boardley was our successful candidate. He will be taking over from Averil next month.
- Back to Averil herself, we want you to leave with our thanks for all you have done for Parish Council and the village over all these years. We wish you a happy and peaceful retirement (with just the occasional phone call requesting help or information!!) and the chance to sit out in your garden and relax with Terry. To this end we decided that a seat was just the ticket .. not just any seat, but a love seat no less, where you can sit comfortably and have a table for your evening drinks or daytime tea or coffee.

(Presentation made)

I wish to close with thanks to my fellow councillors for their support and hard work on behalf of the village; to Averil for the time and effort she put into her work as Proper Officer; and to say 'Welcome Kevin'."

ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JESSICA FLEMING

"Firstly - thank you for your support and participation. A year ago we were looking at the prospect of devolution to a mayor and combined authority, now this project has stalled and local authorities are reinventing themselves in response to changes in how central government intends to fund local services. We can soon expect most revenue to be raised through business rates and growth related levies such as CIL.

Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Districts agreed to merge in 2019 to form East Suffolk Council; Mid Suffolk and Babergh are increasingly working together and will both join the County at Endeavour House later in 2017.

During 2016 the County Council successfully received government backing for several large projects including the Ipswich Wet Dock Crossing and the Lowestoft Third River Crossing. An architectural competition for Ipswich bridge design was won by Forster & Partners Ltd. – refer to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/suffolkcountycouncil/> Also work has started on a new archives centre, The Hold in Ipswich, which will house most of the County's historic records and offer much better public access. It is due to open in 2019.

For highways, considerable investment has been made on road resurfacing over the past year. Speeding and heavy vehicles remain of concern all over Suffolk and work is ongoing to address the related problems through the Speed and LorryWatch schemes. Network Rail has consulted on plans for closing or altering level crossings on all lines in Suffolk in preparation for greater anticipated line use. Some footpaths, bridleways and agricultural crossings are likely to be closed.

The County re-tendered Community Transport to 7 principal operators last year based broadly on District/Town boundaries, the Mid Suffolk operator is based in Stowmarket and can be reached on 01449-614271. The operator coordinates with other services such as community cars and Good Neighbour Schemes which can offer a 'door-to-door' service. No one should feel that they are stuck unable to leave home or get to appointments.

Also last year SCC began hosting a new site - the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS); among other things this publishes a list of 'priority' species and habitats which is helpful in assessing impacts of development on local wildlife, visit the website on <http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/>

There has been noticeable litter along roads and footpaths this year, and Walsham has been diligent in organising local litter picks. To help support community clean-up the Suffolk Waste Partnership hosts a gallery of photos submitted by volunteers; add to the gallery by emailing any photos to: waste.management@suffolk.gov.uk “

ANNUAL REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR JESSICA FLEMING

“Planning and Growth have been a priority at Mid Suffolk as local authorities rely more on development to fund essential services. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came in last April and in part replaces Section 106 as a means of funding infrastructure. As with S106, the funds are divided between County, District and Parish but CIL allows pooling and gives more flexibility. Communities with adopted Neighbourhood Plans will receive 25% of CIL as opposed to 15%. Business rates have been revalued and will move to 100% retention by 2020.

There is increased interest in Neighbourhood Planning as a way to influence growth; 3 plans are now adopted in Suffolk (Lavenham, East Bergholt and Mendlesham) and 14 others have started including Rickinghall-Botesdale and the Diss Area Plan to include Palgrave, Stuston and Brome & Oakley. The County Council plays an active role in Neighbourhood Planning as well given the need for school places, health care and other services to support new communities.

During 2016/2017 Mid Suffolk has established enterprise parks at Stowmarket and Sproughton which could attract up to **293** new businesses and **2,400** new jobs. It has also purchased land in Needham Market from the County Council which is earmarked for housing.

The District has been active in seeking grant funding for various community projects. For example, with Big Lottery Awards For All, Mid Suffolk was successful with 11 awards totalling about £90,000. Other examples and comparisons for the District are:

Geoffrey Burton Charitable Trust 2014-2015 - £ 4,550; **2015-2016 - £11,000**

Suffolk Historic Churches 2014-2015 - £ 38,000; **2015-2016 - £ 87,829**

Suffolk Community Foundation 2014-2015 - £ 147,271; **2015-2016 - £ 173,377**

During 2016 Mid Suffolk purchased two redundant sites from Suffolk County Council. These are Paddock House former Day Care Centre in Eye, and the former Middle School and Community Education Centre located on Childer Road in Stowmarket.

Babergh & Mid Suffolk Districts have started jointly to build new council houses again, with **65** new homes commenced across the two districts and **14** already in the hands of their new occupants. Funding for Community-led-Housing has been secured through a grant of **£430,000** from DCLG.

Finally – Mid Suffolk and Babergh last summer took the joint decision to move into Endeavour House, Ipswich later in 2017. Hubs will be set up in Stowmarket and Sudbury with other meeting points planned within communities using or enhancing existing facilities.”

The Chairman gave a vote of thanks.

SPEAKERS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

The Chairman announced that prior to the meeting invitations had been extended to all village organisation/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 13 responses and the organisations/charities were as follows:-

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL.
WALSHAM WILD WOOD GROUP.
HISTORY GROUP.
HORTICULTURAL SHOW.
COMMUNITY COUNCIL & COFFEE SHOP.
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION.
ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION.
COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH.
WOMEN’S INSTITUTE.
WALSHAM OBSERVER.
GARDENS WEEKEND.
SPORTS CLUB.
CHURCH FAYRE.**

The meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.