



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23 APRIL 2018 COMMENCING AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE INSTITUTE, HIGHAM ROAD, STRATFORD ST MARY

Present:

Parish Councillors Bill Davies (Chairman); Hilary Cairns; Shaun Baker;; Brian Such; Richard Tilbrook; Graham Pearce, Jenny O'Hanlon(Clerk); County Councillor Gordon Jones; District Councillor Sue Carpendale

Members of the Public: 18

1. **Apologies:**

District Councillor Fenella Swan, Cllr Roger Barrell (Vice-Chairman). Kevin Cassell, Lorry Shead

The Chairman began by welcoming everyone to the meeting.

2. **Approval of Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 24 April 2017**

The Chairman summarised the Minutes and there being no comment from either members of the public or councillors, the Minutes were passed.

3. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave an overview of the past year's activities as detailed below: -

1. Closure of the Village Shop/Post Office and Sorting office. The transfer of the Shop to the Vale Garage completed and the new Post Office is due to open on 8th May 2018.
2. Strickmere Estate Pavements: The pavements resurfacing issues have now been completed following the feedback last year on how unsatisfactory the finished works were.
3. Children's Play Area: The play area was completed and the grand opening was a success and covered by the EADT
4. Following the completion and instillation of the Stratford Lock Gates by River Stour Trust, they are holding an opening and renaming ceremony on the 12th May.
5. The Church roof repair has now been completed after 2 ½ years since the theft.
6. The damage to The Kings Arms by an HGV on the corner of The Row junction was discussed.
7. Villagelife open gardens and the Firework display were both very well attended events in 2017.
8. Land dispute at the former garage site Lower Street remains ongoing.
9. Complaints from residents about speeding tractors through the village was dealt with by writing to 4 local farms and we have received response from a couple.

10. Planning Applications: Two main controversial applications received this year for The Anchor and The Swan. The Swan application went to committee and has now received approval with a 9 votes to 5 majorities.

Thanks to:

All my fellow parish councillors for their contributions during the past year. Our new litter picker, Neil Hazelwood, Rob Baker for grass cutting of the Millennium Avenue and Church, Brenda Such for the Millennium Garden and Jenny, our Parish Clerk. And County Councillor Gordon Jones, District Councillors Sue Carpendale and Fenella Swan.

4. **Report from ABC preschool read out by Cllr Davies**

Report for Annual Parish Meeting - 2018

The Preschool is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which has Trustees and members and is a registered Charity.

As a charity our aim is to benefit our children, not to make money so all monies raised through fees and fundraising goes directly back into the preschool.

As a business we continue to grow and now have nine members of staff.

We currently have 39 children registered with us, with some sessions nearly at full capacity.

Our children are predominately from Stratford St Mary and Dedham, with a few children further afield.

Financially we continue to be impacted by the continual increase in the Living Wage, the implementation of auto enrolment pensions and the lowered our hourly funded rate from Suffolk County Council of £4.00 an hour, per child, for three and four year olds.

We continue our great links with Stratford St Mary Primary School. Those children starting school in September visit the Reception class every Monday to help with their transition to School.

We had another successful Christmas Fair in November 2018, which we held in conjunction with the Primary School. All monies raised go towards resources for the children.

5. **Report from Stratford St Mary Primary School delivered by Karen Bilner**

It has been an exciting year for the primary school. The staff, governors, parents and pupils have reviewed the school's vision and agreed upon the strategic direction and core values for the School. Friendship, environment, community, and growth mindset are some of the core themes that our stakeholders felt important in our small, family orientated school.

We have received external recognition for our activities and have been awarded the Gold Standard for our Junior Road Safety Officers and a Gold School games mark for the use of physical education and competitive sport in the curriculum. In July last year the school was awarded the eco-school green flag award. The green flag is the highest standard for environment awareness in schools and out of the 18 thousand schools in the programme less than 5% achieve this highest accolade.

