

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING in BOXFORD** on Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7.45 p.m. at Village Hall, Boxford.

**PRESENT:** See attached list. The meeting was chaired by Julian Fincham-Jacques (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Debbie Hattrell (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer) was also present. Around 18 parishioners including Councillors attended.

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from A Sargeant, S Mattocks and R Loose.

**MINUTES OF 22nd May 2018:** The previous Minutes were proposed and accepted as a true record.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Councillor Bryn Hurren attended and discussed matters from 2018/19. These included the increased ward sizes as a result of the Boundary Review. New Council houses were in the pipeline and he spoke of the need for affordable homes locally. The Joint Local Plan was in progress. He explained the costs involved in relation to waste and urged everyone to recycle more and waste less. Bottle banks were generating funds locally and the solar panels on Council Houses were bringing in revenue. He thanked the Parish Councillors and the Clerk for all they do.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr James Finch attended and out-lined the highlights from 2018/19. He announced the County Council was looking to develop a 4.5 acre site which is owned as part of its County Farm estate in Cockfield village near Lavenham. The plan was for 51 affordable homes to be built. Suffolk's tourism trade was booming. Superfast broadband continued to be rolled out. Mid Suffolk Home First were rated outstanding by the Care Quality Commission. Mid Suffolk Home First support people following a period of ill health with the aim to help restore some independence. A national award was received for supporting communities to be more energy efficient. Construction of a new building called "The Hold" was underway for Suffolk's archival collections. He spoke of the significance of the sport and physical activity sector to the Suffolk economy. Thermal patching technology was introduced to repair Suffolk roads. He confirmed Suffolk had risen in the national GCSE league tables. More specialist education placements in Suffolk had been agreed. Suffolk had won a grant to develop sensors for street lights to monitor all manner of things in their vicinity such as road temperatures, traffic speeds and to equip them with renewable energy. Finally he focused on the budget setting including the costs of providing Adult and Community Services. He concluded by thanking everyone for their support and the Parish Council.

**FINANCE:** The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer reported on the past years accounts. Last year the Precept increased by 1% to residents and Burial Income remained stable. The Fireworks cost the same as last year and were reimbursed from the proceeds of the event. On Street lighting, the invoice for power and maintenance was being prepared by the County Council. The LED upgrades had been chased again, with over £5000 outstanding held in reserves. Similar to last year, the Bin Empty Invoice from the District Council was late so missed the Accounting Year. The reserves for the Churchyard wall will roll over to the next financial year as appropriate protection was necessary ahead of the works. The Parish Council paid grants during the year including £1750 towards the insurance costs of the Church, around £1600 for the Playing Field grass contract, £1500 to the Village Hall and £50 to Sudbury Citizens Advice Bureau.

Regarding reserves, monies are set aside in respect of further land for Burials, Future renewal of Street Lighting and Neighbourhood Planning. Reserves amounted to around £50,000. All expenditure is voted on by the Parish Council at Meetings. The annual budget in December enables funds to be available for that process. As an Election Year, residents had the opportunity to stand for election to the Parish Council and therefore contribute towards the on-going financial decisions.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The Chairman spoke of the proposal from developers to build a substantial development on Sand Hill. The Planning application was awaited at that time. He spoke of the

progress with the Neighbourhood Plan which was in early stages. Protection is being examined for the Churchyard wall ahead of the maintenance work. The Chairman reminded the meeting the election deadline was rapidly approaching and he encouraged people to apply to join the Parish Council. He went on to introduce the new members of the Parish Council and spoke of the extremely sad losses of 2 longstanding and highly valued Parish Councillors over the past year. He thanked members of the Parish Council and the Clerk for their contributions.

**REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS:** Reports were given by the Community Council and Playing Fields. Ward Baker, Chairman of the Community Council, out-lined the events that took place in another busy and successful year and thanked all the helpers. David Burden, Chairman of the Playing Field Management Committee could not attend, however, Ward Baker gave his report. Hugh Phillips on the Playing Field Management Committee was thanked for all his hard work in relation to the refurbishment of the Pavilion. Tina Loose then gave a report from the Boxford Society and although they had feared they wouldn't be resourced to continue, new Committee members have come forward which has been welcomed. She then gave a report on Primrose Wood. Everyone listened with interest.

**ELECTORS QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:** Questioning was around Affordable Housing, School Academies, the proposed development on Sand Hill from Catesby Homes and about the meadow at Goodlands. District Cllr B Hurren spoke about the extent of the issue with the lack of Affordable Housing. V Strafford updated the meeting on the findings of the first survey for Neighbourhood Planning. County Cllr J Finch spoke of local Academies and the monitoring. In relation to the proposed development, the Parish Council needed to wait for the formal plans before commenting, however, were taking an active interest information gathering in the meantime. At that stage the potential plans to be brought by Hopkins Homes in the vicinity were unlikely to be progressed due to engineering difficulties and therefore financial implications with the site. The history of the Goodlands meadow was discussed and the role of the Woodland Trust and landowner. Cllr B Hurren and Cllr M Wooderson were investigating the issues involved.

**The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.**