

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024 at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Alan Braithwaite (Chairman), Angela Forrest, James Hodges and Rupert Perry

Cllr Robert Lindsay (SCC)

District Cllr Bryn Hurren (BDC)

Attending: Lucinda Rogers (Clerk) and seven members of the public

90/23 Apologies for Absence

None

91/23 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

None declared

92/23 Minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

93/23 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Cllr Lindsay congratulated Cllr Braithwaite's successful bid for the Brett Valley Digi Bus. Highways have visited Mill Lane and now aim to raise its priority to get the work ordered. Highways work in Monks Eleigh – the village gates can be carried out by the parish council under license from Highways. Cllr Lindsay to send details to the Clerk. Hitcham are in the process and willing to give advice. There are no easy answers to the other matters raised on highways as there is no funding for work and they are not matters that would be recommended to carry out under Highways guidance. The Cllrs thanked Cllr Lindsay for his support including the contribution from his locality budget. Cllr Lindsay's full report is in appendix 2.

94/23 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Cllr Hurren explained that Babergh's budget is short by £1.8million and it has to balance so they will need to make cuts and raise funds. There are fewer planning applications at present and less new homes money coming in to the council. Babergh and Mid Suffolk may have to join together as one large district council which would save £1million. Babergh have built 128 affordable homes. The new Joint Local Plan is calling for new development sites to plan for the next 6-10 years. Cllr Hurren's full report is in appendix 3.

95/23 Public Forum

- Millenium Green Trust – This was raised under the precept agenda item. The trustees realise that the average age of MG's working parties is 76 and it is time to have help, twice a year at a cost of approximately £250 per event. To protect this important space in the village there is a need to guarantee the work will be carried out during the year, especially in the autumn. It was pointed out that if the trust folds, it becomes the responsibility of the parish council. Millenium Green is an important breathing space, picnic area and nature reserve for the

village. The work involves hedge trimming, tree safety, grass cutting and strimming. The mowing does not require support at this time but maintenance of the equipment is needed.

- Traffic & Pavements – The pavement width varies throughout the village and in some places is too narrow to even push a baby buggy. Could the road width be reduced and the pavement width increased. Cllr Lindsay explained that Highways have no money for projects and it would really need to greatly contribute to public safety so it is very difficult to get any changes made.
- Vehicles Parked on Pavements – is a problem as the remaining pavement area is too narrow for pedestrians, especially if the waste bins are out ready for collection. People have had to walk in the road due to this.

96/23 Planning Matters

- a. Babergh have granted planning application reference: DC/23/04304 Application Listed Building Consent - Replacement of broken tiles, battens, felt and roof rafters at Laurel Cottage, 12 Church Hill, Monks Eleigh
- b. Babergh does not wish to object to application DC/23/05587 Proposal: Notification of works to Trees in Conservation Area - Removal of N10 trees at High Bank House, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh
- c. DC/23/05312 Householder Application - Replacement of 7 No front windows and door at Highfield, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh
- d. Application for consent to carry out works to tree(S) protected by a Tree Preservation Order - DC/24/00304 Proposal: Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order WS317/A6 - Reduce 1 No. Pine (T1) by 40% Location: 1 Foysters Hall, Monks Eleigh

97/23 Finance

- a. The councillors approved the financial report and noted income received – see appendix 1.
- b. The councillors authorised payments from the RFO Report made since the last meeting and to be made.
- c. The councillors noted that the outlook for 23/24 is for a deficit of less than £4,000 as against a budget of £7,775. In setting the precept for the current year we planned to reduce reserves from their current levels and in expectation that there would be a big hike in the precept for 24/25 due to the 17 new houses. It now turns out that that increase in the tax base was factored into the calculator for the year. As a result, and in error, we kept the increase to parishioners down for the 23/24 year. Other factors influencing the out-turn included that we did not anticipate the grant for the play area which reduced play area maintenance costs considerably. And the costs for the streetlighting replacements were well down. So, against budget there has been a lot of change. See the table on the following page to get the overall picture.

