

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Monks Eleigh Village Hall at 7.30pm
on Monday 24th May 2021

Present:

Cllrs Angela Forrest – Chairman, Patti Derry – Vice Chairman, Victoria Keitley-Webb, Alan Braithwaite and Elizabeth Evans

County Cllr Robert Lindsay and District Cllr Bryn Hurren

In Attendance:

Mrs L Rogers - Clerk

17 members of the public attended

1/21 Apologies

Will Sykes, Chris Eames, Deborah Dwyer, Jenny Pooley, Jacques Forrest, Jean Gatewood, Karen Ann, Carl Mudge, Simon and Jan Kelsall

2/21 Minutes

Copies of the minutes from the meeting held on 9th March 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and were duly signed.

3/21 Cllr Robert Lindsay

Traffic calming and lower speeds Throughout the year I have been well aware of the issues of fast traffic on the High Street in Monks Eleigh and before the end of my term did authorise the painting of new 30mph roundels on the High Street at either end of the village. I will keep on top of Highways to ensure this gets done. It was also very pleasing to finally see approval for the principle of a 20mph speed limit in Bildeston after years of campaigning on this front. The details will have to be worked out and paid for and my locality budget can only be a contribution and will not be enough to cover all of it. I am also supporting Lavenham through a 20mph application for that village. **Foodbank expands to meet greater demand** This group, which evolved out of the Bildeston community support group during the first lockdown is now supporting 18 families in and around the village. I was pleased to be able to help them with an initial grant from Babergh and in March I contributed £1k from my Babergh awards budget to the foodbank. **GoStart rescues 112 bus route to Sudbury** In March 2020, the then operator of the 112 bus pulled out because the county had withdrawn its subsidy. Despite protracted pleas and negotiations with me, the county refused to provide any more funding but luckily GoStart Community bus from Sudbury was able to step in. I contributed £1k at their launch in March 2020 and another £1k last month March 2021 from my locality funds from Babergh and Suffolk. **Budget amendments** Being a group allowed us both at the county and Babergh to put together a series of budget amendments and several motions over the year which although they were voted down by the Conservative administration, will have flagged up areas that need attention and some of which were later adopted by the administration. **Group Budget Amendment – floods** One of many amendments our group at Suffolk County Council proposed in February was to fund an extra officer for the flooding team to help bid for funding and manage projects. At the end of March the flood risk scrutiny committee recommended to cabinet that the council hire extra staff to the floods team to help tackle the flooding backlog. **Floods Monks Eleigh** I hope Highways now that they have accepted responsibility for the ditch by the Millennium Green can proceed with clearing out the ditch to prevent future flooding. They also cleared the ditch on the other side of the road where there had been a flood. **Budget amendments Babergh** The Green group proposed a series of amendments to the Babergh budget which would have set aside a bit more for training and staff in planning and planning enforcement, as well as in retrofitting our own council homes. This was voted down however. **20mph motion Suffolk** My feeling is that there would be enormous health and other benefits if residential areas in Suffolk were allowed 20mph limits by default rather

than being forced to go through the hoops that Bildeston has. As a result I proposed earlier the year a motion that called for a scheme to reduce speed limits in all suitable residential areas from 30mph to 20mph, for a price of £4m. Communities would have been able to opt out. This was rejected with the administration saying that 20mph could not be enforced without expensive measures. I also seconded a biodiversity motion for Suffolk that will implement a new biodiversity strategy. This was passed unanimously. **Pension committee** I sat on the pension committee and during the past financial year the committee agreed, after much pushing from me, to move its entire passive equity fund into a low carbon fund. It represents about 10% of the total fund. **Cabinet approves 5-year cycling plan for Suffolk** In June 2020 Suffolk's Cabinet approved a 5-year cycling plan for Suffolk, which identified 148 potential routes to be prioritised. This is as a result of a motion proposed by me in July 2018, which called on the council to produce a strategic costed 5-year cycling plan. Funding has not yet been secured for these routes, but the cycling plan will provide a strong basis to bid for funding as and when it becomes available. **Climate emergency recommendations published** In July 2020, Suffolk's Cabinet approved the recommendations of a cross-party policy development panel outlining how the council should respond to the climate emergency and reduce emissions. This followed a motion from myself and my Green colleague in March 2019, which declared a climate emergency and committed the council to be carbon neutral by 2030.

