

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING in BOXFORD** on Tuesday 28th March 2023 at 7.45 p.m. at Boxford Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** The meeting was chaired by Cllr Julian Fincham-Jacques (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Debbie Hattrell (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer) was also present. Around 25 parishioners including Councillors joined the meeting.

**WELCOME:** The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everybody.

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from District Cllr B Hurren and County Cllr J Finch.

**MINUTES OF 24th May 2022:** The previous Minutes were proposed and accepted as a true record.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr Bryn Hurren was unable to attend, however, his report was read to the meeting confirming that the District Council now holds many meetings and briefings remotely, which helps to fit into the working day. Full Council and main Committee meetings including planning are back to face-to-face meetings and are now live streamed. Babergh District Councils part of the Council Tax has increased by 2.9% for the 2023/24 year. Planning is their most controversial function, and their joint local plan was progressing slowly. They continue to work hard on their Public Realm and Environmental role. They recycle just under half of the refuse, and none goes to landfill. They have installed solar panels in 2000 out of their 4000 Council houses bringing in funds as well as from the Energy from Waste facility. They are working to improve walking and cycling strategies and also, they have a new Culture, Heritage and Tourist Strategy. Locally he has supported our Village Hall and Box River News with his own Councillor Locality Budget. He is also working hard to achieve funding for improvement to the facilities at the pavilion and possibly access to the Croft. He thanked the Clerk and Councillors for their support, help and friendship over the past year.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr James Finch was unable to attend and his report, issued in advance, was read by Cllr L Wortley, and covered that fees for road closures were waived to celebrate the King's Coronation. Suffolk Archives are looking for volunteers in their branches in Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, and Ipswich. Suffolk Archives collects, preserves, and shares over 900 year's worth of Suffolk's rich history. An independent special advisor has been commissioned to further strengthen the reform of special educational needs and disabilities services at Suffolk County Council. Suffolk Walking Festival returns to celebrate its 15th year. The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services Community Risk Management Plan has been finalised. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions continue.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The Chairman attended and delivered the following report: -  
John F. Kennedy once said "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

It does not seem nine years I have been chair of the Parish Council, far longer than it should or was ever meant to be. During this time life on the Council and in the village has changed. People have decided to leave the council either for personal reasons or due to life events and it has been a pleasure to work with each and every one who brought their own views and dynamics and been respected for it. Finding people to fill spaces has brought its own challenges and now is the opportunity for those who have stood on the sideline and thought things could be done differently or better, to demonstrate their passion for the village and its future by standing in the forthcoming election.

This has been another busy year for the council, especially with a reduced number of councillors. Alongside the usual business of planning etc, we have seen the refurbishment of the church clock, delivered by Cllr Pamela Edwards, refusal of the Catesby development at Sand Hill and the adoption

of the Neighbourhood plan following a great deal of commitment from the team of people that have been working on it.

Refurbishment of the Church wall has been another long-term project, which hopefully the new council will finally be able to conclude.

William Pollard, a clergyman from the 1800's once said.

Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.

That quote is as true now as it was at the time.

Boxford continues to be deemed a core village. In the current climate, it is likely that we are going to be faced with further applications for development in the village. The council understands that whilst change will not always be popular it is inevitable and will do its best to manage the change and get the best possible result for the village.

It is also time for me to have a change and after some 15yrs on the council, I feel it is time to say goodbye, therefore I will not be re-standing at the election.

I would like to end by thanking Debbie and my fellow councillors for the dedication and commitment they have shown to the village, Bryn Hurren and James Finch for their assistance, they get a rough time at the meetings but still come back for more.

**REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS:** Reports were given by the Community Council, Village Hall, Boxford Society, Playing Fields, Footpath Wardens, Boxford Friendship Group, Bowls Club, Boxford & Hadleigh Community Car Scheme. The Playing Fields were welcoming back Boxford Rovers and were planning to upgrade the changing facilities. The Footpath Wardens regularly walk the footpaths and report any issues. They were working to complete the leaflet project. The Community Car Scheme is open to all, and they currently have 15 drivers. The Community Council continues to work well with the various events including the Fireworks, Bike Club Tornado, Barn dance and Race Night and they were looking forward to celebrating the Coronation in May 2023. The Boxford Society holds various meetings and is committed to preserving the character of the Village.

**ELECTORS QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:** Questioning and comments included a vote of thanks to Trudi wild for taking over Box River News. The issue of widespread potholes and the surface of the croft path were raised. The Highways Reporting tool was publicised as a way for residents to record issues around the village. Cars parked directly opposite the junction with Homefield were raised together with Goodlands planning and access to Primrose Wood. The Catesby Appeal to the refusal of the Sand Hill development was discussed. On the latter, written representations on planning grounds and attendance at the hearing were urged.

**The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.**