Budget and precept - 24/25 The table following also shows the budget. It is designed to maintain services – there are no breakout schemes. The assumptions are noted in the margin. Setting the precept is difficult this year as the base has gone down by 2.9% vs last year due to the new houses not coming into occupation. That means we would need to ask parishioners for a 2.9% increase to stand still in terms of income. The proposal is that we increase the precept to

£21,500 which is a 2% increase in our budget but a 5% increase for parishioners. An increase at this level is in line with inflation. The option to increase to £22,000 would mean a rise of 7% which is optically high even though it is a few pence per week per household. Setting the precept at £21,500 means we will be planning for a deficit of £3,900 which is well within our reserves policy.

- d. The councillors agreed the Precept at £21,500 which was signed by the Chairman
- e. The councillors agreed the Clerks annual salary award of 3.88% from 1.4.2023
- f. The councillors agreed to appoint Heelis & Lodge as Internal Auditor
- g. The councillors reviewed and agreed the External Auditor report
- h. The councillors reviewed and agreed the Asset Register
- i. Online banking is now up and running and we are working through some teething issues. Clerk to check if the Standing Orders and Finance Regulations need updating due to online banking.

Item	2023/24		2024/25		Commentary
RECEIPTS	Budget	Forecast outcome	Budget first view		
Precept	£ 21,090.00	£ 21,090.00	£	21,500.00	2% increase but 5% to parishioners due to tax base
Allotments	£ -	£ -			Need to collect here
Polegate	£ 60.00	£ 30.00	£	30.00	
CIL	£ 30.00	£ 78,078.00			CIL receipts depend on sale of 17 homes
Grants and sales	£ -	£ 64.16			
Interest	£ 105.00	£ 80.00	£	150.00	
HMRC VAT Refund	£ 300.00	£ 19,055.49	£	600.00	Assumes VAT'able costs at £3,000
Total Receipts:	£ 21,585.00	£ 118,397.65	£	22,280.00	
EXPENDITURE:					
<i>Administration:</i>					
Clerks Salary	£ 6,600.00	£ 6,700.00	£	7,415.10	Clerks wages will rise 5%
Clerks Expenses	£ 450.00	£ 680.00	£	500.00	Printer purchase in last year
Training	£ 350.00	£ 222.00	£	250.00	
Subscriptions	£ 350.00	£ 344.24	£	350.00	
Website support	£ 60.00	£ 60.00	£	75.00	
Insurance	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,297.59	£	1,600.00	
Audit	£ 600.00	£ 472.00	£	550.00	
Village Hall Hire	£ 50.00	£ 40.00	£	50.00	
Planning and Legal	£ 500.00	£ -	£	500.00	
Newsletter/press releases	£ 100.00	£ 56.80	£	100.00	
Chairman's allowance	£ 150.00	£ 130.22	£	150.00	
<i>Environment:</i>					
Grass cutting	£ 1,750.00	£ 1,730.00	£	1,903.00	Increase by further 10%
Dog/litter bins	£ 550.00	£ 422.21	£	450.00	
Wooden Bridge repair	£ 700.00				
Street lights	£ 1,000.00	£ 2,206.09	£	1,500.00	LED Lower costs to run
Tree work at Swingleton	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,740.00			
Street light replacements	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,000.00	£	400.00	Contingency - should be completed
Strimming / hedge cutting	£ 500.00	£ 150.00	£	500.00	
Causeway	£ 600.00	£ -	£	250.00	Hoping for CIL grant for Board walk
Highways	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	£	150.00	
Speedwatch battery	£ 75.00	£ 75.00	£	75.00	
<i>Benefits:</i>					
Playground / Asset maintenance	£ 2,250.00	£ 596.00	£	1,000.00	Routine repairs etc
Playground refit	£ -	£ 96,710.02			
Allotment rent	£ 75.00	£ 75.00	£	75.00	
Village hall	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,500.00	£	1,000.00	Down from last year
Bus subsidy	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	£	1,000.00	Same
MESCAL	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£	2,000.00	Same
Defibrillator	£ 350.00	£ 338.08	£	350.00	
Local donations	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,402.40	£	2,500.00	Same
<i>Exceptionals:</i>					
Election fund	£ 500.00	£ 128.36	£	500.00	Provision
Contingency	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£	1,000.00	Provision
Total Budgeted Expenditure:	£ 29,360.00	£ 122,176.01	£	26,193.10	
Suplus/Deficit:	-£ 7,775.00	-£ 3,778.36	-£	3,913.10	