4/21 District Councillor Bryn Hurren 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 Baberghmidsuffolk 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. 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 achilles 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 Monks Eleigh and I look forward to continuing to work together for the next two years.

5/21 Chairman of the Parish Council –Cllr Angela Forrest

I would like to welcome you all to this Annual Parish Meeting for 2021. Firstly, I must thank all my fellow Parish Councillors for all their hard work and support during the last year, and our County Cllr Robert Lindsay and District Cllr Bryn Hurrell for keeping us abreast with all the processes of Babergh/Mid Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. I would also like to thank Lucinda our Clerk for managing all our correspondence and accounts. Last but by no means least I would also like to thank all the volunteers who keep the grass and hedges cut around the village.

Over the last 12 months there have been 5 Parish Council meetings and 1 additional meeting, mostly on-line. The Parish Council consulted on 19 planning applications and approved or had no objection to all of them. All of these applications were approved by Babergh.

The focal point of the village throughout the pandemic has been our community shop which has coped incredibly well with all the different situations, we are indebted to the Committee, Managers and volunteers.

We are grateful to the volunteers who man the Community Speed Watch and arrange for the movement of SID (Speed Indicator Device) and the management of the data. Both schemes have a good effect on the speed of the traffic through the village. After consultation with Suffolk County Council, it has been agreed to put extra 30 mph roundels at the eastern end of the street. These have been kindly funded by Robert Lindsey's locality fund. In addition to this the Parish council has applied for and Suffolk County Council has added H lines at the bottom of Church Hill to try and alleviate the parking of vehicles across the dropped kerb and close to the junction with the A1141. The Parish Council have provided additional grit bins and have replaced the Parish Notice Board; we have also updated the emergency plan and have a continuous rolling review of Parish Council policies.

The strangeness of the year has meant that the Village Hall has been closed most of the year but with help of a grant from Babergh District Council and a strong team of Trustees it is ready to get back in business as soon as possible.

The School site is currently being developed with a development of 17 properties, these are being built in Peterborough and arriving as modules, though there has been a lot of disruption and our roads and footpaths are suffering we have been assured that when the site is completed the infrastructure will be returned to a good condition.

The 112 Bus service is now run by the charity Go start and with the support of several Parish Councils, Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council it has run successfully from February (2020) and provides a vital service for several villages.

The play equipment on the Recreation Ground is currently being repaired and cleaned.

The Parish Council hopes that Back Lane/Swington Hill and Tye Road will soon both be adopted as Quiet Lanes which are lanes that have signage to indicate that drivers should be aware that the lanes are used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The aims of the Parish Council next year are to continue to respond to the community needs in addition to upgrading the streetlights to LED bulbs, (this sounds simple but some of the poles and 4 existing equipment are incredibly old and so this is complicated and expensive, so the aim is to upgrade over a few years). The allotments continue to be underused but if there are any parishioners who have an interest in even a small part of an allotment please get in touch.

There is a vacancy for a Councillor so if anyone has an interest, please contact the clerk, it is not too onerous, just 6 meetings a year and an interest in your village and its community.

6/21 Table Tennis

Cllr Forrest read Deborah Dwyer's report – the club has started back and runs on Tuesdays at 7pm – all are welcome

7/21 Carpet Bowls – Diana Swansborough

We started out carpet bowls club last January, with the help of 'Fit Villages' which is a council run initiative designed to support any physical activities to get up and running in villages. Then along came coronavirus and lock down in March so everything was put on hold. However now we are able to relaunch Monk's Eleigh Carpet Bowls and Fit Villages have agreed to continue to support us, which will help us get started again. We have all the necessary equipment for playing, some of which we bought last year and some has been kindly loaned to us by Bildeston Carpet Bowls Club. Our first meeting is on Monday 28th June 7.30pm to 9.30pm here in our lovely hall. We will of course be abiding by strict covid restriction guide lines and health and safety rules, Everyone must wear face masks and all equipment will be regularly sanitised. I have started a list of people who are coming along to play and if anyone is interested in joining us please do speak to me this evening or ring me on 01449 740070. All of this will be advertised in Roundabout magazine and on posters in the notice boards around the village.

