

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Tuesday 26th May 2015 at
THE VILLAGE HALL, Humber Doucy Lane at 7.30pm**

CHAIRMAN: Mr P Richings

PARISH COUNCILLORS: Mrs M Brown, Miss A Cracknell, Mrs J Clarke, Mr D Francis,
Mr M Newton, Mr P Richings, Mrs B Richardson-Todd,
Mr P Tarling, Mr J Withey,

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 3 members of public.
PCSO Mike Sarbutts, PCSO Justin Moss

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR: District/Parish Councillor Mr M Newton

COUNTY COUNCILLOR: None

CLERK: Mr M R Bentley, Mrs J Potter (Asst Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Parish Councillors, Mr M Sones – Holiday , Mr J Wright,-
Holiday
County Cllr C Hudson, (received 18.30) – SCC Business

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted as detailed above.

**2. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
Tuesday, 27th May 2014**

These were made available to all present. Miss Cracknell proposed that the minutes be accepted, seconded by Mrs Clarke with majority in favour (1 abstention). The minutes were duly signed as a correct record with no alterations.

Matters arising: - None

3. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR

Parish Council Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015 – Copies of the Parish Council approved but as yet un-audited accounts were distributed to all present. The Clerk to the Council explained the various expenditures and incomes and noted variances on the previous year.

RECEIPTS: Of note were:- Total receipts at £134,343 was down £15,255 on the previous year (£149,597). Burial receipts were down by almost £9,000 and miscellaneous receipts were down by nearly £11,000. (Transitional relief and playspace funding received last year). Against this there was an increase of £2,700 in grants and donations. VAT Refund at £6,863 was the amount re-claimed for 2013/14 transactions, a decrease of £1,751 on the previous year.

PAYMENTS: 'Total payments' for the year at £119,374 were down from £134,558 in the previous year. If the Bent Lane footway improvement scheme contribution of £12,500 had finished on time then the total payments would have been very close to the previous year. That money was now listed as an earmarked reserve carried forward to 2015/16.

Thus total cash assets at the bank were £178,132 at 31st March 2015 an increase of £15,000 on the previous year. Of those assets £145,000 were earmarked reserves.

The end of year balance in the general account was £9,000 greater than the amount at the end of the previous year, whilst the cemetery current account balance ended the year £6,000 greater than the previous. Note that the cemetery management panel recently agreed that cemetery fees should be held for another year. There is however, roadway building and landscaping to be carried out on the cemetery extension this year.

The running of the cemetery currently makes no demand on the precept as it is self-financing.

Questions

In response to a question the Parish Council accounts have been audited and passed by the Internal Auditor and have yet to be sent to the External Auditor.

The members present accepted the Parish Council Financial Accounts for year ending 31st March 2015.

4. POLICE REPORT – THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

PCSO Mike Sarbutts and PCSO Justin Moss attended and reported A short written report was distributed and attached to these minutes.

Questions

In response to a question concerning the SNT Office in Kesgrave it was reported that it was hoped the work would be completed shortly. The Woodbridge Office is soon to be closed but cannot take place until the Rushmere and Kesgrave SNT team can move back to Kesgrave.

Police would be working more with Health and Social Care and hope to get more staff if more work taken on.

PCSO's Mike Sarbutts and Justin Moss left the meeting at this point.

5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Richings gave a report looking back on his year as Chairman of the Parish Council. The full report is attached to these minutes at **Annex 1** and would also be placed on the parish website.

Questions

In response to a question as to why the Nursery Car Park did not have a barrier it was reported that the site agent has suggested this course of action to them but the nursery declined to install one.

Bus Shelter in Foxhall Road – kerbs should be done shortly and bus shelter afterwards when it had been delivered from Liverpool.

Mosquito on the Indian Restaurant – Is it working?. Asst Clerk to check with police.

6. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS and QUESTIONS

District Cllr Mark Newton for Tower Ward spoke about the elections on 7 May. 37 Conservative, 2 Liberal Democrat, 2 Independent and 1 Labour councillors had been elected, 42 in all. Council Tax has been frozen since 2010-11. £2.71m gap to fill over the next 4 years. Move to new HQ will save £8m over 20 years. Partnership with Waveney had saved £10m since 2010. Community Enabling budgets amounted to £4,000 for each councillor each year total £330,000. The next 4 years councillors would have £4,500 each year. Suffolk Coastal Are needs more housing. Rendlesham is the first area to have a Neighbourhood Plan in place; 47% of the electorate voted with 98% in favour of the plan. Recycling in Suffolk Coastal area stands at 58.61% and Suffolk Coastal in in the top 20 Councils nationally. Suffolk Coastal has a 0.7% unemployment rate.

Questions:

District Councillor Deborah Dean will attend a Parish Council Meeting soon. She is taking part in training sessions for the District Council and for her new employment so has been really busy. She has email but not phone at present.

Community Enabling funding is for projects to get the community involved.

Planning – expansion at Martlesham, thought targets had been met without Martlesham. Where applications received for housing adjacent to physical limits boundaries, not much Council can do. Suffolk Coastal District Council not meeting targets for officer decisions, could go into special measures if not solved. Planning Committees are meeting every 3 weeks at present instead of 4 weeks. Problems due to reorganisation and high turnover of staff. New staff need training first. The change to having an enforcement officer in each area is not working well. Councillors not yet allocated to committees until the District council AGM.

Social (affordable) housing should have started in April this year. There is no requirement for affordable housing on any building site with less than 10 houses. Right to buy scheme too new at present to make any comments.

7. A THANK YOU TO RETIRING COUNCILLORS

The Chairman of the PC thanked Councillors who had recently retired at the end of the last 4 year election period.

It was of particular note that Gordon Laing had finally hung up his Councillor tag after 35 years of service to the community as a Parish Councillor and for a substantial time as a District Councillor.

8. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and raising points of concern.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm and tea and coffee was served.

Annex 1 – Chairmans Report

Chairman's report to Rushmere St. Andrew Annual Parish Meeting – 26th May 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the year ending March 2015, one Councillor decided to stand down in November 2014. With all Councillors' terms of office expiring in May 2015, when the 4 yearly elections were due, we were entitled to leave this vacancy unfilled and continue with 14 Councillors which is the course of action we decided to take. This ensured that no possible election costs would be incurred to find a replacement who would only serve for a very brief period of time. 3 Councillors, Mark Newton, Robert Whiting & John Withey, also served as District Councillors for Suffolk Coastal District Council. Robert also serves as a Councillor for Suffolk County Council, together with Christopher Hudson. The Parish Council has 2 remunerated Officers, our Clerk, Mel Bentley, and our Assistant Clerk, Jean Potter.

In early 2014 the Boundary Commission for England carried out a review of the Electoral Boundaries in the Suffolk Coastal area. The net effect of the review was a reduction in the number of Suffolk Coastal District Council members from 55 down to 42 with an associated redrawing of the boundaries for Council Electoral wards to ensure each District Councillor represented a similarly sized electorate. These changes were implemented at the May 2015 elections.

As far as the Parish was concerned, a ward split occurred along the A1214 Woodbridge Road. Hitherto, 3 Suffolk Coastal District Councillors represented the whole of the Parish. From the May 2015 elections, 2 Councillors represent the Tower Ward covering the area of the Parish to the south of the A1214 with Deborah Dean & Mark Newton duly elected. The Parish area north of the A1214 was included in the Fynn Valley Ward which also includes the Parishes of Swilland, Witnesham, Tuddenham St Martin & Westerfield with Robert Whiting being elected to serve this Ward.

However, this boundary split had implications as far as the Parish Council was concerned in that statute dictates we have to have Wards which align with the District Council ward boundaries. In consequence, the Parish was split along the A1214 into 2 Wards, Village Ward with 3 Councillors allocated and Tower Ward with 12 Councillors, the split again being based on electorate size. In the May 2015 elections, the numbers of nominations led to both Ward elections being declared uncontested. The Village Ward positions were filled by retiring Councillors, Ann Cracknell and Robert Whiting together with newcomer Barbara Richardson-Todd. The Tower Ward positions were taken by retiring Councillors Mirabel Brown, Dennis Francis, Mark Newton, Philip Richings, Peter Tarling, Brian Ward & James Wright. This left a significant number of 5 vacancies in Tower Ward. Very kindly, three of our retiring Councillors, who had stood down in the hope of seeing some new faces putting themselves forward, decided to fill the void and thus Julie Clarke, Mark Sones & John Withey were co-opted back onto the Council at its May meeting after a very brief retirement of two days. This leaves 2 vacancies which the Council can currently fill by co-option without an election being required.

