

## MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Council Meeting was held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Church Fields, Monks Eleigh. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mrs Jacqueline Clarke took the Chair for the meeting and welcomed the following Parish Councillors: P. Derry, D. Reynolds, A. Forrest, P. Day, A. Keitley-Webb; as well as Mrs J. Antill, County Councillor; Mr C. Arthey, District Councillor; PC Rob Sippit, Safer Neighbourhoods Team; Ms N. Smith, Clerk to the Council; and 14 members of the village to the meeting.

*In accordance with the changes in legislation, the public and councillors were permitted to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of the meeting. The full wording is available from the Parish Clerk, on request.*

1. **Apologies for absence** – no apologies for absence.
2. **Minutes of the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016** –these were agreed by all eligible to vote as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman as such.

**3. District Councillor – Mr Clive Arthey**

District Councillor, Mr Clive Arthey was invited to present his report – a full copy of which can be seen at *Appendix A*.

Following his report Parishioners thanked District Cllr Clive Arthey for his hard work particularly in relation to recycling.

**4. County Councillor – Mrs Jenny Antill**

County Councillor, Mrs Jenny Antill was invited to present her report – a full copy of which can be seen at *Appendix B*.

Chairman thanked County Councillor Jenny Antill for her work as a County Councillor since 2013 and wished her well in her retirement from the role.

**5. Police Report – PC Rob Sippitt, Safer Neighbourhoods Team.**

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team have not for some time had the resources to regularly attend Parish Council Meetings, but it is the aim to try to attend at least one Meeting per year.

Signed.....

Dated.....

PC Sippitt advised that he had consulted the data for reported crimes in Monks Eleigh since March 2016 and there were two reported crimes as follows:

June 2016 – a public order offence (driver of a vehicle);

September 2016 – attempted theft of the charity box from the Church.

PC Sippitt advised that generally there remains trends for thefts from gardens sheds and some household burglaries but they tend to take place in larger towns or in villages located very near to accessible routes (larger roads so that the vehicle can get away quickly as opposed to dealing with winding village roads). However, if you see or suspect anything suspicious then you should contact the Police immediately.

PC Sippitt invited commented/questions. Following discussion with parishioners it was noted that it can be difficult to speak to a member of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team if you attend the Police Station. PC Sippitt advised that because of changes in how Suffolk Police operate there is no “counter service” at Sudbury and that the nearest Police Station that you can walk into and ask to speak to an Officer is Bury St Edmunds or Ipswich. Parishioners also reported that if they have rung the 101 number to speak to a member of the SNT, then often no one answers the telephone. Again PC Sippitt indicated that this had been raised at another parish and he would feed this back to his superior. In the meantime PC Sippitt advised that if the matter was not immediately urgent or life threatening (in which case you should dial 999) then the best way to contact the SNT was via email at [sudbury.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sudbury.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk)

Chairman thanked PC Sippitt for his time in attending the Meeting that evening.

## **6. Chairman of the Parish Council – Mrs Jacqueline Clarke**

I welcome you all to the second Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Council that was elected in May 2015 to serve from May 2015 to May 2019. Our first APM was on 21 March last year.

The Parish Council has had another extremely busy Council year. Since last year's APM we have held 6 meetings planned at the beginning of the Council year (7 including this one), and 4 additional meetings (two of those in April 2016). This follows the pattern set in 2015. It is far from ideal. This Parish traditionally has had six meetings a year, and for the size of the Parish that should be possible. I trust that it will be again in time.

Signed.....

Dated.....

## CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

We started the Parish Council year in May 2016. As you know, I am sure, we had one Councillor who was appointed to the Parish Council in the May 2015 election who resigned immediately prior to an Additional Parish Council meeting on 16 August 2016. We have been working since with six Councillors.