8/21 Monday Lunch Club – Cllr Angela Forrest

Monday Lunch Club aims to start again on Monday July 26th at 12.30pm for 1.00 pm at the Village Hall.

Margaret, I and John will be running a community lunch club for all comers though we have an upper limit of 36. Tickets will be on sale in the Village Shop for £8.00 each from 1st July.

We very much look forward to starting up this social lunch again.

9/21 Millennium Green – Jacques Forrest

Cllr Forrest read the report- In the absence of a Chairperson, I submit a report of the activities of the Millennium Trustees for the year 2020. Because of the pandemic the Trustees have not met, nor have we had a public AGM for the years 2019 or 2020. However, the Trustees have communicated by 'phone and e-mail over this period. However, The necessary submissions have been sent and accepted by the Charities Commission., including the necessary financial statements. Adrian volunteered and expertly mechanically cut the hedges in both 2020 and 2021. Angela and Ros inspected with a fully trained arborist the Ash trees and commissioned an expert tree surgeon to deal with the respective diseased ones. Volunteers have regularly cut the central grass and trimmed the grass near the paths.

Both have been completed in accordance with the agreed trustee's maintenance plan. No public or fund-raising activities have been carried out or have been planned by the Trustees over the

reporting period. It is obvious that the Green continues to act as a haven for wildlife and in these pandemic times has offered an area of refuge, relaxation, solace, meditation and more for village residents (at least during daylight hours). Long may it continue. As soon as is allowed I will arrange a Trustees meeting.

10/21 Poetry Club – David Mills

For some months now

The ghosts have occupied this hall

They may have held masked balls, but do not speak.

They ponder though on all that went on before,

And wonder why the hall is cold and dark –

Where are the folk that used to gather here?

Where are the folk that once enjoyed this space?

Where are the songs of hall, oh where are they?

Why is the joyful sound of Zumba and the spoken word all stilled?

Just brooding silence now and emptiness,

Where once words flowed and music played,

Where once the sound of laughter filled the air!

So long now since their voices could be heard,

- They may have just forgotten how to sing!

Like other users of the hall, we have sorely missed our meetings – the last one some 15 months ago in February 2020. But we intend, and very much hope, Boris and Covid willing, to resume in July, and have accordingly booked the Meeting Room for our once monthly gathering from that month onwards.

11/21 Knit and Stitch – Jean Gatewood

Cllr Forrest read the report- Around 2 years ago, a conversation with Solveigh Mills about knitting, embroidery (of which she is an expert) and other crafting projects, we thought to start a group in the village and so KNIT&STITCH began. Enthusiasm was high with local ladies from the start, and we now have approx 17 members. Some even come from outside Monks Eleigh!

We meet once a month in the Village Hall.

From 2.00-4.00pm. Fee: £3.00 session. Included with lots of chatter is Tea & Biscuits.

Hopefully with everything going to plan we shall start again in Sept. and meet up with friends sadly missed during Lockdowns! New members are always welcome to be inspired: start new projects, or bring your own. Plenty of expertise and help on hand and lots of fun too! Don't be afraid to join - we are not all experts! Me included.

Kind regards

Jean Gatewood: 01449 257148 Solveigh Mills: 01449 744918

12/21 Yoga

Cllr Forrest read the report- Some benefits of yoga

- Improves strength, balance and flexibility.
- Helps with back pain relief.
- Can ease arthritis symptoms.
- Benefits heart health.
- Relaxes, aiding better sleep.
- Increases energy.
- Aids in the management of stress.

- **Connects you with a supportive community.**

Possibilities to move forward @ Monks Eleigh VH

Currently there is one class a week running at Monks Eleigh on Friday mornings at 10.30AM – 11.30AM. I have students that have been attending this class since I started in early 2019.

All of which have continued attending online classes during lockdown. The class is open to all with plenty of variations on postures. The venue at Monks Eleigh is fabulous, with lots of space which is important in the current climate of COVID. I am very much hoping that people will feel confident to return to class. Moving forward if the numbers are looking good I would hope that we could start to run more classes at Monks Eleigh VH. The only point that I would make is that sometimes the hall is chilly. Looking forward to continued support at the venue.

