

EDWARDSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting at Edwardstone Parish Hall held on
Monday 17 May 2021 at 7.00 pm.**

**Present: (Edwardstone PC) P Baker, D Williams, S Norman, M Gibson
J Finch (Suffolk County Council), H Phillips (Boxford Playing Fields Management
Committee. R Jones (Minutes)**

1. Welcome by the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed all present and thanked them for attending.

2. Report from Suffolk County Council

Councillor James Finch provided a report on behalf of SCC, a copy of which is attached.

3. Report from Babergh District Council

Councillor Bryn Hurren was unable to attend and provided a report, a copy of which is attached.

4. Reports from local Organisations

Boxford Playing Fields Management Committee - Hugh Phillips reported the following:

The pavilion had been refurbished through a mixture of grant funding and existing resources. Hedgerows had been cut back pre-covid but all work had been stopped due to the pandemic. Grant funding had been sought for a new refurbishment programme to include the following:

- Health and Safety repairs to include new steel fencing (£7,000)
- New drainage, grading and pot-hole filling to Car Park
- Repairs to Tennis Courts
- Erection of a Field Shelter for young people to 'hang out' in
- Car Park extension, hopefully through section 106 funding

Also setting up a 'sinking fund' to help with the cost of future works.

5. Financial Report

Richard Jones reported the following on behalf of Edwardstone PC:

At the start of the financial year the Council had £7,252.39 in its bank accounts, and at the end it had £7,137.16.

This was made up of £4,606.84 in the Current Account and £2,530.32 in the Savings Account.

The precept received from Babergh District Council was set at £5,995 which kept the cost to a band D property the same as in 2019/21.

The Council continued to support local groups and made donations totalling £1,950.00 to such organisations throughout the year.

A copy of the end of year audited accounts can be viewed on the Council's website

6. Chairman's Report

Phil Baker thank Parish Council members for their support throughout a difficult year, in, having to conduct meetings via telephone conference calls. The Council had continued to assess Planning Applications in a fair and balanced way, always keeping in mind the unique nature of the Parish. To assist with future planning discussions, the Council had agreed, following consultation with

parishioners, to produce its own Neighbourhood Plan, which will give the community a say in future development in the Parish.

The Council had agreed to assume responsibility for footpath grass cutting and had appointed a contractor to carry out this work on the Council's behalf. In addition to this, a footpath leaflet was being jointly produced with neighbouring parishes to help and encourage visitors to use the area's footpaths.

The Year of COVID 19

The year has been dominated for all of us at National and local level by pulling together to overcome the unprecedented incident of Coronavirus throughout the year. The County Council with the Suffolk fire Service reacted from the very beginning back in March 2020 in many ways to the National guidance given by the Ministry of Health and the NHS. These are just some examples of actions taken by the Council:

- Immediate response supplying the elderly and vulnerable with food packs so that they were well fed and nobody suffered because of the 1st lock down and were unable to visit the shops.
- The collection and dissemination of local data and advice to guide the local policy for best practice control.
- The organisation of Home Schooling with the local authority in maintained schools
- The introduction of "Home but not Alone" free phone line for the lonely. Support Lines for those with Financial Worries.
- The follow up to Test and Trace and now recently totally co-ordinated at the local level since March 2021.
- Local co-ordination of the Vaccination programme with Clinical Commissioning Groups via the Director of Public Health – Stuart Keeble.

There will be lots of lessons learnt for this last year and no doubt our future modus operandi both in work and leisure will be different in the future.

We should all thank each other for the collaboration that has been achieved. My belief is that there is "always good that comes out of bad".



Resurfacing of 25% of the Suffolk Highway

On 5th August it was announced that Suffolk Highways completed its 1000th resurfaced mile following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network. In 2017 Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a four year period in a bid to improve the quality of roads and reduce the number of potholes. There is still more to do.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

In September it was announced that 100 fast charging points for electric vehicles were to be built in rural parts of the county. The council have reached out to interested parish and town councils and non-profit organisations to put in fast chargers where there are currently none. The funding will cover the installation and set-up costs, meaning very little expense for the hosts and possibly creating a source of income for them. The uptake has been good.



Fostering and Adopting in Suffolk

In October the Council launched Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England. Adopt East will work

across local authorities to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. The target has also been doubled for increasing number of new foster parents from 30 to 60 for 2021/22 as a result of the predicted extra numbers required following the Pandemic.

Choice of Schools for September 2021

On National Offer Day 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place at one of the schools preferred by their parents. Suffolk County Council received 7,602 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2020. Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.



Suffolk' Response to the Climate Emergency

In response to its declaration of a climate emergency, SCC aims to lead the way with an unparalleled range of activities and policy changes to support its ambition of being a 'net zero' authority by 2030. The council's cabinet reviewed and agreed an extensive programme of recommendations to achieve this ambition including dozens of changes and new ways of working. Being 'net zero' means the council will remove its carbon emissions where it can; if it is unable to do so, it will compensate for those emissions



Investment in Suffolk's Natural Environment

The County Council will be investing in tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife. £228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.