## OVERVIEW

To give you an overview of some of the work the Parish Council has carried out on your behalf this year:

- We made a discretionary Village Award early in the Parish Council year to Mandy Coll for her long standing services to the village and villagers;
- We granted consent to the VHT/CIO to commence entrance works at the Recreation Ground;
- We have considered and dealt with several parking issues which have been brought to our attention over the year, so far as the Parish Council has the remit to do that. Some of these continue with regards to the Greens in the village and are ongoing. I refer to these below. *They are quite time consuming and controversial in the village so if people could take care when parking to observe the Highway Code that would be appreciated;*
- The PC and the Clerk in particular have continued to chase and liaise with both SCC Highways Department and the parish with whom it will share the speed indicator device for the installation of the SID (speed indicator device) . Posts are now up and an agreement that the Clerk has drafted is with Whatfield Parish Council for its approval. Subject to that we should be able to proceed to buy the device. It has been a long project to bring to fruition;
- We have reviewed Standing Orders, Grass Cutting Contract and the updating of the Emergency Plan which we are still working on.
- We have dealt with further approaches to us concerning a property in Back Lane;
- We have continued with reporting of various highways issues which resulted in the resurfacing of the main road, you may remember, one hot weekend last summer;
- We have organised and taken part in another successful litter pick. 16 villagers in total turned out to help on Saturday 11 March and I believe a few others undertook to clean up certain areas around them a day or so either side of that day;
- Also recently the PC has taken back day to day control of the allotments, previously organised for it very generously by Jacques Forrest. The allotment agreement has been reviewed in the last couple of weeks and there are allotments to let (as allotments to villagers in accordance with the statutory duties of Parish Councils)should anyone here like one. Rent is £15 a year.

## Planning

Throughout the year we have also been consulted on 15 planning matters within the Parish . That included the outline application for the Old School Site, and SCC arranged its own public consultation in advance of making the application as suggested by the PC.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The Parish Council has made comments on a number of these applications and indicated its approval on others.

### Parking

I alluded above to work done to address concerns about parking in the village. A number of concerns have been raised with us by various villagers over the year. I was reminded when I re read last year's report that the Church Hill/Street junction was already a concern this time last year. Other concerns raised by parishioners relate to parking on and into the side of The Green, and parking on Swingleton Green, and parking on the road by a vehicle at an inappropriate and dangerous place.

Obviously, this village was not built with the motor vehicle in mind, and villages like this often suffer from a lack of suitable parking places. There is only so much a Parish Council can do as highways matters are largely under the governance of the Highways Departments of County Councils, and in addition Parish Councils have limited funds and resources. However much this Parish Council might like to supply a free car park to villagers it is not in the position to do so. Most of us have cars and know both the frustration of arriving somewhere and not being able to park and reverse of that- the frustration caused when someone parks inappropriately on "our turf". There are now signs on the picket fence at the bottom of Church Hill asking people not to block the junction with The Street, and I have noticed today a sign that Cllr Reynolds has organised and placed on The Green itself. We have yet to finalise what signs or other measures might be needed for Swingleton Green for example. Perhaps I could ask you all though, please, to urge your visitors to park sensibly in this village and to consider road safety and others' interests.

### Challenges

In last year's report I had a section headed "Changes of personnel and challenges". I have dealt with changes in personnel above, briefly. I need a section for challenges in this report too. Obviously, any Parish Council faces challenges from time to time. Without challenges in a Parish there would be no need for a Parish Council, perhaps. Just by virtue of sitting on the Parish Council brings home to any new Councillor, how difficult it can be sometimes dealing with issues that to some parishioners are a nonsense and to others are of paramount importance. Opposing views in any society can be challenging to deal with and the Parish Council and its members are acutely aware of that. We are very conscious of the need to deal with matters objectively and appropriately, but we are always, sadly, aware that whatever we decide there is the likelihood that we will not please everyone.

As those of you who read agendas and minutes know, of the 11 meetings that have taken place during the course of the last year, 7 of those have had an in camera section.