98/23 People and Place Plan – The team have made great progress and have designed the village needs/issues survey; the working draft is ready to be circulated. The next stage is for the parish council to review and agree it at the March meeting with a view to launching it at the Annual Parish Meeting. It will ask if we need a separate housing survey for the village which is a bigger piece of work. Strutt & Parker want to carry out a housing needs survey and this could work as a second stage in preparing the People & Place plan. It was agreed that the two pieces of analysis should not be done in parallel. The survey will go on Facebook and the website and also be distributed in print to each household.

99/23 Speedwatch and SID Report – Chris Eames presented the report. The councillors congratulated him and thanked him for his work in organising the speedwatch team.

SID and CSW summary – 2023 for MEPC

SID - Speed Indicating Device

Summary table

	2018/19 Average	2020 Average	2021 Average	2022 Average	Q4 2023	2023 Average
Average Speed	29.4 mph	29.8 mph	28.9 mph	28.8 mph	28.1 mph	28.4 mph
85 % percentile	34.4 mph	35.2 mph	33.8 mph	33.8 mph	32.9 mph	33.2 mph
% Speeders from Lavenham	14.2 %	17.4 %	12.9 %	11.7 %	7.1 %	8.0 %
% Speeders from the East	8.2 %	11.2 %	5.9 %	5.7 %	4.2 %	4.9 %
Average Vehicles per day in one direction	1,852	1,106	1,774	1,673	1,837	1,855

Note: A speeder is someone travelling at 35 mph or more

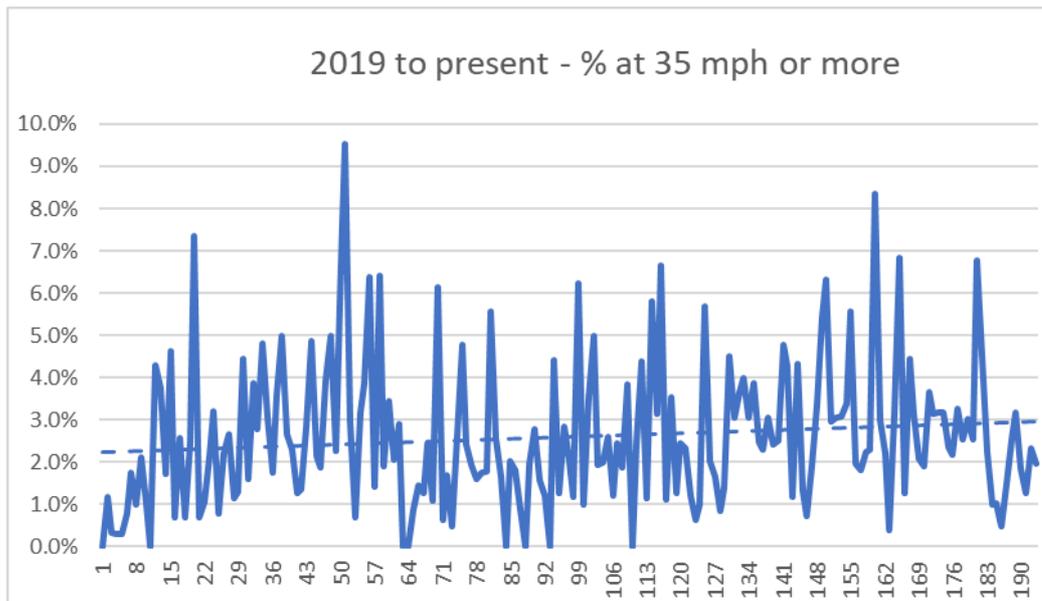
- Speeds have slightly reduced over 4 years
- New SID, belonging exclusively to Monks Eleigh, delivered in March 2023

CSW - Community Speed Watch (see graph on following page)

- 50 x 1 hour sessions carried out in 2023
- 10,527 vehicles monitored in 2023 (i.e. number of drivers reminded of the speed limit)
- Average speeders in 2023 = 2.9%
- Overall Average speeders in 2019-2023 = 2.6 %
- No lorries caught speeding
- 12 qualified volunteers of Monks Eleigh CSW team

➤ **Conclusion:**

- SID indicates more speeders than CSW, so CSW does change behaviour!



