

Tuddenham St Martin's Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2023 commencing at 7pm at the village hall.

Present: Mr W Pipe, Mr D Lugo, Mrs J Ellinor, Mr H Brightwell, Mrs K Lindsay, Ms P Procter, Mr J Bird, Mr C Hedgley and Mr D Clery (District Councillors), Cllr E Bryce (County Councillor) and Mrs C Frost. 1 member of the public arrived during the meeting.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome and Apologies.** Apologies were received from Mr Blake (Parish Councillor), Mr Frost (Chair of Village Hall Committee) and Mrs Pipe (St Martins PCC). The Chairman welcomed every one present to the meeting, with special welcomes and congratulations to Mr Hedgley and Mr Clery following the recent District Council elections, and Mrs Lindsay on joining the Parish Council. Apologies were additionally received from Cllr Hedgley and Cllr Bryce as they would need to leave early in order to attend a neighbouring Parish Council meeting. It was unanimously approved to move the order of items to facilitate attendance.
- 2. Minutes of Meeting held on 3rd May 2022.** These were approved and signed.
- 3. Matters arising.** There were none.
- 4. Chairman's Report.** This was moved to later in the meeting.
- 5. Report of County Council and District Council Representatives**

The County Council and District Council reports had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. Copies of both are available to view on the Parish Council website www.tuddenhamstmartin.onesuffolk.net

Cllr Bryce presented her report and added that she had not been around as much as had wanted but was now back at work and looking forward to working with the Parish Council. A very recent village traffic concern had been raised with Cllr Bryce before the meeting and this was being taken up with the Highways Dept. Highlighted topics from Cllr Bryce's report were:

- £35,000 of funding announced by Suffolk County Council (SCC) to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.
- Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years. The target of 200,000 trees for Suffolk has now been surpassed.
- Suffolk will benefit from nearly £200m of investment to mitigate the impact on communities, the environment and infrastructure associated with the Sizewell C development.
- The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) scheme pilot has been extended for a longer period.
- SCC had agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND. Cllr Bryce is the Chair of the County Council Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Bryce expressed thanks for the support while away and invited questions.

Ms Procter reported that the outstanding speed roundels had not been installed, although the County Council report had stated they had. There had also been a road blockage issue reported due to the size of the traffic using the limited width village highway (bus and general traffic in one direction and a farm vehicle followed by general traffic in the other direction). There was a discussion about road blockages in the village and that possible priority signage was needed to address driver behaviour. Cllr Bryce and Ms Procter would liaise after the meeting to arrange a joint site meeting with the Highways Dept. to consider resolutions.

In answer to questions from Mr Brightwell, Cllr Bryce explained the procedure if a registration number was captured on ANPR, and that SCC are in discussion at the moment about devolution deal for the County. Nothing concrete had been decided and there would be a consultation if for instance, there was a mayor proposal for the County. A discussion followed about the benefits and drawbacks of the appointment of a Mayor for Suffolk.

Mr Hedgley was pleased to have successfully been re-elected and introduced Dan Clery, the new District Councillor. Mr Hedgley presented his report and highlighted some of the topics included. These were:

- The past year had been one of recovery from the pandemic and then a 'cost of living crisis'.
- District Councillors had contributed £1,000 from their budgets and the combined fund had helped with 500 referrals associated with the cost-of-living crisis.
- The government instructed local Councils not to raise Council Tax by more than 5%. ESC has set the increase at 2.8% for 2023/24.
- ESC approved a budget of over £30million to fund essential services in 2023/24.
- Voter ID was a requirement introduced at the recent elections and Cllr Hedgley welcomed experiences and opinions as to how well this worked on an individual basis.

In reply to this, a Parish Councillor commented that the voter ID requirement had resulted in some people not voting and could not see a reason for the new ID requirement.

Mr Hedgley welcomed the Parish Council to get in touch to help resolve District Council issues.