I know that this has caused some concern and adverse comment in the village. I would like to take this opportunity to say to you all that no-one on the Parish Council has a wish to be part of a secret society nor to treat the Parish Council as one. Nor do we deal with things- or place things in camera lightly. The matters that we consider suitable for in camera discussion are mentioned on the agenda and we consider very seriously our resolutions to deal with those matters in camera. The Councillors making up the Council have been appointed to serve the community on the Parish Council. The Parish Council has met continued challenges from some quarters that the Parish Council has, in successive resolutions, considered can only be dealt with appropriately, properly and effectively and within the provisions of its Standing Orders, in camera. I would ask you to bear with the Parish Council on this and to

Signed.....

Dated.....

appreciate that all Councillors together making up the Parish Council take their duties very seriously and solemnly.

THANKS

As you may gather, from listening to this, and certainly if you are a regular attendee at meetings or reader of minutes, the Parish Council has had another very busy year. We have the benefit of an efficient, knowledgeable and helpful Clerk without whom this would not be possible. Nicola Smith has regularly exceeded the job advertised hours target of 6 hours a week, and the Parish Council has now extended that hours quota to 8 hours a week. That is to deal with the sort of business that has come our way since May 2015, it does not leave slack in the system. I thank Nicola on behalf of both the Parish Council, and the Parish itself, for her continued dedication and commitment to the tasks presented to her.

I also thank each of my fellow Councillors who bring their own energies, strengths and experience to the Council. There is not one Councillor sitting with me on this Council who does not lend valuable weight to the work that we are faced with and I appreciate their continued attendance at the plethora of meetings we have needed over the last two years.

On behalf of the Parish Council I thank both Cllr Antill, our County Councillor, and Clive Arthey, our District Councillor and to our Babergh SNT team for their continued efforts and interest in our village. Councillor Antill will be in post only until May of this year as she is not standing for election again. She has been County Councillor since May 2011 so has worked on many issues that have faced us in Monks Eleigh and I know that some of them have been very time consuming. I thank her for her drive and I wish her a peaceful retirement from local politics.

Cllr Clive Arthey is, of course, our long standing and well known District Councillor. I hope we can look forward to welcoming him to further meetings and hearing, especially, about how well we are doing in this area with recycling. I mean that most sincerely, a recent television report showed lamentable progress in some areas of the country.

Finally thank you to all of you for attending and listening to us.

Jacqueline Clarke

Chairman

**7. To receive information on the following:**

**i. Update on the Speed Indicator Device;**

The Clerk advised that Monks Eleigh and Whatfield Parish Councils (with whom we shall be sharing the device), now have their roadside posts in place so that the SID can be mounted on them. Monks Eleigh Parish Council have compiled and submitted a draft Agreement to Whatfield Parish Council about the purchase, ownership, use, maintenance, storage and insurance of the device. Whatfield Parish Council had that morning emailed the Clerk asking for clarification on some of the clauses and proposing an additional clause. It is anticipated that the two parishes will have an Agreement in place shortly and thereafter the device can be purchased.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The two parishes can then start to use the device. It is hoped that it will make drivers more aware of their speed as they drive through the village.

**ii. Update on the Parish Emergency Plan;**

The Clerk had brought along to the Meeting some Emergency Plan Questionnaires for anyone who had not yet got around to completing one. In addition the Clerk also had some information leaflets from UK Power Network with helpful information in it. Parishioners were encouraged to take one for themselves, and their neighbours. The deadline for returning the Questionnaire was 31<sup>st</sup> March and thereafter the Clerk would start to compile the information and liaise with Sue Herne, the Emergency Planning Officer at Suffolk County Council with regards to updating the existing Emergency Plan the village has in place. The Clerk aimed to have a final draft for approval by the Parish Council at the September 2017 Parish Council Meeting. Cllr Reynolds reminded people that whilst the Parish Council are going through an update of the plan, there remains telephone numbers on the website that parishioners can call in the event of an emergency event in the village. Cllr Reynolds being one of the people who could be contacted.