100/23 Causeway – Clerk to enquire about ownership and how to apply for grants for work to install a board walk.

101/23 Brett Valley Digi Bus – Cllr Braithwaite’s proposal for the DigiBus scheme, under SCC’s call for proposals, has been selected for development. It aims to link with Hadleigh and Lavenham so people can access their reliable and frequent bus links to travel to Sudbury, Colchester, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. This is especially needed for college students. The bus would travel on a flexible / on-demand route around local villages providing the link. It is based on volunteer drivers and engaging with Hadleigh Community Transport and Go Start in Sudbury. We wait to hear the process form here. There is a precedent in rural Essex which will be helpful. The councillors thanked Cllr Braitwaite for his work.

102/23 Traffic & Pavements – see Cllr Lindsay’s report. It was agreed that Cllr Braithwaite will talk again with parishioners and see if we can keep the issues in focus.

103/23 Church Hill Village Green Removable Bollards – The councillors considered a generous offer to install removable bollards at the apex of the village green to allow vehicles to reach the houses without vehicular access. This is aimed at helping access for emergency vehicles and in very specific agreed situations. It was noted that the green has been recently damaged by vehicles driving on it by mounting the bank and chewing up the grass. Cllrs were minded to accept this offer subject to the Clerk checking if the parish council can allow vehicles to drive on the village green.

104/23 Thermal Imaging Camera –Cllr Forrest carried out several thermal images and helped to show people where heat is escaping from their houses. The residents were grateful for the information given which will help them to better insulate their houses. The councillors thanked Cllr Forrest for her time doing this.

105/23 Village Clean Up – It was agreed to carry out the village clean up / litter pick on Saturday 16th March. John Naylor and Patti Derry have kindly agreed to lead it. Clerk to use leaflet template and send a draft to Patti. The leaflet needs to go out two weeks before the day. Clerk to request Babergh for litter bags and a rubbish

collection after the litter pick. Councillors to let Patti know who will be leading in each area covered.

106/23 Memorial Tree – The councillors agreed to Mr Whitehead planting a flowering cherry tree in the gap in the hedge at the west end of the recreation field in memory of his mother. Cllr Braithwaite to liaise with Mr Whitehead.

107/23 Village Community Award- The councillors agreed to make an award this year. They will agree who to award by email and make the award at the Annual Parish Meeting. Patti to send the certificate template to Cllr Forrest.

108/23 Action List Review

Actions from the previous minutes have been completed unless otherwise stated.

Action	Who
Locality budget request to Cllr Hurren by 24.3.24	Clerk/Cllrs
People & Place Plan launch at APM 25.4.23	Cllr Hodges
Online banking – check if affects Standing Orders/Finance Regulations	Clerk
Play area opening in the Spring liaise with BDC to set a date	Clerk
Litter Pick 16.3.24 flyer, bags and pick up	Clerk/Cllrs
Community Award – who?	Cllrs
Establish ownership of Causeway walkway	Clerk
Vehicles and village greens - law	Clerk
Quotes for recreation field fence	Clerk
Memorial cherry tree at Recreation field	Cllr Braithwaite

109/23 Councillors Reports

It was agreed to discuss permission for a Christmas Tree with battery lights on Church Hill green at the March meeting. Clerk to add to the agenda.

The Village Hall has installed a CCTV camera to cover the play ground and have covered the cost of installation.