Under the Chairmanship of Julie Clarke, our General Purposes & Finance Committee have ensured that statutory activities such as Budget Setting, Parish Risk Analysis, Asset Register and Insurance Valuations, Financial management & Audit procedures have all been satisfactorily carried out. I'm pleased to report that our internal & external auditors once again gave a clean bill of health to the Council management and accounting procedures.

With the increasing number of services the Parish Council are funding, our budget calculation determined that a small increase from £98,900 to £101,436.61 needed to be raised for 2015/2016. Historically this amount would have been declared as the Precept, all to be funded via the Council Taxation Process, but currently, following Government changes to the formula by which the number of households sharing the burden is calculated, they are still making a transitional grant to inhibit excessive increases to householders due to this formula change. We expect this to be the final grant made available. The mathematics of all this are that the 2014/15 total requirement of £98,900 was raised via Precept of £95,979.19, collected from Parishioners via the Council Tax system, and £2,920.81 from Government Grant. For 2015/2016, the corresponding figures are for a total requirement of £101,436.61, of which £100,000 comes from the Precept & £1,436.61 from Government Grant. For the

Government's baseline band D property, the Parish Council's Precept requirement works out at £40.58 per annum or £0.78 per week per household.

Since I last reported, under the Chairmanship of John Withey, our Planning and Development Committee have met 11 times and have reviewed 54 planning and tree preservation applications, before passing our comments to Suffolk Coastal District Council, the determining Authority.

It is pleasing to note that, from time to time, members of the public take the opportunity to attend and submit comment personally at these planning meetings.

Last year, I mentioned that there had been significant public interest in 2 applications pertaining to the site of the thatched house in The Street called Redecroft. The first, originally for 3 houses behind Redecroft was subsequently revised to 2 houses and this application was granted approval by Suffolk Coastal on 13th May 2014. At the time of my report last year, the second application for 14 dwellings, located to the west of Redecroft, had been withdrawn. A revised application was submitted at the end of July 2014 and was subsequently refused by Suffolk Coastal for non-compliance with their Planning Policies. Areas of concern relating to planning included the fact that the site lies in open countryside, outside the physical limits boundary for Rushmere St Andrew, and the policy to ensure open land is retained to keep Ipswich & Rushmere St Andrew separate. It is perhaps unfortunate that this land has a sentimental value to a number of local residents, whence it has become an emotive issue. It would appear the current land owner is attempting to make best pecuniary reward for charitable objectives through a bequest perhaps made with an air of ambiguity or misunderstanding. This application has recently gone to appeal for final determination by a Government Inspector. Perhaps the lesson here is to always make a watertight will.

At Bixley Farm, the three areas of land currently with planning approval include discrete areas for open market housing, retirement bungalows & affordable housing. Construction of the retirement bungalows is complete and work on the open market housing has proceeded apace. However, the area allocated for affordable housing still remains barren.

At Rushmere Sports Club in The Street, the major refurbishment and enhancement of the club and its sporting facilities had been completed. The associated "enabling" housing has also been completed. As reported last year, to further safeguard & protect the open area from any future development, the freehold of the remaining 17 acres of sporting facility land would be divested to a body such as the Parish Council. This transfer is currently progressing via the land owner's and Parish Council's Solicitors.

The Committee have also dealt with other issues such as tree preservation orders & planning enforcement issues.

Our Parish Amenities and Services Committee met 6 times during the year with James Wright at the helm. The Committee's responsibilities cover Parish facilities such as the ponds, play areas, allotments, the provision of notice-boards, litter, doggie and grit bins, the condition of footways and roads, vegetation clearance, litter clearance and grass cutting.

In the Chestnut Pond area, I reported last year that problems with flooding in The Street seemed to have abated following the works carried out to the pond overflow pipes. Whilst the pond outflow seems to be working well, flooding continued to occur on The Street. The root cause of this appears to be a failure of the highway surface water drainage. Worse still was the fact that failures in the sewage disposal system were occurring, especially in times of heavy rainfall. In consequence, two meetings have been held during the year, chaired by your Member of Parliament, Dan Poulter, with representatives of the Parish Council, Suffolk County Council and Anglian Water to discuss eliminating the problems.