We currently have 94 pupils on role. In the last two years the number of pupils has increased by 20%. As well as serving the parish and immediate vicinity we also have pupils who travel from Manningtree, East Bergholt and Colchester. As the funding the School receives is directly linked to the number of pupils, the increase in pupil numbers has allowed for more sustainable finances and further development of the teaching facilities. From September we will have an additional full-time teacher. The seven year groups will still be arranged into four classes. The extra teacher will allow us to increase the pupil intervention work and mean that we are less reliant on outside contractors and supply teachers. This is a really positive step forward.

We are proud of our 2017 SATs results that are well above the national and local authority averages and we anticipate a strong performance from the Year 6 and Year 2 pupils who will be taking their SATs next month.

Since the February 2017 Ofsted inspection, when the school was re-rated as 'Good', progress on the school's development plan has continued. Although it will most likely be a couple of years until we are revisited by Ofsted, we expect to meet all the criteria to be rated as an 'Outstanding' school this year.

The school website was overhauled and relaunched in February this year. We regularly post articles on what is happening at the school and our involvement in the wider community and would encourage anyone who wants to find out more to take a look.

We are very fortunate to have so much outside space that the children can use for learning and play. It does take a lot of effort to keep on top of all the ground maintenance and for several years only the bare minimum has been done. In June we are planning a Ground Force weekend

were we plan to tackle some of the outside areas that need a bit of attention. We will be replanting the garden area and revamping the playground. We are hoping that parents and members of the community will come along and lend a hand. We could certainly use some green fingered expertise but any help is will be gratefully received. The Ground Force weekend is 9th and 10th of June. We will send out information nearer the time but please get in touch if you think you can help or would like to find out more.

6. **A Report was not received from Orchard Barns Kindergarten**

7. **Report from Stratford St Mary Community First Responders delivered by Sue Lawrence.**

Stratford St Mary 1st Responders 2017 -18

It has been a difficult year all round, but we are very fortunate to have recruited Peter Dawson from Langham, who has taken on a lot of the co-ordinator role as well as covering a majority of hours. Peter is a Parish Councillor in Langham and brings some fresh ideas.

We currently have 3 active Responders who cover 10 – 70 hrs a month between them. We desperately need to recruit more people to increase our coverage but this is easier said than done.

Last year thanks to Hall Farm we undertook fundraising and were supported by the Parish Council to raise money to install a CPAD – ‘Community Public Access Defibrillator’ Site at the Farm which enables all the villagers access to the defibrillator when no CFRs are about.

To date the Defibrillator has been accessed once for a Chest pain but it was not deployed.

In an attempt to improve access to the CPAD site we would like to consider a ‘VETS – Voluntary Emergency Telephone System’ which is already active in Langham.

Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT) has developed the VETS™ scheme (Village Emergency Telephone System) to aid communities in this type of rescue. Using telephone technology, a village has a single emergency number they can ring if required to alert up to 10 volunteers to bring the defib, or otherwise assist. This has to be activated by the rescuer and not by the ambulance service (currently). The cost of this is a fixed price per year.

Then followed a discussion lead by Peter Dawson about the VETS system and the benefits that this will give to Stratford St Mary and the costs that will be involved with this. To be discussed further at the next PC meeting on the 14th May with the hope that the PC will be able to assist with the costs. Cllr Davies thanked the Responders for all that they do.

8. **Report from the Firework committee**

Adam from the firework committee delivered their report which included information about how successful their online sales are and how far afield people travel to visit the display. Lots of work involved, including a two day set up for a 10 minute display, tickets sell out extremely fast for this very popular event. The PC was thanked for their kind donation plus lots of other local organisations. £6500 was donated to local groups, this year's date for the diary is Saturday 3rd November tickets on sale in August.

9. **Report from Stratford St Mary Ramblers**

A report was delivered by Don Umfreville and included detail on 22nd year of running, now 45 members and on average 10-12 walkers each time. They have lost some members but gained new ones and they walk usually 4-5 miles every 10 days. They have a social programme, which included holidays and a trip to Portsmouth dockyard. New members always welcome £3.00 per year fee.