110/23 Date of the next meeting

Parish Council Meeting 25th March 2024

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Appendix 1: Financial Report

FINANCIAL REPORT 22 JANUARY 2024

Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 27 November 2023

Income Received since 27.11.23

4.12.23	Barclays	Interest	31.19		
	Barking Parish				
20.12.23	Council	Half share of printer	64.16		
					<u>95.35</u>

Expenditure (movement since 27.11.23)

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

27.11.23	Suffolk Tree Services	Swingleton Green trees	1740	101626	Open Spac LGA
27.11.23	L Rogers	New printer	153.99	101627	1972
30.11.23	Kernos Centre	Donation	550.00	101628	LGA 1972,
30.11.23	Sudbury CAB	Donation	550.00	101629	LGA 1972, LGA
4.12.23	L Rogers	November expenses	31.99	101630	1972
4.12.23	Bildeston Foodbank	Donation	550.00	101631	LGA 1972,
6.12.23	Bluecloud training	Defibrillator training	125.00	101632	Public Hea LGA
7.12.23	L Rogers	December wages	575.45	101633	1972 LGA
7.12.23	HMRC	December tax	19.40	101634	1972 LGA
12.1.24	PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	252.00	BACS	1972 LGA
12.1.24	A Braithwaite	Christmas lights	62.97	BACS	1972 LGA
12.1.24	L Rogers	January wages	575.25	BACS	1972 LGA
12.1.24	HMRC	January tax	19.60	BACS	1972 LGA
12.1.24	L Rogers	December expenses	35.45	BACS	1972 LGA
			<u>5,241.10</u>		

Unpresented cheques

5.9.22	Hadleigh United Reformed Church		10.00	101528	LGA 1972
11.4.23	Tye Farm Contracting	Grass Nov-March	278.00	101564	Open Spac LGA
4.10.23	CAS	Website hosting	60.00	101614	1972 LGA
7.11.23	HMRC	November tax	11.20	101623	1972 LGA
6.12.23	Blueclouds Training	Defibrillator training	125.00	101632	Public Hea LGA
7.12.23	HMRC	December tax	19.40	101634	1972 LGA
12.1.24	PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	252.00	BACS	1972 LGA
12.1.24	A Braithwaite	Christmas lights	62.97	BACS	1972 LGA
12.1.24	L Rogers	January wages	575.25	BACS	1972 LGA

Bank Reconciliation					
Account	statement date	statement balance	actual balance	credit/transfers not shown	unpresented cheques
Community a/c	29.12.23	£10,784.87	£9,336.00	0.00	£1,448.87
Business reserve	29.12.23	£23,987.01	£23,987.01	0.00	£0
		£34,771.88	£33,323.01		

GALLETTS AND POLEBRIDGE RECREATION GROUND

M.E.P.C. is the sole trustee for the Galletts and Polebridge Trust.

To date there has been no expenditure. Income is held in the Parish Council's bank account on behalf

of the Trust equates to £360 (2023-2024 inc.) and is to be used solely for maintenance of the ground

Appendix 2: Report for Monks Eleigh Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor

New bus services? Congratulations on passing the first hurdle for a app-based demand responsive bus service in the area. Lavenham have also heard that their bid for improved 753 between Bury and Sudbury has been approved but both these bids will depend on the county finding operators prepared to do it, and contributions from parish councils will help. I am not yet clear whether Bildeston and Hitcham have been given the thumbs up for a five/six day a week service between Hadleigh and Stowmarket. **Mill Lane broken culvert** A Highways officer was in touch on 19th December with the resident who originally raised the complaint about this issue arranging to meet with him. I have asked for an update on this and will give you a verbal one if I have it. **Letter with list of Highways issues** Before Christmas I passed on your chairman's letter with a list of five or six Highways issues in the village. You have had a written response from the Highways Locality Engineer to these. I am urging Highways officers to meet with a PC rep on site to discuss. She is investigating about the causeway. **County Budget proposes £64m budget cuts over 2 years** The complete axing of £535k funding for **arts and museums** has attracted the headlines and will impact places like Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds. It will also impact vulnerable elderly and children from across the county who are supported by groups like Suffolk Artslink and Dance East, Food Museum. Other cuts: £11m staffing costs, initially by not replacing vacancies. The county is taking £16m from reserves and £2.2m from risk reserve. There is a warning in the papers that the remaining £20m in risk reserve is now below the level need to provide full confidence that the council's financial risk. The biggest cuts are in **Adult and Community Services** where they are proposing cutting £28m next year, £15m more than planned. There are warnings from officers in the papers that the cuts for adult care "may result in an increase in customer complaints". The county is also cutting all funding for skills development and apprenticeship programmes. It warns that this means it is likely that the number of young people in Suffolk not in education, employment or training will rise as a result. The programme to decarbonise and retrofit school buildings to meet zero carbon targets is being stopped from the end of this financial year.