**iii. Update on the new Village Hall on the recreation ground;**

The Chairman invited Angela Forrest as the Chairman of the Village Hall Trust to provide an update. Mrs Forrest confirmed that the Land Registry had at long last granted title for the Village Hall as per the plans on the Village Hall site. This means that the sale of the site of the current Village Hall is proceeding. As soon as that is completed then the VHT/CIO can take up the lease on the Recreation Ground, and we can then instruct the builders to commence work.

Suffolk County Council have promised the VHT three things from the former school site, namely:-

- Solar panels - these need to be removed very carefully so as not to damage them, and then they will eventually need to be reinstalled by a person able to fit them correctly. However, the more immediate problem is that once they are removed they will need to be stored safely. Demolition of the former school building is scheduled for the August, so the panels will need

Signed.....

Dated.....

to come down before then and be stored until the new Village Hall is built. If anyone would be able to safely store the panels on behalf of the VHT then please contact Angela Forrest (contact details are on the village website);

- Pedestrian access – negotiations are continuing in this regard;
- A sum of money from the sale of the school site, the amount of which is yet to be determined.

Chairman, Cllr Clarke asked Cllr Forrest is she would be able to provide a quick update regarding the Millennium Green Trust. Cllr Forrest confirmed that on the 31<sup>st</sup> March the Millennium Green will have a visit from the Community Payback team. The Millennium Green continues to be looked after and used well.

## 8. Public Forum

Speed Watch – This Parish Council contributed to equipment namely high vis jackets (kept by volunteers), signs (still stored in parishioners garage) and radar gun. The radar gun is held somewhere else (location unknown). It had broken and had to be repaired, but the gentleman co-ordinating the repairs became unwell and the scheme just seemed to fall apart at that stage. In large part it was because the Speed Watch Team had contracted in size over time and could not attract new members. Those left felt they had contributed enough of their time and could not continue indefinitely without more volunteers coming forward. Could the Council look into possibly locating the radar gun, repairing it and restarting the Speed Watch? Some parishioners were keen to see the scheme up and running again, particularly at a time when the Village were looking to install the Speed Indicator Device. The Speed Watch scheme runs in conjunction with Suffolk Police and can prove successful in reducing speeding in the village. Other parishioners were concerned that people may volunteer to begin with but the scheme will fall by the wayside again like it did last time, due to a lack of volunteers eventually.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would contact Great Finborough, Hitcham and Bildeston Parish Council, and look into this matter and place it on the Agenda for the next Parish Council Meeting. The Chairman asked for it to be noted that in her view Speed Watch (if the Council decides to re-introduce it) could only be successful with a team drawn largely from outside of the Council members.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Parish Councillors could not be expected to add Speed Watch duties to their existing workload.

Hedges – On the road to Chelsworth by Cobbolds Mill the hedge has become so overgrown that cars are scraping by it. A number of parishioners had spoken to Cllr Reynolds about this. Discussion took place. County Cllr Jenny Antill confirmed that the usual rule is that the Highways Department is usually responsible for the first metre from the root, but thereafter the landowner is responsible and should be written to. If the landowner ignores the request by the Parish Council, then the Parish Council should write to SCC who will then write to the landowner. However, it was noted that at this time due to the personal circumstances of the owners of the property concerned it was not appropriate to write to them at this time. Clerk will email SCC to see if there is any other way that this matter could be dealt with. Clerk noted that there are specific times throughout the year that hedge cutting can take place. Generally it cannot be undertaken between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> September due to nesting birds. However, if there could be a possible plan in place for after 1<sup>st</sup> September it would be useful.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Appendix A

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MONKS ELEIGH.  
27th March 2017

Joint Working and Partnerships.