Suffolk Archives New Home “The Hold” Welcomes First visitors in 2020

Monday 28 September saw the public able to access The Hold, Suffolk's flagship new heritage facility on Ipswich Waterfront. This versatile new building will be the permanent home of the Suffolk Archives Ipswich branch and is shared with the University of Suffolk, who have dedicated teaching spaces within the building. The creation of The Hold, and its associated countywide programme of events and activities, has been made possible thanks to a grant of £10.3m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and further funding support from other national organisations and local Suffolk heritage groups.



Better Broadband for Suffolk reaches 100,000th customer as the 3rd phase contract is agreed with the UK Government.

By June 3, more than 100,000 households across Suffolk were using faster broadband, thanks to the council-led Better Broadband for Suffolk programme. The partnership - between Suffolk County Council, Openreach, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the New Anglia Local Enterprise

Partnership (NALEP) and local councils – has made faster broadband available to around 150,000 premises so far, since being launched in 2010. It means the current total superfast broadband coverage in Suffolk now stands at more than 98 per cent coverage. The team has plans to go even further, after today announcing an additional phase of work, to provide connectivity to approximately 5,000 more premises, including over 550 businesses, in some of the most rural parts of Suffolk under Phase 3.

Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative.

Suffolk County Council (SCC), working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, has secured £3+M of funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within buildings used to provide frontline public services. Working with Concertus, the council has been preparing a range of packages to support the decarbonising of various buildings in the Council's estate including applications for the council's headquarters at Endeavour House in Ipswich, four rural fire stations, Beacon House, Waterloo Centre and Leiston Children's Centre. All this is to help reduce the County Council's running costs for the future.

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County Council Elections – 6th May

I am honoured to have been elected as your County Councillor for a 4th term. May I thank Edwardstone residents for the confidence they have shown in me for the next 4 years. As before I am here to represent everyone who live in the Stour Valley Division at the County Council and will continue to do so to the best of my ability.

James Finch, County Councillor for The Stour Valley Division

Babergh Annual Report for Edwardstone APM.

By Cllr Bryn Hurren. May 21.

This year for most of us has been a year like no other for all the wrong reasons.

Having said that it has also been a year where Babergh as a small local District Council has shown a distinct willingness to support their electorate and businesses to the very best of its ability. We have made sure that all who were entitled to business interruption grants and rate relief have received the best and the most that we were able to give them.

Also, as landlord to close on 4,000 tenants the Babergh mid Suffolk housing teams have been there to advise and help those that have been shielding, alone, short of supplies and in debt to make ends meet at crucial times, while always trying to see that bills were paid both for rent and other critical utilities before due deadlines.

One thing that soon became apparent was that the much-criticized universal credit system was not suitable for quick fixes and parachute payments as it is cumbersome and slow to administer and bring help and at times it seemed it was designed to be just that.

As a long-time serving Councillor it has been good to see staff at all levels continue in their posts even when distant from colleagues and other team members but there has been a toll I feel, on some of the younger members of staff who have lacked guidance and the mentoring that normally would come from an office environment. For myself I have put in all the effort that I have been able to summon in pursuit of my elected duties and as joint chair of the Audit and Standards Committee it has fallen to myself to see that money allocated has gone in the direction and cause that it should.

The death rate from Coronavirus in Babergh has been amongst the lowest in the whole country but still tragic to know that close to 260 souls in the Babergh District have lost their lives to this virus. I was especially saddened to lose a close friend in

Eddie Kench who has always been a support and a source of comfort to me especially when writing items for the BRN. If you feel it, write it, was his constant advice and the more controversial the better. I spent time in his house fitting and fixing ramps and steps so that he could push his wife Janet around in the new wheelchair just before I heard that he had become ill and still wish that I had spent more time with him before rushing away to do the next job.

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Thankfully at the last district election the public voted to have a council of No Political control which has made it essential that we all work together and for the minority groups to contribute and get on with the work we were elected to do, without a ruling political group going off on vanity trips and chasing political white elephants or even blue ones.

Although planning and heritage issues are still our achillies heel I do feel that all other departments and functions have performed well. With the huge environmental challenges that we all face being tackled despite not really much leadership from the government we have implemented our own climate emergency and have used CIL monies to start a program of converting our fleet of vehicles to bio diesel fuel and a move to electric rechargeable vehicles for fleet cars. We will also make a start on tree planting and biodiversity on land that we own or on host land for those willing to take part. It is also hoped to switch our investments in bonds that are associated with fossil fuels to more green and environmentally friendly alternatives.

We also try to keep people safe with our food inspections for hygiene and safe working methods and the score on the door system of grading has served us well for restaurants, shops and eateries of all sorts. While one recent case has hit the headlines, it should be remembered that thousands of inspections take place every year to keep us all safe.

Plans are also in place to enact a decision to take back our public realm function in house, this hopefully will mean better control of work and hopefully more work carried out with less taxpayers money. I hope that we will then have access to a scraper for our road cleaning duties which will mean that we will no longer have to wait for County Highways to get the mud off the roads before we can effectively sweep them. Hopefully this will mean we do not have a repeat of the stand-offs that occurred this past winter.

Locally I have done my very best to be here for you whenever needed and have always tried to throw my weight behind you, which it certainly has been on a few occasions this past year. I look forward to expanding on this report and answering your questions when we meet on Monday evening.

Thank you to our clerk, councillors and all residents of Edwardstone
I look forward to continuing to work together for the next two years.

Bryn Hurren.

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