

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Monday 26th March 2012 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. Donald Reynolds, welcomed the following Parish Councillors: Cllrs. Patti Derry; Di Reynolds; Libby Grosset and Chris Eames, as well as Mr. J. Pembroke, County Councillor; Mr. C. Arthey, District Councillor; Mrs. V. Waples, Clerk to the Council; Mr. R. Giles, Headteacher of Monks Eleigh CEVC School, and 34 members of the village to the meeting.

The Chairman of the Parish Council opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and thanked them for their attendance.

1. Apologies for absence - the following apologies of absence were received and are to be recorded as accepted: Cllrs. Barry Bailey and Jacqueline Clarke.
2. Minutes of the meeting of 28th March 2011 - these were agreed by all eligible to vote as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman as such.
3. MATTERS ARISING
 - i. Update on affordable housing scheme - the Clerk provided updated the meeting with an update on the status of the affordable housing planning application during which it was confirmed that whilst the application had been passed in principle final confirmation was still awaited as the S106 had still to be signed. It had been confirmed by Orwell Housing that, provided all the legals on the acquisition of the land were completed and the S106 could be signed and sealed by the end of April, a contractor would be appointed for a start on site in June/July. It was also noted that the planners at BDC were still to respond as to whether they would support a small scheme of 1 or 2 units in Lindsey. Should the planners support such a site a further site appraisal would need to be conducted to identify a suitable suite.
 - ii. School Hall/Community Project (MESCH) - it was reported that, with the personal support of County Cllr. Jeremy Pembroke, SCC had agreed to lease part of the school grounds to MESCH for 99 years to build new community hall and to provide funding of £185,000. The Heads of Terms for the lease had been agreed in August 2011 and SCC's legal department were currently working on the lease. Fund raising efforts by the village alone had raised £45k from 50 separate events and MESCH had secured 93% of the funds (assuming a sale price for the village hall site of £250K). It was expected that MESCH would be able to receive grants from additional funders as they got closer to building. It was mentioned that the only remaining piece of the jigsaw was the sale of the village hall site. Given that it was a difficult market, the Village Hall Trust and MESCH were now looking at one builder / developer to do both projects i.e. build new houses on the village hall site and build the new community hall. This would make it more likely to find a builder / developer as it was a more attractive proposal.
 - iii. Update on Community Speed-Watch - an update was provided in which it was confirmed that regular speed-watches had been carried out over the past year both early in the morning and early evening/late afternoon. It was held that a regular presence had generally slowed down traffic and confirmed that, for the month of October, 17 letters had been sent to those caught speeding. Unfortunately due to the lack of volunteers no speed watches had been carried out since Christmas. More volunteers were urged to come forward as currently there were only 4 and it was preferable to have at least 2 for each speed watch session. The aim of the speed watch was to try and hold sessions on a monthly basis.
 - iv. Update on the Provision of a Bus Service - it was confirmed that the Bus Service 112A would commence on Monday 16 April which would give a Monday and Wednesday morning service (term time only) leaving Sudbury and travelling through Great and Little Waldingfield, Brent Eleigh, Monks Eleigh and Semer to Hadleigh arriving at the Bus Station in Hadleigh. Drop off points had been arranged at Buyright and Highlands Road. The same would be repeated later at lunchtime. Travel to Sudbury on Mondays and Wednesdays would allow one return journey with a stay of two hours in Sudbury. It had also been confirmed that there would be a bus on a Thursday servicing the Waldingfields, the Eleighs, Chelsworth and Bildeston travelling in a smaller loop allowing an hour and a half stay in Sudbury. This latter service would be a public bus service so concessions would apply. It was pointed out that the success of the service offered depended on it being used regularly not just by those who had bus passes but also by fare paying passengers. The service and fare levels would be monitored so it was in the interest of villagers to use the service.
 - v. Dog Fouling - Cllr. Libby Grosset addressed the meeting on the hazards of allowing dogs to foul community areas and asked that villagers were vigilant in ensuring that all dog walkers picked up after their dogs. The meeting's attention was drawn to the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 which made it an offence for someone not to clear up after a dog when it fouls. Notices that had been placed around the village had the full support of the Parish Council and the public were welcome to report any incidences to the Parish Council.
 - vi. Allotments - a report had been received from the Chairman of the Allotments Association in which the meeting's attention was brought to the problems that the allotment holders were encountering with regards to Muntjac (all year round) and rabbits when the ground was frozen. It was felt that the ideal situation would be deer/rabbit proof netting either round all the allotments or around individual allotments. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at a future Parish Council meeting. There had also been an issue previously with the Community Payback Team who had left the churchyard rubbish on the unused allotments as they were not allowed to burn but it was thought this had now been resolved.