10. **Report from the Stratford St Mary Welfare Trust**

No report has been received but a copy of the annual accounts of the Charity can be obtained from the clerk.

11. **Report from the VillageLife Organisation**

Annual Report 2017/2018

VillageLife (VL) is a volunteer organization in Stratford St Mary, formed some five years ago. VL's purpose is to provide opportunities for community/ social interaction for all who live, work or play, in and around the village. The only financial objective is that, as far as may be possible, events should be managed so as to fund themselves at the lowest possible cost to individual

participants, with the intention that no one who wants to attend will be prevented from doing so by the cost. In this context, anything that has the potential to enhance community life in the village is considered to be within VL's remit.

Over the past five years, VL has been responsible for staging:

- 4 Summer Fairs and the Village Open Day (2017)
- the annual Quintuple (pub-games) Challenge at the Swan;
- the 'Christmas Light-up'.
- various social events including traditional country dancing evenings and periodic 'Stories by the Fire' evenings;

Overall, 2017 was another successful year. Starting with a Race Night in April, a social event with an overtly fundraising objective, which was held in part to provide funds to underpin future events, but particularly to support the Stratford St Mary First Responders with their plans for community defibrillator training.

In conjunction with the Church Fabric Committee, **VL** undertook the organization of a Village Open Day instead of a themed fair, as its summer event for 2017. From all the reports received, the various activities in Stratford St Mary on 24th June seem to have generated an ambiance in the village that was warm and welcoming. For **VL** and I am sure for many others, that in itself was success. The financial outcome however, was also pleasing, with £1000 being raised for the Church Fabric Fund and a small surplus retained by **VL** to support future community activity, including the on-going restoration and maintenance of the Millennium Garden.

Activity in the second half of 2017 included the **Quintuple Challenge** in September and the **Christmas Light-up** in December, both of which were also successful events and in the organization of which **VL** received both support and encouragement from Mark, Jane and their team at **The Swan**.

We also gratefully acknowledge the invaluable financial contribution from the **Parish Council** to help stage Summer Fairs during our formative years and to the ongoing maintenance of the Millennium Garden.

Regrettably, we have to report that at the present time the future looks less than certain.

VillageLife was always a small team (with big ideas) but during recent months various members have experienced a succession of health related issues that have prevented the planning and preparation that should have been ongoing, if we were to provide a full programme of social events for 2018.

It is therefore with much sadness that we confirm that we are not able to organize a Summer event this year. We are however intent on returning to the public arena with the Quintuple (pub games) Challenge and in December for the Christmas Light-up.

We intend to hold an open meeting in the near future to consider future plans and hopefully recruit the assistance and support of other like minded residents, in the planning and implementation of future community activities in Stratford St Mary.

There is however, no need to wait until that meeting.

Any resident who feels the urge to contribute more to the social and community life of Stratford St Mary is encouraged to call or e-mail members of the **VL** team, to learn more of what we do and our future plans.

Chris Griffin: 01206 337 363 e-mail: chrisbrookfarm@gmail.com

David Isaacs: 01206 322 259 e-mail: disaac45@aol.com

Norman Woodard: 01206 323015 e-mail: norman@thewoodards.co.uk

Brian Such: 01206 323019 e-mail: briansuch@such.co.uk

12. **Report from the Parochial Church Council was read out by Cllr Davies**

ST MARY'S CHURCH, STRATFORD ST MARY, REVIEW OF 2017

In April 2017 the Church Electoral Roll comprised **47** members (we have not yet had the Church's Annual Meeting this year, so I don't know the revised figures yet). Attendance at services averages out at about 30 for morning services and about 8 for evening services.