Mr Hedgley was pleased that funding from his Enabling Communities Budget (ECB) was helping with the village garden project at the playing field. Mrs Ellinor reported that an article about the completion of Phase 1 of the project, including the funding from the ECB, would be in the Grundisburgh News.

In reply to other questions, Mr Hedgley reported that each District Councillor is allocated funding for the ECB grants. The Carlford & Fynn Valley ward have 2 District Councillors and so the combined amount is allocated to the villages in the ward. Also, that the allocation of £1,000 from each District Councillor ECB fund towards a Cost-of-living fund is being reviewed.

A Parish Councillor commented that County and District Council services, including for instance pot hole repairs, had reduced due to both councils keeping Council Tax increases low, and that tax rises should be kept to a level that provided the needed services. A short discussion followed. Mrs Ellinor reported that regarding pot hole repairs, she found the County Council Highway reporting tool useful. This was an easy-to-use service and provided feedback from the Highways Dept. about the actions being taken to resolve highway issues reported. The Highways reporting tool is available via <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Mr Dan Clery introduced himself. Mr Clery reported that following the recent elections, the Green Party was the largest party in the district but was not a majority. A coalition between the Green and Liberal Democrat parties had just been agreed to form a cabinet. The new full Council meeting was due to be held next week. Mr Clery had lived in the local area for 18 years and was looking forward to representing the village and ward.

Cllr Bryce and Cllr Hedgley gave their apologies and left the meeting.

4. Chairman's Report Deferred from earlier - The report from the Chairman had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. It was as follows:

The highlight of the past year has to be the introduction of new play equipment and the raised garden in the playground. This initiative has been achieved thanks to fellow Councillors David Lugo and Jim Bird assisted by various other members of the community including Sandy Burn and Cathy Watson. Thanks to their efforts the installation of the equipment and garden were achieved at very little additional cost above that of the equipment and materials. David and Jim were also responsible for clearing the brambles and undergrowth to reclaim back an additional area to grass, and maintaining the original playground equipment. A local resident who had also helped gave a seat which has been placed beside the football area. This goes to show how our village community spirit can achieve benefits through the efforts of volunteers. It would be remiss of me not to mention the jubilee celebrations last summer, and of course the coronation celebrations very recently with around seventy people joining in for the barbecue and games, and of course a good social get-together.

Highways matters as usual come under the spotlight at every meeting. Unfortunately, parking issues are a continuing headache, and I fear always will be. SAVID and Speedwatch are ongoing thanks to Pauline Procter, but with more volunteers always needed to man the speed monitoring device. The 'Quiet Lanes' initiative for Westerfield Lane is still in the pipeline as I understand it, but I personally doubt it will make any difference to the traffic speeds. I can also report that the street lights have all been changed to LED's, giving long term savings both in electrical costs and maintenance charges, plus of course a reduction in our carbon footprint.

We continue to support the village hall committee with a contribution towards ongoing upkeep and maintenance of this valuable community facility. We also continue to provide funding to the church as a contribution to the maintenance of the churchyard, and in addition, make small donations to the Air Ambulance and Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

Following the successful installation of the swift boxes on houses in the village and the church last year we look forward in the hope that some of the boxes will be occupied this year.

Our contact with the local police through the Safer Neighbourhood Team continues thanks to the involvement of Holly Hollier who, although no longer a Parish Councillor, has agreed to continue as our contact for which we thank her.

Planning has proved rather contentious this year with the application for twenty five houses off Keightley Way. In view of my personal interest in this application, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on this.

Once again after careful consideration, we have agreed to keep the precept at £6,200 for the 2023/24 year. This has remained unaltered for several years and in view of the ongoing economic situation, hopefully will be appreciated.