4. MR. R. GILES - HEAD OF MONKS ELEIGH CEVC SCHOOL

Mr. Giles was invited to address the meeting and provided all present with an update as to the current status of the school and future plans that were envisaged. He confirmed that 12 months previously the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governors had approached him with the aim of setting up a federation between Boxford and Monks Eleigh Schools. At the time he was the head of Boxford School. He saw this as a fantastic opportunity to do something different and an ideal solution to the issues surrounding the recruitment of heads for a small rural school. Federations were still quite rare but over the past 10 years they had become a practical solution to the very problem in finding headteachers. The federation between Boxford and Monks Eleigh had come about quite simply due to the very fact that the school had become so small. Boxford itself was a very full, oversubscribed school with 200 on the roll whilst Monks Eleigh only had 20. As the headship had become vacant he had agreed to take the position as well as remaining the head for Boxford thereby creating a loose federation between the two schools. There were many advantages to such a federation: shared expertise in teaching eg physical education, sciences; efficiency savings, shared facilities and a joint management team. He was keen to stress that each school would retain its own board of governors, budgets and individual character and identity. He reassured the meeting that, having spoken to the LEA, there were no plans to close the school even though all were aware that it had a small roll with an equally small catchment area of Monks Eleigh and Chelsworth. However it was hoped that by being part of a federation the school would appeal to more parents and in fact the applications for the coming school year were up with a good number of parents choosing Monks Eleigh as their first choice with an equal number choosing it as their 2nd choice. He concluded by stating that the loose federation was expected to continue for 2 years but he did not envisage that this was necessarily a problem and that the school could continue as was.

5. POLICE REPORT - WEST BABERGH SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

A report had been received from the West Babergh Safer Neighbourhood Team in which it was confirmed that for the period 28th March 2011 to 20th March 2012 there had been 3 crimes recorded within the parish which compared to 11 for the same period the previous year. A breakdown of the crimes by type was given and the meeting's attention was drawn to Babergh West SNT's current priorities which would continue to target the theft of catalytic converters and speeding vehicles within their villages. The meeting's attention was also drawn to a Catalytic Converter marking day due to be held shortly where the converters would be marked for free if the converters were visible. The date would be advertised in the local press but if there was anyone interested contact could be made with PCSO Jamie Fudge at Sudbury Police Station. Finally the meeting's attention was drawn to advice from Suffolk Constabulary which asked all residents to be alert and pay extra attention to home and vehicle security with the clocks going forward as this was often seen as an opportunist time for this type of crime.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR - MR. CLIVE ARTHEY

District Councillor, Mr. Clive Arthey, reported that the previous year there had been local elections and a poll to decide on the merger of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. He was returned as the village's Councillor for another term and thanked them for their support. The results of the poll were 'yes' from Mid Suffolk residents and 'no' from Babergh residents. For the merger to go ahead a majority from both Councils Electorate was required. Whilst the two councils would continue to operate as separate Councils they had already decided to integrate services under one Chief Executive. The process was continuing towards full integration and it was hoped that services would be improved by the changes and offer better value for the tax payers. He mentioned that the previous year there had been the consultation on the draft Core Strategy outlining growth in the district over the next 20 years. The draft document had proposed that 40% of housing growth to be in the 'core' and 'hinterland' villages. Monks Eleigh had been classified as a 'hinterland' village where some growth may be appropriate. He emphasized that growth in villages was proposed not only to satisfy housing demand but also to help sustain rural communities and the facilities upon which they rely. He commented on local parish issues such as the provision of Local Needs Housing and the new Community Hall which, in his view, were important for the future of the community. He further mentioned that the climbing frame on the recreation ground had been part funded from S106 developer contributions. He confirmed that he currently Chaired the Suffolk Waste Partnership and that last year a recycling rate of 54% across the whole of Suffolk had been achieved. They were currently looking at ways to increase the amount being recycled including increasing the range of materials that can be put in the blue recycling bin. Work had also started on the Energy from Waste plant at Blakenham which should be completed and taking residual waste by the end of 2014. The aim was for a recycling rate of 60% and 'nil to landfill'. He finished by confirming that there would be a 3.5% increase in Babergh's element of the council tax with the Suffolk Police increasing by 3.75% and Suffolk County Council staying the same. The effect of the two increases would result in an overall increase of 0.8% - Band D amounts would be SCC £1126.53; Suffolk Police £166.77; BDC £143.86 and Monks Eleigh Parish Council £56.94. He concluded by thanking the new Parish Council, the Parish Clerk and the villagers for their support.