In order to achieve savings, the way local authorities in Suffolk operate to deliver services is changing. Across Suffolk councils are working together as pairs, groups and countywide partnerships to achieve savings and benefit the council tax payer. Babergh has already integrated with Mid Suffolk, and the two councils have a Joint Strategic Plan. We share revenue and benefits administration with Ipswich Borough Council out of Grafton House in Ipswich, and a Combined Legal Service has now been established, based in Bury St Edmunds, for Babergh, Mid Suffolk, St. Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils. There is a new, easier to use, website for Babergh and Mid Suffolk, and a new telephone number 0300 123 4000 for all council services.

Chief Executive.

Following the departure of Charlie Adan last summer, we appointed Arthur Charvonia as our new Joint Chief Executive. Arthur is enthusiastic and ambitious and I am confident he will bring a fresh and dynamic approach to the challenges facing the council.

Signed.....

Dated.....



#### Accommodation Review.

The issue of accommodation and headquarters buildings for Babergh and Mid Suffolk has finally been resolved, and in August Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils will be moving to the Suffolk County Council headquarters building, Endeavour House in Ipswich. I do have concerns, mainly regarding the lack of a proper plan for the future use of the Hadleigh buildings, and accessibility to offices in a town centre out of district. There will be 'Public Access Points', in Sudbury (BDC) and Stowmarket (MSDC), but as the council expects more and more to be done online it is essential rural areas have a good internet connection, and for those who do not, or cannot, use the internet, we should make sure our services are still easy to access and use.

#### Local Plan

Work continues on a new Joint Local Plan for the two councils. The plan must accommodate the government's household projections and will use evidence from the latest census and housing need surveys. The plan will seek to provide for appropriate and sustainable growth across the two districts to meet the identified housing, employment and community needs, and planning policies for the two councils will be aligned. Site submissions are being considered and Parish Councils will be advised of supported sites along with Local Plan consultation later this year.

#### Waste and Recycling.

Last Autumn the Suffolk Waste Partnership leafleted every household in Suffolk in a campaign to improve recycling and reduce contamination at the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at Great Blakenham. In 1999 the main driver for our original strategy was the reduction of household waste to landfill. 2016-17 second quarter figures showed our total diversion from landfill has now topped 3 million tonnes. That is 3 million tonnes recycled, and also, more recently, through the Energy from Waste plant, that would otherwise have been landfilled. In 1999-2000 we were diverting around 70,000t from landfill, but in 2015-16 it was 350,000t, with only around 1% now going to landfill.

#### Capital Investment Strategy.

I have told you before how the government's Revenue Support Grant has been reducing and councils have been relying on specific grants to support their budgets. Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk are now embarking on £25 million investment strategies to purchase land and buildings. The returns from these investments will provide a new income stream and reduce pressure on Council Tax. Whilst some councils, particularly Ipswich, have a history of significant capital investments, this is a shift to a more commercial approach for Babergh.

#### Devolution.

After a period of public consultation last summer, proposals were prepared for a Norfolk and Suffolk Combined Authority. They were supported by all Suffolk councils, but only two in Norfolk. It now seems unlikely the Government will support a scheme for Suffolk alone.

#### District Electoral Review.

Some wards, including North Cosford, are now outside the 10% variance for electoral equality. Firstly the review will establish the number of councillors for the district and arrive at a median number of electors per ward. Wards should then be within 10% of that figure to ensure electoral equality. It will involve changes to ward boundaries (not necessarily all), but should not split parishes. Whilst the reviews are separate, both Babergh and Mid Suffolk are being done at the same time. After considering a number of factors, including the upcoming change in governance arrangements to a 'cabinet' chosen by the leader, Babergh has asked for a reduction from 43 councillors down to 31. Following the Boundary Commission's confirmation of council size, the second stage looking at ward boundaries will start in May. There will be periods of public consultation on the warding proposals

Signed.....

Dated.....

before a final decision, and the new wards will be in place for the 2019 district elections.