13/21 Film Club – Carl Mudge

Cllr Forrest read the report- Flicks In The Sticks Dates for new season...

Sunday 26th September 2021

Sunday 24th October 2021

Sunday 21st November 2021

Sunday 9th January 2022

Sunday 6th February 2022

Sunday 6th March 2022

Nothing for December; given previous stats.

Doors open 4pm film at 4.30pm.

Through an opportunity with Filmbank Media where the film licences are purchased we applied for a Welcome Back funding opportunity and have just been notified that we have been successful and will be awarded £150 to assist with the first screening since lockdown and we are in process of finalising and checking terms and conditions; so this will assist with the first licence fee.

All dates subject to current government guidelines regarding Covid.

14/21 Village Shop – Barry Charnley

This report covers the 18th year of the shop serving our community. As our Treasurer has observed, it has been a "most peculiar year". The shop continued to serve the community throughout the pandemic. We were obliged to 'lay off' all of our volunteers over the age of 70 which resulted in significantly reduced opening hours. Restricted access to the shop and Post Office plus socially distanced queueing became the norm. These measures were controlled by many new volunteers able to assist as their places of work closed. Home deliveries were organised for those who were sheltering for medical reasons, again by some existing as well as new volunteers. Denise Pinkerton took over as Shop Manager and due to the demands of the pandemic was supported by Janet Mackie until her delayed retirement in August.

The shop received a Business Support Grant from the Government which helped with an increase in costs due to changes in the way in which we operated. Trading remained robust throughout the financial year which ended in November. This continued through the subsequent Christmas period but currently there are signs of a return to our historic pattern of business. We have been obliged to expand our opening hours as retail restrictions have been eased but we are woefully short of volunteers as those who stepped in during the height of the pandemic have returned to their normal working lives. This situation is becoming critical. We also need new members to join the Committee – we will be advertising for a new Treasurer as Arthur Grosset wishes to step down from this role in this next year after 13 years of dedicated service. Arthur has kindly agreed to continue as a volunteer once a new Treasurer has been appointed. The overall message is that the shop is performing well but cannot continue to do so without more input from the community it serves.

15/21 Village Hall – Patti Derry

The hall has been closed for most of the last year because of the lockdown. Prior to the first lockdown the hall was made Covid compliant with hand sanitisers, social distance notices, intense cleaning equipment and signage to mark a one way system as required. The cleaners hours were changed to ensure the hall was cleaned between each letting and the kitchen and bar were closed. Number limitations on bookings were introduced again in line with government advice. The hall became available for hire again on May 17th and once again the the hall was made Covid compliant. The closure of the hall meant that income for last year was greatly reduced but we are great full to BDC for a grant which helped us meet our ongoing overheads.

The hall has now re-opened subject to current restrictions and The Trustees are now looking forward to the hall becoming busy and bustling once again. I am pleased to report that bookings are already picking up. Our bookings calendar is updated each month and is available on line on the village hall page and also in the notice boards at the shop, the hall and Swingleton Green.

A big thank you to all the Trustees for guiding us through a challenging year and a special thank you to our cleaner who has responded to a change in her work pattern to enable the hall to meet the Covid 19 protocol.

16/21 History Group – Simon and Jan Kelsall

Cllr Forrest read the report- Monday 4th October 2021 – The History and Operations of the RNLI by Rupert Cutler Rupert is an Educational Volunteer based at Harwich Lifeboat Station. His talk will cover saving lives at sea prior to the foundation of the RNLI, in 1824, through to the present day, the history of the service, its current operations and what they get up to at Harwich.