Services continue to be held every other Sunday in the church - on 1st Sundays at 10 a.m. there is a service of Holy Communion (quite often with a baptism thrown in!), while on 3rd Sundays we have a service of Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer at either 5 p.m. (winter) or 6.30 p.m. (April-September inclusive). In addition to those two more formal services, we have the 'Family Hour' service on 4th Sundays at 10.00 a.m. in the Parish Room. This usually starts around 9.30 with bacon butties, and leads into a very informal service based around songs, reading and acting out Bible stories. It is much appreciated by families with young children. On fifth Sundays we all join with other parishes from around Hadleigh Deanery for a Deanery Eucharist, in rotation around the 5 big churches in the Deanery. Because I am currently Rural Dean, Stratford St Mary church tends to get used quite a bit for big occasions, and it has been

wonderful to see it come to life as it fills with people.

In 2017 we had 8 weddings in the church, many of them for couples who don't live in Stratford but who love the feel of the church. These days couples can marry in any church in the country as long as they are prepared to attend church for 6 months before their wedding day, so we get quite a few couples from Colchester, for example.

We also had a good run on baptisms in 2017, many of them children of people I married several years ago.

Sadly, we had 2 funerals of much-loved villagers last year - Reg Price and Effie Clark. We also had a memorial service for Cefin Mobbs, and a burial of ashes for Jean Hadden.

Fundraising in 2017 concentrated on raising money for the roof fund, after the theft of most of the lead on the church roof in the autumn of 2015. Great thanks are owed to Chris Cousins for responding very rapidly to the theft by putting up an immense tarpaulin that has protected the church through all weathers till the spring of this year. I can now report that the roof has been repaired and we are so grateful to all who donated to this project.

We say a big thank you to all who keep our church alive, from Joan Naya, who comes in from Dedham to play the organ for our services; to Nicola Tindall who completed her training as a Reader this year and now leads services and preaches occasionally; to all those who read the lessons, arrange the flowers, serve coffee after services and keep the church clean and tidy so that it is always welcoming for visitors.

Above all, I would like to thank Christine Cousins and Jonathan Dewey, our wonderful Churchwardens, for all they do to make our church a place of welcome for all.

Revd Rosalind Paul, Rector

13. **Report from the Institute Committee delivered by Bill Davies**

2017 was another successful year with income from hiring the hall exceeding £5000 for the third time in the last 4 years. We have several regular hirers using the hall most weeks throughout the year and this, together with lower maintenance costs, produced a surplus of income over expenditure of £2,759 compared with a deficit of £2,504 for 2016.

Our total funds at 31st December 2017 stood at £24,719 up from £21,875 in 2016, meaning our financial position remains healthy although the Institute building is 90 years old this year and ongoing maintenance costs in the future must always be borne in mind.

As always we are grateful to our 100 Club subscribers who contributed £500 towards our income last year.

I would also like to record our appreciation to John Gordon, our independent Examiner since 1999, who has now retired from his role.

As always I thank my fellow committee members, Jenny Symons, Bobbie Kite, Emily Barrell and in Norman Woodard for his dual role of Institute Booking Secretary and 100 Club Organiser.

A discussion then followed about the problems that had been encountered earlier this year when the caravan clubs were on site. Bill agreed that allowing village children to still use the play area needs to be part of the Terms and Conditions of the caravanners being able to hire the facilities. He reiterated that caravans have used the field for the past 35-40 years and they are limited to 6 hires per year and have contributed £9500 between 2005 and 2017, so we don't want to prohibit them.

A survey needs to be completed as to what work needs doing on the Institute Hall, £24,000 to spend on upgrades. Gents toilets were mentioned. Bill suggested this to be discussed further at a separate meeting.

14. **Report on Community Speedwatch.**

A verbal report was received from Bill Davies included more volunteers needed, there are only 6 volunteers helping at the moment. Advertised on the APM leaflet drop, no take ups so far.

15. **Neighbourhood Watch Report.**

Bill Davies asked the question, "Do we still have an active NHW alive in Stratford St Mary?" Asked about how we increase members. Facebook to be used as a tool spread information about issues in SSM?

