

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Thursday 14th April 2016, in the Guildhall at 7.30pm

Councillors Present

Mr C Reeve, Chairman.

Mr R Whitworth, Mrs J Baker, Mrs G Banks, Mr P Gibson,

Mrs J Antill, Suffolk County Councillor (later arrival following another parish meeting)

10 members of the public.

Apologies received from Mrs Twitchett, Mr Gibson, Mr Sheppard (Parish Councillors), Mr Shropshire (Babergh District Councillor), Sergeant 1455 Matt Paisley (Sudbury Safer Neighbourhood Team).

THE MINUTES of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 30th April 2015 were agreed as a true record of those proceedings. Proposed by Mrs Baker, seconded by Mrs Gurling, carried.

MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising from the previous minutes.

POLICE REPORT – forwarded by Sgt Matt Paisley and read to the meeting (*see full report at Report I*)

- Financial climate has resulted in the need to refocus how the service is delivered, every department has examined day to day work to establish core roles
- Suffolk Local Policing Review completed, some fundamental changes will impact local communities
- All front desks now closed except Ipswich, Bury and Lowestoft
- New crime recording computer system introduced late 2015. Many positives resulting from this but one negative in particular for parishes is the inability to provide accurate crime figures for specific parishes at specific times. Unable to provide yearly crime statistics for this meeting.

It was reported that there had been an insufficient number of volunteers coming forward to get a local Speed Watch scheme off the ground.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT BY MR WILLIAM SHROPSHIRE – forwarded by Mr Shropshire and read to the meeting in his absence (*see full report at Report II*)

Lavenham issues

- Has fought alongside parishioners and Jenny Antill to reduce number of large lorries passing unnecessarily through the village. Delighted that go-ahead has been given for trial of temporary weight restriction
- Worked with Roy Whitworth and managed to get agreement to a local A-boards contract
- Continuing contact with Babergh re car parking and temporary accesses at the Halt development
- Supporting early moves to set up the Wool Towns initiative, encouraging the involvement of appropriate Babergh officers
- Dealt with numerous private matters for residents including housing, care and planning issues

Babergh District Council update

- Financial/Organisational – District Council portion of Council Tax rise capped at just 10p to majority of households; Council's Joint Strategic Plan currently being refreshed; Capital Investment Strategy, plan to invest cash and capital resources to generate revenue income, achieve an increase in capital value in the longer term and stimulate local economic growth
- Housing – planning consent to build 27 new council homes supported by HCA grant funding; Council tenants can apply for £20k grants to help them onto the property ladder; Babergh have re-invested Right to Buy receipts in 4 properties, further 6 in pipeline
- Growth/Business – Council voted to adopt Community Infrastructure Levy; Suffolk Tourism Strategy agreed; Babergh with New Anglia LEP secured prestigious Enterprise Zone in Sproughton; change in Development Management Team (Planning), three officer teams serve specific areas within Babergh/Mid Suffolk, new fourth start up team to ensure much faster registration and validation of applications.
- Communities – £104,355 in Capital Grants was allocated across Babergh in 2015/16 to support village halls, community centres, events etc.
- Environment & Environmental Health – two new waste contracts awarded, one for servicing recycling sites and another for garden waste; PV panels installed across a number of properties; £6m has been sourced from government to help businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk to become more energy efficient.

The future will be dominated by two issues, shortage of funding and the battle to build enough homes. The funding gap will mean the Council will have to be more entrepreneurial, situation is harder in respect of new homes building.

In conclusion, overall a busy first year as your District Councillor, but it has been both satisfying and enjoyable. Thank you to Carroll Reeve and his team of Councillors who do a fantastic job. Because much work is already done I am able to pursue Lavenham's needs at Babergh and get answers. Looking forward to the next 12 months working with the Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & STATEMENT ON THE PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2016 - MR CARROLL REEVE

Last year I mentioned the divestment of local services by the District and County councils, this continues with Lavenham now being responsible for street cleaning. Peter Ince, our part time Village Caretaker, can be seen around the village with his gleaming red chariot. He is supported by the Sudbury Town Wardens and the Landscape Group. The Sudbury Wardens are empowered to issue on the spot fines for littering and dog fouling and carry out random patrols in the village with the intention of reducing these anti social acts. Dog fouling is a continuing problem the prevention of which could lead to the banning of dogs from certain areas where children congregate, such as the First Meadow. Elsewhere in the village dogs should be kept on the lead.