Taking the flooding issues first, Suffolk County Council agreed to give their surface water pipes a heavy clean and to enhance their periodic drain cleaning regime. In addition, they propose to install additional drainage channels in the highway.

With regards to the sewage issue, the problems here are complex. On occasion the pumps have failed when high levels of effluent are encountered. Anglian Water has carried out significant maintenance on the pumps and has also enhanced the maintenance regime. Should a failure be reported automatically, they have also reduced their target call out response time to the pumping station. A real challenge is the education of the public in use of the sewage facility. Unfortunately, over the years, surface water connections have naughtily been made to the sewage system so that, in times of heavy rain, the system becomes overloaded. Whilst the 3P (poo, pee & paper) rule should be strictly applied by households, there is a growing habit of putting pump clogging items into the system.

The loo is NOT for nappies, wet wipes, absorbent pads, underwear, dental floss, cotton wool buds, disposable razors, kitchen roll, kitchen waste etc.!

We are aware of other flooding issues in The Street, Bent Lane & Playford Road & have raised these with the Highway Authority, Suffolk County Council. Unfortunately, despite Parish Council & Parishioners concerns, they do not see these as issues of urgent enough priority to deal with. The best advice is to wear oilskins or hurry past the affected areas!

During the year, the Parish Council took over responsibility for the Yewtree Grove play area from Suffolk Coastal. Together with our play areas at Broke Hall, Tower Hall, Chestnut Close & Kelvedon Drive, regular safety inspections and maintenance have continued as normal. This brings all the Council play areas within the Parish into our hands.

We are about to embark upon some refurbishment works to our existing play equipment, and are planning to add some additional items. Not forgetting our older clientele, we are going to add some juvenile / adult exercise equipment as well. The total costs are around £23,000 but, don't panic, we've managed to reduce this figure to around £3,000 from the Parish purse. We are indebted to District Councillor Mark Newton and former District Councillor John Withey for providing substantial contributions from their Enabling Communities Budgets. Combined with the Suffolk Coastal District Council resources from other sports and play based funding opportunities a total of just over £20,000 has been secured.

The Mill Stream & Sandlings Local Nature Reserves continue to be maintained to a high standard by Greenways with financial support from the Parish Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Eventually the long-awaited bollards to inhibit unauthorised vehicles being driven illegally through the disused bus lane at the Bixley Farm Centre were installed. Promised a bollard at either end, Suffolk County Council installed three at one end. Oh well, it did the job!

If you want to tear your hair out, start tugging now. The much requested bus shelter, near the Golf Hotel in Foxhall Road, is being financed by the Parish Council. Costing over £3,600, the order is with the Suffolk County Council and has been for 15 months – fortunately the money is still in our bank account. Dates have been intimated, start dates have been promised and workmen actually turned up in February for a morning, put some aerosol crosses on the kerbstones and that's the last we've seen of them. The last excuse was they went away for gritting purposes. Has anybody seen much snow or ice this past winter?

Keeping "On The Buses", significant dismay was expressed by Parishioners living on Bixley Farm when, at Christmas and on economic grounds, *First* withdrew the last bus service passing the Bixley Farm District Centre. At one time, there were three services, the penultimate one having been diverted by Ipswich Buses via the shorter Bladen Drive route. We arranged a meeting with Ipswich Buses management to see if they would consider re-routing their service but unfortunately they would only do so if a pecuniary offering was available. Suffolk County Council had already stated they were unable to do so, citing completion rules. Whilst the Parish Council were mindful to sponsor the service for a trial period, we were debarred from doing so as it turned out we did not have the legal spending power to do so.

We're pleased to note that work has at last started on the new footway along Bent Lane. This is being funded by Suffolk County Council with a contribution of £12,500 from the Parish Council. Originally planned to start immediately after The Street footway was completed, promised start dates have frustratingly come and gone.

A relatively small amount of money is still in our bank account to fund a "No Through Road" in Tuddenham Lane. Ordered in March 2014, the latest "put off" by Suffolk County Council on this one was back in February!

Quite often, the Parish Council gets enquiries from residents regarding vegetation obstructing footways. Not owning much land, the Parish Council is usually not the responsible body. But who is? It may be Suffolk County Council, residents and, quite likely on Bixley Farm, the original property developer. In our forthcoming newsletter, there's an article on this issue giving a comprehensive update.

At the allotments, the advisory panel, consisting of a mix of Councillors & allotment holders, met twice during the year. After a period of significant reorganisation, the last year has seen little to note, bar day-to day running.

A small Panel look after the strategy for our Lawn Cemetery and have met twice during the year. On a day-to day basis, our Burial Registrar, Andrew Duncan, ably manages the Cemetery administration. As always, regular

maintenance (grass and hedge cutting, bin emptying / dead flower removal, earth replenishment, grass reseeding and weed elimination) has been carried out to keep the area very presentable.

The Cemetery is run as a self-financing facility and there are no financial issues to give us concern. A review of cemetery fees took place but no changes were made this year. We have also been reviewing our Cemetery Regulations Booklet, prior to carrying out a reprint exercise whence distribution to Funeral Directors.

With regards to the cemetery extension, the main visible sign is simply the establishment of the hedging planted last year. However, we have permission to lay the pathways and we are currently obtaining quotations for the work. Our plan is to get this work done this year and then arrange for the land to be grassed.

We are indebted to District Councillor Robert Whiting for providing the funding from his Enabling Communities Budgets for the purchase of a new noticeboard for the Cemetery.

Maintenance of our website continues with regular updates taking place. Additionally, two editions of newsletter were produced and distributed to Parishioners. Costs have been significantly reduced by income received via our recent policy to permit advertising.

With regards to the need for suitable accommodation for the Parish Council to conduct its business, we have not progressed this over the past year. We continue to recognise our facilities are totally inadequate and unsuitable for a Parish of this size but we have continued to allocate a little bit of money each year to build up funds for this project.

We fully recognise and appreciate our local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team and are pleased to note the preparation and highly visible efforts they are making to tackle problems. The Parish Council remain active members of the 12PT (Twelve Parishes Together) group. Meeting regularly, Council, Police and other representatives discuss "issues of the day" which affect the area and determine possible solutions. The Parish Council, in conjunction with Kesgrave Town Council, continue to part fund an additional Police Community Support Officer, Mike Sarbutts.

At Bixley Farm District Centre, tackling anti-social behaviour during the evenings and into the early hours has been a priority. Ownership of the centre has changed hands during the year and a meeting was held with their agents. They were very sympathetic to concerns expressed and whilst, not entirely curbing all the problems, they have installed a lockable gate to the car park, tidied things up and installed a working "anti-loiterer" electronic Mosquito device.

Speeding has also been monitored in a number of known hot-spots & tickets issued in appropriate circumstances.

Car parking in the Broke Hall School area continues to give cause for concern and a meeting was held at the school with Parish council & Police representatives in attendance. Parking for drop-off and collections now extends onto Foxhall Road. With some parents bizarrely willing to take a hit by receiving a parking ticket this is rather a challenge. To paint more yellow lines would probably only move the problem elsewhere – something Suffolk County Council are loathe to carry out. However, the existing yellow lines have recently been repainted with a view to ensure there are no "technical get outs" from enforcement.

I hope this report has given a fair assessment of what has happened through the year, but before I close, I must put on record the following appreciations and thanks: -

- To Greenways for their sympathetic management of the Mill Stream and Sandlings areas, and all our other regular contractors who have carried out work on a regular basis to keep the Lawn Cemetery, grassed areas and playing fields so neat and tidy.
- To the Police for their unstinting effort to keep our neighbourhood safe.
- To Parish Councillors for their unstinting unpaid hard work on behalf of you, the Parishioners.
- To our Suffolk Coastal District Councillors for the generous donations to provide additional facilities.
- To our Committee Chairs for carrying out the "meat and bones" of the Parish business and for their support, both past and future.

And finally, sincere thanks go to our Clerk, Mel Bentley, and Assistant Clerk, Jean Potter. As always, both of them have given their wisdom, guidance and sterling effort over the past year.

Thank you.