16. **District Councillors' Report.**

Cllr Swans report was received and a hard copy can be obtained from the clerk. Cllr Sue Carpendale gave a verbal report, which can be obtained from the clerk

17. **County Councillor's Report.**

Cllr Jones gave a verbal report and his April report can be obtained from the Clerk

18. **Report on Parish Council and Lettice Dykes Accounts.**

FINANCE REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 23.04.18

Income from the last financial year has been generated by a Precept of £15,800 and this was the first year without the benefit of a tax grant from Babergh District Council. Other sources of income have been VAT refund of £5044.11. Interest earned amounted to £80.57. We have also this year been receiving a cleansing grant from BDC relating to litter picking for £255.13 each quarter. We have also received a generous donation from the Firework Committee for £1000.00 which has been earmarked for the Institute field and they have also kindly offered more funds to be used for the relocation of the goal posts.

The very successful New Play area was completed in the Spring of 2017 and the total cost for this was £27239.04 and we were able to claim the VAT back of £4539.84. The Parish Council in previous years had reserved £6000.00 for this project and as this has now been used, we have discussed building up a new reserve for future projects and maintenance of the carpark and play area, £1000.00 has been set aside already.

Other major expenditure for this last year, as for other years, has been general administration, which amounted to £6727.49, village maintenance of £3524.00 and energy and lighting costs of £1157.42. The Parish Council made its annual donations to the Parochial Church Council, Suffolk Accident Rescue Service, the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Partnership, the River Stour Trust, the Royal British Legion and the Suffolk Preservation Society. We have made donations to the Village Life Organisation, The Hopper Bus and the Fireworks Committee Total donations are £1742.00.

The Parish Council agreed at their meeting in January this year to set the precept for the next financial year (2018/19) at £15,800. This gives a Council Tax Band D amount of £49.52 which, according to Babergh is a 0.00% increase/decrease on last year's figure.

Lettice Dykes Charity Trust

This Trust was established in 1911 to provide assistance to pupil's resident in Stratford St Mary, to attend schools, classes or educational establishments other than pre-school, by payment of fees, travelling or other expenses or maintenance allowances. A request was made in December 2017 for assistance from a student resident in our village, and it was agreed to donate £200.00 to assist with funding a trip overseas for educational purposes. Therefore as at 1st April this year, funds currently stand at £1,204.29.

19. **Report on the Parish/Neighbourhood Plan delivered by Cllr Such**

Most of you will be aware that Central Government is imposing requirements for housing development on District Councils and in response, Babergh is currently preparing its Joint Local Plan, that will include commitments in this respect, for the next three to five year period. To permit local councils to have some influence on this process Government has confirmed that its existing policy of allowing local communities to prepare their own planning policies and site allocations in the shape of neighbourhood plans, remains very much part of this process. Through the use of this tool local authorities can actually create policies themselves which have real power, because future planning applications and appeals will be assessed against them.

Although a much simpler process than producing a District Council planning document such as a Local Plan there are still formal processes that must be followed and evidence gathered to inform policies, and open consultation undertaken if the plan is to be accepted. This of course will require investment of time and money. But never-the-less, this forum is designed to allow those who actively engage in the neighbourhood planning process to pool experiences, thoughts and ideas with the very real prospect that they will be able to influence future decisions. Stratford St Mary Parish Council has been considering whether or not to invest in this process for some months now and is in the course of preparing proposals for a programme of work that, if initiated, will culminate in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. We are not able to be precise as to the likely timing for this, at this meeting, but do please look out for further information in the near future, or, if you would particularly like to get involved, do please let the council know, so that we can make a particular point of keeping you informed. I will be pleased to take names and contact details at the end of this meeting

20. **Report on Suffolk Accident & Rescue Service read out by Cllr Davies**

UPDATE ON SARS ACTIVITY

Call-outs

During the last 12 months, SARS volunteer doctors and paramedics responded to more than 300 call outs requesting specialist medical assistance for patients before they reached hospital.

We have attended incidents during the course of the last 12 months in the locality of your parish - 35 mobilisations in our region for December by 24th – and we continue to remain very active in the area.