Monday 1st November 2021 – The Round Church Towers of Suffolk and Norfolk by Stuart Bowell

There are around 180 churches with round towers in England, mostly situated in Suffolk and Norfolk. With his illustrated talk, Stuart will consider when and how they were built, why they were built in this shape and what materials were used. Stuart is a committee member of the Round Tower Churches Society. Monday 6th December 2021 – Lady Alice de Bryene by Pip Wright

Following last year's very successful talk on Suffolk Witches, Pip Wright returns to talk about Lady Alice who lived at Acton, near Sudbury six hundred years ago. What was life like for her and those who ate at her table? It certainly wasn't Downton Abbey! Monday 10th January 2022 – Bryan Thurlow presents 'Music Hall Memories' Bryan has a background in professional theatre. During the 1970's and '80's his music hall act, 'The Berkeley Squares' toured to many parts of the country. His 'Music Hall Memories' is a potted history with songs and monologues. Monday 7th February 2022 –

A New Breed of Surveyor – Vivienne Aldous Vivienne is a freelance Archivist and Researcher and, since 2009, has worked as a part-time Lecturer in History at the University of Suffolk. Vivienne's talk will be on early Suffolk Mapmakers and their work. Monday 7th March 2022 – Secrets and Spies – the Spies who lost the Battle of Britain by Graham Randall Graham's father was trained in radar at Bawdsey during World War Two and he is the Project Director of the Bawdsey Radar Trust. His talk promises to be a fascinating insight into spies and spying and how much Nazi effort was directed at the radar stations which played a vital part in the Battle of Britain

All meetings start at 7.30pm, at Monks Eleigh Village Hall. Tea and biscuits will be served from 7pm. Annual membership is £10.00, £3.00 for admission to a single meeting. For more information contact Jan Kelsall (01449 744162) or David Mills (01449 744918)

17/121 St Peters Church – Pat Braithwaite

I am very pleased to confirm that we now have a Priest in Charge called Reverend Mike Birt, many of you have met already, who officially looks after the Monks Eleigh Benefice made up of the 5 Parish Churches which includes St Peters. I would like to point out this is a half post. Rev Mike and his wife, Sue, moved into the Rectory at the end of September and Mike was officially licensed in October 2020. We are delighted to welcome them. They have made themselves known to the villages since March 2020 when they started taking the church services. There has been one Wedding and several Funeral Services during the Pandemic. The effect of the Covid Pandemic Lockdown has made having services in church difficult but the use of Zoom has surprisingly worked

well with everyone going through a steep learning curve (discovery of the Mute button)! So Sunday Holy Communion and Wednesday Morning Prayers have been held via Zoom, plus an Advent Course, Bible Study and Quizzes. Several services were held in the Churchyard – Remembrance Sunday Service and early Easter Sunday service (7.00 am). Rev Mike and the PCC would like to thank the Parish Council for their support in allowing the Stations of the Cross on The Green over the Easter period. This was a great success and received a lots of positive feedback. Initially the church was open for Private Prayer on Wednesday and Saturday afternoon applying the Government Guidelines. This has been a stop start situation with Lockdown. Currently the Church is now open on Wednesday for Morning Prayer and till 12 noon. During Lockdown specialist contractors working alongside Archaeologists have been installing a WC under the tower and a Tea Point at the back of the church. The back pews have been removed and the Victorian piped organ has been dismantled and sent off to be repaired and serviced. This has created a wonderful area of space and good lighting in the west end of the church. The refurbishment was started at the end of September and has just been completed. Once the organ has been returned we plan a splendid organ recital. I confirm that the Fete and Dog Show will be taking place on Saturday 3rd July 1.00 – 5.00 pm providing this is allowed. A comprehensive risk assessment will be undertaken beforehand by Chris Eames.

18/21 Village Person of The Year

Cllr Forrest presented the Community Award to the Community Shop for their outstanding contribution to the village specially over the last year and thanked them for their support and help to the village especially the staff, committee and volunteers.

19/21 Public Forum

It was asked if the parish council has responded to the planning breach at land opposite Second Pits, Highlands Road. The planning application is waiting to go to appeal and Babergh are not taking any enforcement action unless the appeal is unsuccessful. It is likely the appeal will take place in six months time. The question of foul waste at the site was raised.

It was requested that the subject of speed and volume of traffic be added to the July agenda. The parish council requested the cat's eyes be removed but not happened yet – parish council to follow up. Cllr Lindsay to send criteria for speed limits from Highways to those asking questions. The H lines have been installed at the bottom of Church Hill and are not being parked on although some creative parking has since occurred.

The Chair thanked all for attending especially those who had put together and delivered presentations to the meeting. The Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

Chairman..... Date.....