Council Tax.

Increase of +3.4% in Babergh's element, Suffolk Police +2% and SCC +3%. Monks Eleigh PC has had a slight increase in precept, but with an increase in Tax Base the PC's element falls slightly. Band 'D' figures for Monks Eleigh are SCC £1183.50, Suffolk Police £176.85, BDC £153.86, MEPC £73.53.

Clive Arthey

Appendix B

County Councillor's Report to Monks Eleigh Annual Parish Meeting, Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017

This will be my last report to your Annual Meeting as your County Councillor since the Council comes to an end in early May.

Looking back over the past four years I wish that I had a more exciting record of achievement at the Council to report. Unfortunately however the very difficult financial circumstance in which all of local government finds itself has meant that the activities of the council have been necessarily limited. The main focus therefore has been on measures to cut costs while doing as little damage to council services as possible and on the whole I believe that this has been achieved.

Over the past four years our funding from Central Government has been reduced by £200m representing a large proportion of what was a gross budget of almost £1bn and a net budget of c. £600m. As we promised in 2013 the County Council's share of council tax has not gone up. We have however increased the County Council share of the council tax bill by 2% last year and 3% in 2017/18 to reflect the levy permitted by Central Government to support our Social Care activities.

Suffolk has a population which is ageing faster than many other parts of the country and this puts particular pressure on our Social Care budget. Thanks to investment in new care homes made prior to 2013, and a programme that changed the way that we deliver services to users, we have with one or two exceptions managed to continue to deliver adequate services to those in need who qualify. This has not been easy and there is need for further increases in resources in the years to come combined with improved co-operation with the National Health Service.

I think that it is fair to say that over the past two years the attention of the leaders of councils across Suffolk has been quite pointlessly distracted by the issue of Devolution. It was obvious as soon as the arrival of the new administration under Theresa May that this matter had fallen down the Government's agenda, and that only the most enthusiastic regions, which did not include Norfolk and Suffolk, would be pressing ahead with what was in any event a flawed initiative.

I would expect future changes in local government to be connected with the creation of unitary councils, which would to my mind be a good thing.

The Highways Department has been held back by problems relating to the contract that was signed four years ago now with Keir. It is clear that insufficient thought went into the design of these arrangements, and this is only now being sorted out. I will not dwell on highways apart from saying that demand for road repair and improvement, particularly in a dispersed county such as Suffolk, is infinite and it is almost impossible to satisfy the demands of everyone.

Signed.....

Dated.....

All has not been total doom and gloom however. Our Children's Services, both in the area of education and in looked after children have both shown an improving trend. Firstly, Suffolk's Children in Care services received a Good rating from Ofsted last year. Secondly, four years ago standards in Suffolk's Schools were very poor. Indeed one of my stated aims in my election material at the election in 2013 was to try to help to support improvements in educational attainment in the County. I have enjoyed being a member of the Schools Improvement Board which has had oversight of this process. Suffolk has gradually risen from the bottom of the league tables, and now stands at or slightly above average in most areas which is a good achievement. One area where we still need to make improvements is in the area of special needs children and the focus is now shifting towards this aim.

#### Monks Eleigh

It has been a great pleasure to represent Monks Eleigh over the past four years. It has not always been plain sailing. The closure of the school within a few months of my arrival was a sad event and I much regret that I was unable to achieve a different outcome. I did learn a lot from that experience which has stood me in good stead over the past two years with my work on the Schools improvement Board. The position of small rural schools in the county continues to be challenging, and one which has not been improved by the Government's current attempts to introduce fairer funding for schools.

I am pleased that at least the village will benefit from the proposed development of the school land through some contribution towards the new village hall in due course.

I would like to thank the Parish Council, and also Nicola Smith, for their kindness and reasonable and positive attitude over the past four years, and to wish all the residents of the parish the very best for the future.

Jenny Antill

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Signed.....

Dated.....