£3.57m will have been spent on this in the current year. Over two years £3m will be cut from the £5m Housing Related Support budget which enables vulnerable people to live independently and helps stave off homelessness. The council papers say costs will be “rebalanced” which I assume means persuading the district councils take up the burden. The Bury St Edmunds records office will be closed and records centralised at the Hold, Ipswich. Former Children’s Centres, now called Family Hubs, will be “redesigned” in an unspecified way following a public consultation next financial year to save £700k.

Appendix 3: Report for Monks Eleigh Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor

Firstly the annual debate on our budget setting for 24/25. With a predicted deficit of 1.4 m, this has become controversial again because along with everything else, we have to review the level of cost and income from running our car parking service, this is at the moment subsidized by the council tax payers to an amount that is not entirely clear, until councilors have all the facts before them. We are told that the cost to Babergh DC, to run, police and repair all our car parks, is just short of £480,000 but we are not quite sure of the income we get through long term parking charges and fines etc. My group at full council has asked for more details to enable us to make a balanced decision on behalf of our residents and council tax payers. There is no such thing as free parking, it is either funded by the users or the rate payer as a whole, who may not be a user or even have a car at all. Is that justified??The main share of our costs to run the car parks is the government levied Business rates which currently stand at just short of £300,000. While I personally support free car parking for the user for 90 minutes to help churn and trade in the market towns, this is becoming ever harder to balance without the DC having the finances to facilitate it and keeping other services and general benefits, such as grants and subsidies as well. More controversially nationally is the great post office scandal, that I am sure that now the real truth is coming out will be sorted out quite quickly after over 20 odd years of hurt for the innocent Sub postmasters and mistresses. We can but hope that the chain of brilliant branches in our villages, town and cities will survive the Fujitsu/government incompetence and cover up. Please everyone go into your local and see how much the foot soldiers can offer and do for you. Good news across BMS is that we have managed to build 128 new affordable homes in 2023, this is as a result of exception sites put forward by communities, windfall sites from private development sites and new homes we have built on our own council owned land. One piece of bad news is that we have had to sell 9 as a result of the dreadful, still in place right to buy legislation from a long bygone era. Still a really good effort with a net gain of 119 homes. As part of our extending the future housing needs requirements well into the future of our long term Joint Local Plan, BMS has invited landowners/developers to submit land that might be suitable for housing development, to approach the council and engage with us to fulfil our housing needs into the future. This process is called, A call for sites and will run until spring. It is hoped that this process will guarantee us housing land into the future. It

is very important that with our JLP stage one in place, that we decide our own future development and not let it be decided by government inspectors at appeal. A good time to highlight the importance of our environmental team, it was recently reported to me by a local resident that a new business was coming to a high street in our area. An American confectionary and vape shop, upon consultation with local members who also had concerns about this establishment, I referred it to our environmental team at BMS. They had noticed the presence of this new outlet and had dropped cards in asking to visit without response. Upon my request they made a statutory visit and found that---They were planning sell US confectionary that is illegal in UK due to non permitted ingredients. Failure to provide health warnings on products which contain colour and other additives that cause hyperactivity in children along with vapes being age and nicotine restricted. Also a lack of hot water and washing facilities for staff. The premises were given a 1 out of five, as a score on the door and advised not to open until these issues had been rectified, also that the environmental team would visit again in two weeks and refer this premises to the CC Trading standards Dept. Some guidance on the village People and Places/ Neighbourhood plan would be appreciated. The appeal against the BMS refusal for 64 houses in Boxford has taken place and will be a first test for our new part adopted JLP, we all wait with some confidence but also trepidation. My locality budget for your village of approx. £400.00. is available until the end of March 24. As a result of questions, our bio-diversity officer is Richard.parmee@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk