

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Tuesday 21st May 2019 at
VILLAGE HALL, Humber Doucy Lane at 7.30pm**

CHAIRMAN: Mr P Richings

PARISH COUNCILLORS: Mrs M Brown, Miss A Cracknell, Mr D Francis, Mr C Griggs, Mr M Newton, Mr R Nunn, Mrs B Richardson-Todd, Mr P Richings, Mrs S Todd, Mr B Ward, Mr J Westrup, Mr R Whiting

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 5 members of public.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: Mr M Newton

COUNTY COUNCILLORS: Mr R Whiting

OTHERS PRESENT: Mrs S Stannard - Clerk; Mrs S Jenkins – Assistant Clerk.
Minutes taken by Mrs Stannard.

APOLOGIES: Ms G Read (PCSO for Rushmere St Andrew & Kesgrave), Mr Wright (another commitment)

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 22 May 2018 at Tower Hall

These were made available to all present. Mrs Barbara Richardson-Todd proposed that the minutes be accepted, seconded by Mr Nunn with ALL in favour. The minutes were duly signed as a correct record.

Matters arising: - None

3. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR

Parish Council Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 –

Copies of the PC approved and as yet unaudited financial accounts for year ending 31 March 2019 was distributed at the meeting. The Clerk explained all main variances on the previous year's accounts.

itemising each transaction was not distributed as it amounted to 33 pages but was available if required.

RECEIPTS: Of note were:- Total receipts at £183,618.10 was £5,320.87 more than the previous year (£178,297.23). Burial receipts were down by £4,930.00 at £32,589.00. The Council had gratefully received a total of £21,079.88 in grant money compared to £12,867.23 the previous year. There was also an increase in the precept from £112,000 for 2017/18 to £116,600.00 for 2018/19.

PAYMENTS: 'Total payments' for the year at £137,531.43 were down from £141,096.58 the previous year. This was accounted for by asset improvements the previous year at play areas, investment in Community Speedwatch equipment the previous year, lower expenditure in 2018/19 for the PCSO as a result of reduction in hours of the PCSO; changes in the legislation regarding pest control that meant the contract with pest control no longer continued in the 2018/19 financial year; and as a result of the warmer weather in the 2018/19 financial year the maintenance costs for the play areas, ponds, cemetery and the allotments were lower than the previous year.

Total cash assets at the bank were £227,872.47 at 31st March 2019, an increase of £47,590.70 on the previous year. Of those cash assets £170,334.04 was Earmarked Reserves. The year ended with £2,358.06 of cheques not reconciled (cleared).

The end of year balance in the general account was £27,059.42 better off than the previous year and the cemetery current account balance ended the year £20,422.99 better off than the previous year, a result from more income from burials. The cemetery account was also boosted by a number of people paying for Exclusive Rights of Burial in advance of passing away. The Business Premium account remained static with £108.32 of interest paid in.

Mr Westrup asked about CIL grant funding received and the loan repayments. The Chairman and the Clerk provided more information regarding CIL funding and loan repayments.

A resident asked about the differences in expenditure between 2017-18 and 2018-19 under S137 and S142 payments. The Clerk responded and will provide the resident with further information after the meeting.

The members present accepted the Parish Council Financial Accounts for year ending 31st March 2019.

4. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS and QUESTIONS

County Councillors and District Councillors –

Mr Newton provided a verbal report as a district councillor.

A discussion followed about the reasons for the boundary commission to divide the parish into three wards. Mr Newton indicated that the commission looked at the number of electors per district councillor and they tried to balanced the number of electors per councillor.

A written report by Mr Whiting was distributed at the meeting. Mr Whiting provided a verbal summary at the meeting.

A discussion followed about the traffic calming scheme for Playford Road; a pedestrian crossing to be provided in Foxhall Road in the vicinity of the Golf Hotel, and concerns from the public about traffic volumes and the lack of visibility in The Street. It was agreed that traffic volumes and lack of visibility in The Street will be added to the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Mr Ward reported that there is still flooding at the lower point in Playford Road around numbers 44-47 in Playford Road. Mr Whiting noted this and will consider how it can be addressed.

5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Richings provided a written 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.

Mr Richings thanked the retired PCSO Mr Mike Sarbutts and the current PCSO, Ms Gemma Read, Mr Andrew Duncan (Registrar at the Cemetery), Mr Westrup (Allotment Manager), Mr Potter (various tasks he performs including servicing noticeboards and for the letter rounds), volunteers that look after the play areas and lock the gate at Broke Hall Play area, contractors, councillors, retired councillors, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk. Mr Richings also indicated that there is currently a councillor vacancy.

No questions were asked.

6. OPEN FORUM

Questions were asked about the contract and hours of the PCSO and members of the public reporting crimes, etc.

The Chairman and the Clerk responded to the issues raised.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 9pm and tea and coffee was served.

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Annex 1 – Chairman’s Report

Chairman’s Report to Rushmere St Andrew Annual Parish Meeting 21st May 2019

Your Parish Council is looked after by 15 elected Councillors who take the decisions, with two Officers, Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer and Assistant Parish Clerk who guide them & enact the decisions made. Starting the year with one Councillor vacancy, we were pleased to welcome Chris Griggs, and, later in the year, said farewell to Mike Shields with thanks to him for his contribution to the running of the Council. That brought us back down to 14, but with the 4-yearly elections imminent, we carried the vacancy for a short period. During the year, the merger of the former Waveney & Suffolk Coastal District Councils into the “super-sized” East Suffolk Council had implications for the Parish. With rather fewer Councillors and wards needed within this body, the Boundary Commission for England considered the whole area & realigned their ward boundaries. Unfortunately for the Parish Council, our wards have to align with these boundaries which left us having 3 wards with our 15 Councillor allocation split by ward 10/3/2. Knowing that 13 Councillors were willing to stand again, and not knowing of any outside interest, the 13 split their nominations 8/3/2 – and all were elected unopposed. This careful consideration led to a saving of several thousand pounds in electoral costs for the Parish Council. That left us with 2 vacancies to fill, but “retiree”, James Wright, had a couple of days sabbatical & returned to the Council by co-option. That leaves us with one vacancy to fill – expressions of interest would be greatly appreciated. 2018/19 was the first full year that our newly appointed Officers took charge of our Councillors! As Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Sylvia Stannard, and Assistant Parish Clerk, Sarah Jenkins, have fitted in so well and provided an admirable service to the Council, dealing with the plethora of tasks that crop up from day-to-day.

There are approaching 200 outdoor items within the Parish to look after. We have 5 play areas furnished with associated play and adult exercise equipment, not forgetting the two village ponds. Dog, litter & grit bins, noticeboards, defibrillators, seats and the 2 village signs are provided, maintained and replaced, as necessary, by the Council. As part of a managed plan, we provide funding towards the well-used Millstream and Sandlings Local Nature Reserves. During the year, we have assessed our portfolio & subsequently arranged to pressure wash our play-areas, given maintenance of a significant number of our seats & given a good “wash & brush-up” of our noticeboards. One seat, the 1953 Coronation seat in Bixley Drive, needed significant works but we felt its historic significance justified a full refurbishment and it is now back to its original glory.

We are always on the lookout for, & are delighted to receive, grants from others to provide additional facilities and enhance the Parish. Our contribution inevitably involves organisation of the project, and sometimes a willingness to make a contribution to “kick-start” the process. This year has been no exception & we thank the following for making funds, totalling in excess of £18,000, available to us:-

- Mr Ranns for provision of seat at Sandlings Local Nature Reserve
- Councillors Newton, Dean & Whiting (Suffolk Coastal District Council) Enabling Communities Grant for Battles Over – A Nations Tribute Beacon Lighting Community Event
- Councillor Whiting (Suffolk County Council) Locality Budget & St Andrew Church PCC for new seats outside St Andrew’s Church in The Street
- Councillor Lawson (Suffolk County Council) Locality Budget for ponds at Millstream Local Nature Reserve
- Councillors Newton & Dean (Suffolk Coastal District Council) Enabling Communities Grant for inclusive roundabout at Broke Hall Playing Field
- Councillor Whiting (Suffolk Coastal District Council) Enabling Communities Grant for information board at Chestnut Pond
- Suffolk Coastal Norse for ponds at Millstream Local Nature Reserve

There's not a lot to report on two of our assets, the Cemetery & Allotments are both looking very neat & tidy. The new cemetery extension continues to establish very well. At the allotments, after a period of downturn with us struggling to find tenants for plots, we now have a waiting list.

Looking at Community safety & wellbeing, for a number of years, the Parish Council has provided funds, along with Kesgrave Town Council, for the employment of a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). Originally the funding was based on the Police funding 50% of the costs with the other 50% split on a 2:1 basis Kesgrave: Rushmere St Andrew. Along the way, the Police decided to withdraw their funding so both Councils took the decision to increase (effectively doubling) their funding. A review of Police resourcing took place in 2018, which threw everything up in the air as to whether this would continue or not. Negotiations were tricky, akin to walking through treacle, but eventually both Councils signed up to continue the arrangement, albeit with reduction in hours. During the transition, our long-serving PCSO, Mike Sarbutts, decided to leave the force and out thanks go to him for all his efforts especially tackling tricky anti-social behaviour issues in Bixley Farm. In his place we welcomed PCSO Gemma Read and wish her well in looking after issues that occur within the Parishes.

Whilst anti-social behaviour has been on the agenda for a number of years, we feel there has been a significant downturn of late. However, we recognise this tends to "ebb & flow" over time so we would ask that any problems are reported in a timely fashion. Vehicular parking near schools is one that is a major issue on a broadly national basis, and local concerns are no different in our area – particularly Broke Hall School & an ever expanding environ. As part of the process for the move towards civil, rather than Police, enforcement of parking issues with Suffolk, we did request additional "yellow line" traffic restrictions but these suggestions have been put on hold. Repainting of the existing lines throughout the district is in progress which may help in the short-term. Currently delayed at Government level by their "Brexit" challenges, the legal matters permitting the transition to civil enforcement inhibit advising a start time when this may have some effect – we shall see!

Looking at planning issues, whilst a quieter year than some, we held 10 meetings to review, and make recommendations on, over 50 planning applications. The vast majority encompassed extensions to existing buildings, although a small number were for infill "new build within the Parish.

At Bixley Farm, after a lull of about a year, we were pleased to note work restarting on this long-standing development. As part of this development, we also took the opportunity to publicise the availability of "affordable housing" being offered, with 1st priority given to those associated with the Parish. The development land at 155 The Street cropped up during the year with more applications submitted & approved. Probably, there will be more to follow, sometime, with the land being offered for sale at auction in May 2019.

With regards to longer-term development plan formulation, we continued to review both Ipswich Borough Council & Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan proposals. Suffolk Coastal produced their final version during the year & submitted it to the Government for acceptance. Ipswich Borough Council is slightly behind with consultations at the "preferred options" stage having been considered. Last year we reported that the Ipswich plan had proposals for converting some narrow strips of land within their boundary, previously identified as "countryside" along the Humber Doucy Lane / Westerfield corridor, to "housing" & this is still on the table. Additionally, the Suffolk Coastal plan has added an adjoining area between Humber Doucy Lane & Tuddenham Road as part of this overall plan. Split over the Parishes of Tuddenham & Rushmere St Andrew, around 150 dwellings are proposed. Both plans intimate development from the year 2031 onwards.

During the year, at the behest of local residents, we investigated the possibility of putting in a central pedestrian refuge in Foxhall Road outside the Golf Public House. The need was highlighted very well to the Suffolk County Council officer who attended, when he struggled to cross the road at "off-peak" lunch-time! With funding provided by our County Councillors the design phase has been completed. It's now a question of identifying funding for the implementation phase.

"Kick-started" by a contribution from the Parish Council, together with funding from County Council Councillor Whiting, design work has been completed on the traffic calming measure project for the well-

identified “high-speed” traffic flow along Playford Road. The Parish Council took the opportunity to apply for the needed funding, to implement the scheme, from the “Community Infrastructure Levy” collected by the District Council from developers via the planning application process. Our successful bid will provide a grant of £45,200 which, when added to County Council funding, will allow implementation of the scheme.

Each year, the Parish Council allocates up to £1,000 to provide donations to local organisations & charities. In 2018/19, we were pleased to help Broke Hall School, Kesgrave Community Library, Heathlands Community Preschool, Suffolk Accident & Rescue Service & New Beginnings-Fresh Start. Publicity-wise, our website was brought in-house and undertook a total revamp. We regularly add items of news & information so keep an eye on it. We continue our efforts to update our newsletter with our next edition generated in-house. Over the years, volunteers have delivered the newsletters but, on occasion, it has been challenging to find enough resource to cover our needs. We have taken the difficult decision to say “thank you” to them all for their past efforts and we have awarded a “print & deliver” contract to a local supplier.

For the first time in many years, the Parish Council organised a community event & what a success it was! To mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, we took part in the national “Battle’s Over – a Nation’s Tribute” commemoration. Held at the Ipswich School Sports Centre, we would like to thank everybody who took part. To Ipswich School who so graciously provided the venue, to the exhibitors for their memorabilia & history exhibits, car park marshalls, caterers, singers.... This was really a night to remember for the 500 or more visitors which culminated in the lighting of the Beacon. To provide a lasting legacy, an area containing 100 plants has been created at Broke Hall School and shortly the final act will take place with the burying of a “time capsule”, filled by the school children. A special heartfelt thank you to our Clerk Sylvia, Assistant Clerk Sarah, & all of the Beacon Working Party Committee chaired by James Wright for all their hard work in organising everything so well.

As always, we must mention, and give thanks to, those people who put their efforts in to making the Parish a nice place to live in. Our volunteers look after the play areas with visual inspections and litter picking. At Broke Hall Play Area, a rota dealt with the daily locking & unlocking of the gates. Our Cemetery, Allotments and Newsletter Production, Noticeboard Servicing & Councillor Letter Distribution were admirably managed by Messrs Andrew Duncan, John Westrup & Rob Potter. Thanks must also go to our PCSO’s, Mike Sarbutts followed by Gemma Read, for their work on your behalf. Mention must also be made of our regular contractors dealing with such issues as grass & hedge cutting & formal play area & equipment inspections.

Thanks must also be given to our Councillors who give their time and effort attending meetings, site visits and dealing with the various “issues of the day”.

And last, but not least, to our Clerk & Assistant Clerk for dealing so ably and professionally with the plethora of issues those Parishioners, Councillors & other bodies throw in their direction.

Phil Richings – Parish Council Chairman