The LED street lighting scheme is partly in place and the remainder should be completed this year.

The Neighbourhood Plan has reached an advanced stage and is now out for examination. Following the examiner's report a further version will be produced to go out to the village for referendum, which should take place later in the year.

The Community Land Trust is now in place and pre planning meetings have taken place, the full planning submission will be made during the summer. The plan is to develop 18 affordable dwellings available to qualifying Lavenham residents and people working in the village.

During the year new play equipment was installed on First Meadow. This was enabled by a generous anonymous donation, a sum from our County Councillor's Locality Fund, a release of Section 106 monies and a Babergh Community Project Grant, with the Parish Council covering the balance. Other donations have contributed towards the provision of further seating in the village. The Parish Council has also provided additional litter and dog bins and gritting bins.

The Parish Council is fully behind the plans to move the Pre School to a specially built annexe to the Village Hall.

The Parish Council continues to support village clubs and societies, such as the upcoming Arts Festival and the children's activities in the Library. Following the closure of Mr Kemp's allotments the Parish Council will need to look at where and how it can offer an alternative allotment site.

Event organisers are reminded that they need to clear their event with the Babergh Safety Advisory Group.

Congratulations to Mrs Lorna Waller for her well deserved Babergh Community Achievement Award.

In the near future the Parish Council will launch a dedicated website. In the meantime I would remind you that Lavenham Life is a good way of keeping up to date with village affairs, including the monthly minutes of meetings. Remember the Parish Council meets on the first Thursday of each month, in the Guildhall at 7.30 pm., meetings are open to the public and indeed, at the beginning of these meetings parishioners may raise matters of concern.

During the last 12 months two parish councillors have stood down – Carole Holland and Mike Beech – and I would like to thank them for their contributions towards the wellbeing of the village. I would also like to thank Brian and Roz Bundy for organising our village litter picks.

Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the Parish Council and our Clerk, Jane Bellward.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Copies of the accounts year ending 31/03/2016 had been circulated to the meeting.

The Precept for 2015/16 was £68,000, other income came from burial fees, car park voluntary payments, VAT refund and grants.

A programme of tree works in various areas of the village had commenced and additional litter bins etc. had been provided. Christmas lighting is supported by fundraising and it was good to have Gail Banks taking this on with added donations from collecting boxes placed on premises with the support of many local retailers, pubs etc.

Amongst reserves the Parish Council is still holding monies for projects such as the LED street lighting conversion, traffic management improvements and the pre school annexe grant.

REPORTS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

Operations – Mr Roy Whitworth

Work towards the handover of the Lavenham Walk proceeds slowly, practical matters still to be resolved are remedial tree works and drainage.

Following a survey of trees on land owned by the parish a schedule of works had been drawn up and work had commenced. There is still much more maintenance to be done in order to provide a base from which to work in the future.

The Sudbury Wardens are supporting Peter Ince and carrying out random patrols of green spaces in the village to deal with incidents of littering and dog fouling. They have authority to issue on the spot fines but will use their discretion when dealing with incidents, preferring education over enforcement. The Sudbury Wardens are employed through Sudbury Town Council.

The Parish Council website is not yet complete, needs further time to set up. When up and running it will be possible to access minutes and various Parish Council documents as well as community news and upcoming events.

Parking in the village is a continuing problem, especially for big events. Organisers should contact Babergh's Safety Advisory Group to discuss any big events planned in the village. Mr Whitworth and Mr Panton had already attended with the organisers of the VW event. A reconfiguration of the Church Street car park involving the removal of 2 coach parking spaces would increase car parking space. Reinforcing the entrance to First Meadow could provide event parking for around 100 cars. Additional car parking would have to be adequately signed.

Emergency Plan – Mr Bryan Panton

The Plan, although requiring further 'filling out' with local information, has reached a stage where it has been registered with Babergh. If an emergency occurs in the future the District Council will be aware of the plan and the community's willingness to help, who can do what etc. which will give us priority. The only costs so far have been for Bryan attending courses.

Christmas lighting – Mrs Gail Banks

Last year was a success with many more people participating. Contact details for the purchase of lighting and the electrical contractor will be published in Lavenham Life. To attract donations collection boxes will be left in shops, pubs etc. with the kind permission of traders. The Parish Council has increased financial support this year but is working towards making the Christmas lights self supporting.