7. COUNTY COUNCILLOR - MR. JEREMY PEMBROKE

County Councillor, Mr. Jeremy Pembroke, commenced his report by commenting that whilst a great deal had changed in the last 12 months since he given his last annual report, a year on, we still faced the same challenges, the same tough decisions and with them the same opportunities. The top challenge was the budget. Given the tough financial conditions he was pleased to announce that the county council had agreed a budget for 2012/13 which included a council tax freeze for the second year in a row. This had been achieved without recourse to the government's one-off council-tax freeze grant which would be used to support economic growth projects instead. The £50million budget gap SCC faced over the next

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two years would be met by cutting management and back-office costs, finding greater efficiencies and cutting bureaucracy which would protect valued front-line services whilst aiming to reduce costs. He confirmed that in December the County Council had voted through the proposal that would see the county's library service moved to a new operating model - an industrial and provident society which would oversee the assets, IT, staffing and funding and would work with local community groups to develop the services to meet local needs more effectively. He also confirmed that the Fire and Rescue Services in October 2011 had joined forces with Cambridgeshire to create a combined fire control centre for the people of both counties. This would be the first combined control centre in the country and other counties were looking to do something similar. The Council's plans to find a new provider for the remaining council-run care homes was nearing completion as a rigorous selection process had whittled down the bidders and the cabinet would be making a final decision at its meeting in April. He brought the meeting's attention to the fact that there were around 40 schools in Suffolk that had become or were applying to become academies independent of county council control. At the same time as well as the Stour Valley Community College, there were four proposed free schools in Stoke-by-Nayland, Saxmundham, Brandon and Beccles currently going through the process of application. One final positive development had been the selection of Suffolk to be one of the first counties in England to benefit from comprehensive, high speed broadband. The county council's investment of £10million in this project was being matched by the government and over the next few months a provider will be selected to begin the work. He finished by stating that the next 12 months would be challenging as they promised to be equally tough financially but the County was set on a path of innovation by working closely with other organisations to find the most effective means of providing the services on which people depended. He concluded by thanking those who had provided the refreshments and the Clerk for her support.

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - COUNCILLOR DONALD REYNOLDS

The Chairman, Mr. Donald Reynolds, commenced his report by thanking the District Councillor, County Councillor and Parish Councillors for their hard work and support and especially the Clerk without who nothing would get done. He reported that the Council had held six scheduled meetings and a further three to consider planning applications. The Council had been consulted on 27 planning applications and had recommended acceptance on all 27 although three had since been withdrawn and BDC had refused one contrary to the Council's views. He asked that the minutes reflect the Council's and the village's appreciation to all those who had contributed to a number of ventures within the village over the past year: those who had helped on the Pylon debate; volunteers who ran the Village Shop and the Youth Club and to those who served on the Village Hall Management Committee and the MESCH Committee. He further thanked his fellow parish councillors for giving up their time and their commitment to serving the village. He mentioned that following the increases in its portion of the Council Tax for 2011-2012 the Parish Council had been able to reduce the precept for 2012-2013 by 1.6% for a Band D Property. He concluded by drawing the meeting's attention to the fact that the basketball hoop and surface on the Playing Field had been removed and that a new wooden climbing frame would be installed within the next six weeks and that the Council had contributed to half of the cost of new benches for the Millennium Green. He reminded all that the Parish Council meetings were open to all to attend and that there was a Public Forum in which members of the public could raise items of issue direct to the Council.

9. PUBLIC FORUM

- i. Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - it was noted that the planning for the events to be held was well underway and that a leaflet had been distributed to all in the village giving an outline of the events planned for the bank holiday weekend with activities concentrating on June 2, 3 and 4. It was also noted that an order to cover the road closure from 2 - 4pm had been issued by Babergh District Council which confirmed that Church Hill from its junction with The Street to the entrance to St Peter's Churchyard would be closed to all traffic from 11am to 5pm on Sunday 3rd June 2012 and from 2 to 6pm on Monday 4th June 2012. It was also confirmed that a memories book would be compiled and contributions would be welcome from all and that there would be a display of photographs in the Church for the whole weekend.
- ii. Annual Litter Pick - 31st March 2012 - it was confirmed that the Annual Litter pick would this year be held on Saturday 31st March 2012 starting at 9.00am on the Village Green. Anyone interested in taking part would be more than welcome.