SARS specialist volunteers are mobilized to a wide variety of serious medical incidents but responding to serious road traffic collisions and to patients suffering cardiac arrests remain common call-outs.

In 25% of the incidents attended by SARS responders we were the first medical resource on scene. Speed of response is vital in life-threatening situations and this illustrates the value of a local volunteer network with an expertise in emergency medicine.

It is a testament to the commitment of our clinicians that they continue to give their time and expertise without charge to the patient, the ambulance service or the tax payer.

Preventive work and best practice

Apart from our direct activity, we continue to focus on preventative initiatives. It is unfortunate that the number of people willing to give bystander CPR in the UK remains way below areas such as Scandinavia and the USA. SARS is mobilized, on average, to at least one patient in cardiac arrest a week.

Therefore, we are keen to raise awareness of how important this basic life-saving skill can be in reducing the level of fatal cardiac arrests in our local communities. We regularly demonstrate CPR at events we attend and we also undertake ad-hoc sessions with local schools and other groups. The aim is to demonstrate that anyone can learn this skill and help save a life!

We also collaborate on road safety projects to try and reduce the numbers of people being killed on our roads. This includes working with Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service and again talking to young people. As with everything else we do, these sessions are conducted free of charge and in our volunteers' spare time.

Why do we need your support?

SARS receives no central government funding and we rely on voluntary grants and donations to help maintain our life-saving activity. Your donation will help fund vital equipment and training for our volunteer doctors and paramedics. One

of the key aspects of our voluntary resource is that our specialist responders carry equipment and drugs which are not available on front-line ambulances. Since the beginning of last year SARS has spent nearly £85,000 on equipment and training. This includes purchasing a second rapid response vehicle for SARS teams, replacing specialist drugs, buying new personal protective equipment, undertaking major incident training courses, updating monitoring equipment and pioneering specialist kit to help patients with life-threatening respiratory conditions.

This equipment combined with a SARS specialist's additional skills and experience means that our volunteers remain able to make interventions at the scene of an incident which wouldn't normally be possible outside the hospital environment.

Our local responders include some of the most highly skilled prehospital clinicians in the region and the benefit they can bring to an incident scene continues to save lives, reduce the chances of patients suffering permanent disability and facilitate patient's speedy transfer to hospital.

Over the next 12 months, we want to purchase more life-saving equipment and continue to upgrade and replace the equipment and drugs which are used by our responders, on a day-to-day basis, as they help treat patients in need within their local community. We are also continuing to bring new clinical volunteers into the charity who need specific training in the prehospital environment we work in.

We cannot make investments in our volunteers without the support of all sectors of the local community including our local councils. Grants from this sector make an important difference for a small charity like SARS which doesn't outsource fundraising to professional companies and doesn't employ teams of fundraising staff.

The voluntary commitment given by our doctors and paramedics equates to thousands of pounds in time and expertise. They give up their time because they live locally and are passionate about providing additional pre-hospital care for people in need. There will always be patients who will benefit from the enhanced medical care that a SARS volunteer can provide and we want to help as many of them as possible.

Thank you for your support for Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

If you would like some more information about SARS please visit our website www.sars999.org.uk or facebook page (Suffolk Accident Rescue Service).

You can also download our annual report at the charity commission site www.charitycommission.gov.uk – charity number 1168764.

21. **Parishioners Questions and Answers.**

Cllr Davies asked the members of the public present if they had any questions.

Q: The approach road to the A12 heading towards Ipswich is very short and dangerous; can anything be done about this?

A: Cllr Jones said that the transport minister had already visited the whole area last year in particular the 4 sister's junction. There is nothing in place on Highways England forward plans to deal with this issue and all the slip roads are inadequate along this stretch of road.

Q: Potholes?

A: Cllr Davies reported that he would produce a list of all the potholes in the village currently and arrange to get these reported.

Close of Meeting

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.16pm. Refreshments followed.