Good Neighbours Scheme – Mrs Lyn Gurling

In the absence of Mrs Twitchett, Chairman, the report was read by Mrs Gurling.

It is now 2 years since the Scheme was launched, over 300 missions have been completed in that time. Our main calls are for transport to medical appointments, but there are also other requests for various tasks. The success of the Scheme is down to the amazing team of volunteers who are always on hand when the calls come in.

Our 2nd AGM was held in October, followed by a Cheese and Wine evening as a thank-you to the volunteers.

In February, led by Rose Bates, monthly afternoon teas for the elderly started in the Tenter Piece common room. These have proved very successful with Caroline Eves organising various visitors and talks, for example the Police on safety in the home and a gardener to demonstrate potting up of summer plants. The next meeting will focus on local history, accompanied by another very good tea. Plans are in hand for a Street Party style tea in the Village Hall to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. This is on Friday 10th June so please come and join us. Details are in Lavenham Life.

Token schemes in Waitrose and our local East of England Co op have added to our funds, as has a recent Coffee Morning in the Village Hall.

Most importantly this is a big thank you to our Chairman Doreen, helped on many occasions by her husband Chris, and to all the people signed up as volunteers. Please encourage people to use the scheme, or join as a volunteer.

Planning – Mr Philip Gibson (read)

The Parish Council is invited to comment on planning applications. Applications are first considered by the group of five members who made recommendations to the full Parish Council each month, they also arrange site visits for particularly sensitive applications. Over the past 12 months 67 applications have, including 7 site visits, were considered with reasoned comments made to the District Council.

When the Neighbourhood Plan is approved then planning applications will need to be in accordance with those policies. It is apparent that the Plan is already carrying some 'weight' with Babergh and the Parish Council finds it useful in its consideration of current applications to test out how the Plan's policies would apply in practice.

Mrs Antill arrived at 8.25 pm. after having earlier attended Annual Parish Meetings at Brettenham and Thorpe Morieux.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT BY MRS JENNY ANTILL (see full report at Report III)

The Budget 2016/17

- General council tax will not be increased
- County's share of the bill increase by 2% to reflect the Government's Social Care Levy which is ring fenced for spending on Adult Social Care
- 90% of Councils in England will be raising this levy, many increasing council tax to the maximum allowed without a referendum (3.9%)

Devolution

- Suffolk Leaders submitted a formal 'expression of interest' to Government in September
- Rapidly became clear Suffolk's ideas did not coincide with those of Whitehall who wanted to include Norfolk in the plans, and later Cambridgeshire

- Chancellor confirmed he was keen to conclude a deal with what has become known as the Eastern Powerhouse headed by an elected Mayor
- The whole process appears shrouded in mystery and the future is uncertain

Children and Young People

- Suffolk County Council's Services for looked after children rated 'good' by OFSTED
- Educational standards improving slowly, A level, GCSE and SATs results moving from bottom of league tables
- Suffolk County Council continuing to take part in the fairer funding campaign aiming to get a better level of central government funding

Future of the Fire Service

- Reorganisation consultation concluded in February, once results known decision by cabinet due in May. Proposals which involve closure of some fire stations and reduction in equipment should be seen against reduced demand/reduction in call outs

Lavenham

- Number of requests for assistance from Lavenham residents over the last year which she has sought to resolve
- Worked with the Parish Council, District Councillor and others on a number of different matters affecting the village including: Highways issues; HGVs; consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan; capacity and other issues at Lavenham School; land owned by the County Council in the Lavenham area

Mrs Antill looks forward to representing Lavenham once again in the coming year.

REPORTS BY LOCAL CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

Representatives of the following groups/organisations reported to the meeting:

Martin Weaver for Lavenham Community Council and Tennis Club; Stephen Earl for Church of St Peter & St Paul; Katherine Eves for Lavenham Pre School; David Jones for the Lavenham Woodland Group; Jane Gosling for Lavenham Guildhall and Lavenham Society.

Written reports had been received from Lavenham Players, Art Festival, Friends of Lavenham Library, First Responders, Scottish Dancing and Badminton Club, these were read to the meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other matters for discussion.

In conclusion Jane Gosling thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the community.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.