Following the elections this year and with Holly Hollier standing down, I am pleased to welcome Kate Lindsay as her successor, and thank Holly for her contribution to proceedings. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of our District Councillor Colin Hedgley. It is very easy to overlook the one person who is responsible for running the Parish Council and keeping us all in line, namely our parish clerk Carol Frost. A very efficient and long-suffering person who just gets on with it in her quiet way. A very big thankyou Carol from us all. One other member who deserves a special mention is Jean Ellinor, who gets involved and also ensures that our villagers know what is going on with her facebook and email circulation (both of which are independent of the Parish Council). Thank you, Jean. And finally, to my fellow Councillors, thank you for your continuing support and contributions to the village community.

6. Presentation of Accounts to 31st March 2023. The Clerk presented the Accounts for the year ending March 2023. These would go forward to the meeting of the Parish Council.

7. Report from the Village Hall Committee. The report had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting and was as follows:

Here is my report for the Annual Parish meeting, an update to the report I gave in December 2022.

The hall continues to run well despite the loss of two regular bookings. The Bowls Club no longer take a regular Monday evening slot and the line dancers have been unable to take their regular Friday slot due to ill health, although we hope they may return in the summer. Happily, the Monday evening slot has now been taken by a local band who use the hall for rehearsals, and a new Friday morning session has started: a sensory class for babies and toddlers, which seems to be popular. We have also had interest from an NHS training agency who have made several bookings for 2-day training sessions.

Despite the healthy bookings, our costs continue to rise and the donation of £500 from the Parish Council is most welcome. A recent fire inspection highlighted that we needed to provide some emergency lighting in the disabled toilet and we are proceeding with the installation of this and other ongoing repairs.

We had a couple of incidences of fly tipping earlier in the year, but none since we put up a CCTV warning sign. We are organising a Village Hall cleaning day for later in the year.

The village hall remains a key asset for the parish, and all the support that the Council, the committee and other villagers give is much appreciated.

8. Report from Parochial Church Council. The report had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting and was as follows:

As the threat of Covid gradually receded we were able to get back to our usual pattern of weekly services which was a relief for our regular congregation. However, we continued with the outdoor services on Church Hill for Remembrance Sunday and around Christmas as these had proved very popular. The lit Christmas tree and crib on Church Hill have equally been enjoyed.

Floodlighting the church on a regular basis continues, and has proven to be a beacon of hope for those experiencing difficult times. An opportunity for published sponsorship by villagers has helped offset the higher electricity costs of doing this. The floodlit church is much admired by those driving through the village on dark evenings as well as those out and about on foot.

The fabric and churchyard are in generally good order. Andrew Offord continues to cut the grass and hedges in the churchyard, and volunteers continue to undertake additional tasks which help maintain the appearance of the churchyard. This year we have had to use tree surgeons to take down some dead elms which were endangering the cottages adjacent to the churchyard and further work may be required in the area overlooking the road. The ongoing financial support given by the Parish Council for this maintenance work continues to be very helpful and much appreciated. Our churchyard is very much alive, especially at festival times, where it is a delight to see it enjoyed by relatives tending graves and also the many walkers who pass through.

Following last year's installation of swift boxes in the belfry we are looking forward to this year's nesting season in the hope that they will be occupied.

During the winter a group of 9 villagers came together to learn how to bell-ring with help from the Suffolk Guild of Ringers. We are all looking forward to hearing the bells ring to celebrate the King's Coronation!

The Electoral Roll currently stands at 29 members. Our vicar, Charlotte Cook, was delighted to have 4 village Baptisms during the year, and the time and care she took with the families involved was much appreciated. On Thursday mornings at 9.30am there is a half-hour slot for 'readings, discussion and prayers' which is open to everyone.

Our normal fund-raising and social events were held last year and we are all so grateful for all the support we receive from the village. Particularly special are the stalls on Church Hill which provide an opportunity for contact and community spirit which are such a key part to life here in Tuddenham St Martin.

Monica Pipe & Jim Bird Churchwardens.

9. Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting. 7th May 2024.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Mrs C Frost
Parish Clerk. Tuddenham St Martin