

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Monday 9th March 2015 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Church Fields, Monks Eleigh. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. D.Reynolds, took the Chair for the evening's meeting and welcomed the following Parish Councillors: Cllrs. P.Derry, Mrs D Reynolds, J. Clarke as well as Mrs. J. Antill, County Councillor; Mr. C. Arthey, District Councillor; PCSO Gary Austin; Mrs. V. Waples, Clerk to the Council; and members of the village to the meeting. (44 people in attendance in addition to the Chairman, the Clerk and the District and County Councillors and PCSO Gary Austin)

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

A statement was read out indicating that, 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. Full wording available on request.

1. **Apologies for absence** - the following apologies of absence were received and are recorded as accepted:
Parish Cllr.C.Eames and also Janet Watchman.
2. **Minutes of the meeting of 24th March 2014** - these were agreed by all eligible to vote as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman of the as such.

3. **Police Report - WEST BABERGH SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM**

PCSO Gary Austin was invited to address the meeting . A written report would follow although for a slightly different period- *a full copy can be seen at Appendix A.*

Babergh West Safer Neighbourhood Team now consists of 2 Police Constables and 2 PCSOs. Monks Eleigh's main contacts are PC Darren Marshall and PCSO Jamie Fudge.

Recorded crimes from 21 March 2013 to 21 March 2014 20 crimes – Down to 14 this year.

Theft – 4, Driver/vehicle- 1, Other burglary- 2, Common assault- 5, Other/misc- 2. The reduction is mostly due to the reduction of thefts from the graveyard. Although ongoing those have reduced. Extra patrols were put in place to deter graveyard and outdoor pot thefts.

Advice is available to parishioners from the team about household and outbuilding security.

4. **District Councillor- Mr. Clive Arthey**
District Councillor, Mr. Clive Arthey was invited to present his report - *a full copy can be seen at Appendix A.*
5. **County Councillor-Mrs Jenny Antill**
County Councillor, Mrs. Jenny Antill arrived late due to other commitments that she had that evening so this item was suspended until her arrival. She was invited to present her report - *a full copy can be seen at Appendix A.*
6. **Chairman of the Parish Council – Mr Don Reynolds**
Report read- *a full copy can be seen at Appendix A*
7. **To receive information on the following:**

7 i- the new Village Hall on the Parish owned Playing Field

a)The Old Rectory owners had objected to the Village Hall Trust's application to non-material amendments.

b)Richard Bines, Trustee of the Village Hall (Coronation Hall Trust) gave a report.- *See attached at Appendix A*

c) Cllr Di Reynolds spoke of her planned fund raising efforts for the new Village Hall. The sale of tiles for people to decorate to be mounted somewhere in the new hall and a craft fair to be held for local artists to display and sell their works to be held on 18-19 July of this year- more information to follow.

7 ii- The future of the old village hall site – see Cllr Antill's report.

7iii- Elections 7 May 2015 including Parish Council election

Anyone interested in standing for election as a Parish Councillor for the term May 2015-2019 was invited to speak to the Clerk, Mrs Vicky Waples for further information.

7iv to receive an update on the MESCH project.

Report read – tabled as received.

8 Public forum

8i To discuss and approve the removal of some of the recycling bins on Church Fields.

Agreed after discussion and a majority vote in favour that, subject to Parish Council resolution being passed (to be considered at a future Parish Council meeting), the textile recycling bin and the waste paper/cardboard bin could be removed, leaving only the bottle bank.

8ii to receive issues of concern from the meeting

a) A parishioner asked why, if Babergh District Council encourages villages to carry out litter picks, it does not have litter picking equipment to lend to Monks Eleigh. The answer given was that there is a high demand in the Spring and there are just not enough to go around. A suggestion was made that the Parish Council might wish to purchase some high visibility jackets and possibly some litter picking sticks. To be taken forward as Parish Council considers appropriate at a later date.

b) A member of the saveMESchool group reported that it had carried out a survey and the group had concluded that the majority of those who responded to it were in favour, in principle, of an education establishment being set up in the old school building. The group was in the process of compiling a business plan and requested parishioners with ideas for its use to contact the group. The group expected to be able to show that the education centre would be self-funding.

c) The same parishioner explained that she would be initiating a leaflet for distribution to the village – a "What's On" leaflet.

d) Another parishioner posed a question "surely transparency codes should mean that it is paramount that SCC shows what commitment it can make to the future use of the site of the old school?" Cllr Antill responded that SCC needed to satisfy the "best value" condition for the site but that if there are other priorities of SCC that would be served by doing so then it might be able to make an exception and recycle some of the benefits back into the community." It had to be noted that proceeds of sale of the site have to be recycled back into the SCC Education budget.

e) Defibrillator training to take place on 30 March at 7 pm in the United Reform Church. An open invitation extended to anyone who wished to take part.

f) Concerns were expressed about a dilapidated house in Back Lane and questions posed about Babergh's will to take action; the house is listed and it was thought that Babergh should be taking steps to preserve the house. Another parishioner mentioned that something similar was happening in Stackyard Green, although to a lesser extent.

There being no further questions or comments from those present the Chairman of the Parish Council declared the meeting closed and thanked all for coming and for their contributions. The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman's Report

Monks Eleigh Annual Parish Meeting 2015

As always I must start by extending my thanks to our County Councillor, District Councillor and Parish Councillors for all their hard work and support over the past year. I also heartily thank our Clerk, Vicky, for all her hard work and for making sure we are all carrying out our duties correctly and are aware of all new official procedures.

Throughout the last year there have been 5 Parish Council Meetings and 2 extra ones.

There were 19 Planning applications consulted upon of which 15 were supported with comments to Babergh District Council.

All 19 were agreed by Babergh District Council.

The most important of all these being the passing of the planning permission for the village hall site which we supported.

This years precept has been set at £16714 making an increase on band D properties of 4.42% which equates to £2.94 per year or 5p a week.

This was necessary to cover £1000 we have pledged to the New Village Hall. £500 for Parish Elections this year, and to allow for a contingency fund.

A new Quality Council Scheme Award has been launched and the Parish Council will be considering which level would be appropriate in the new term.

There is a new Transparency Code which the Parish Council must adhere to.

Parish Councils must now publish certain information on line including draft minutes and a brief resume of all expenditure incurred over £100. This is part of the lighter touch audit which means that from 2017 onwards there will be no external audit necessary for Parish Councils with annual expenditure under £25000.

The public and Councillors now have the right to use all types of social media to record the meeting of the Parish Council. This does not extend to live verbal commentary. The Parish Council has in place protocols and guidelines to deal with this and any disruptive behaviour.

Unfortunately having gone into special measures our school has now closed.

This year the Parish Council has spent £2000 on clearing the allotments so they are usable and can be advertised. If anyone would like to work an allotment or knows of someone who would please contact either Jacques Forrest or Don Reynolds.

Around this time of year Monks Eleigh Parish Council give a Chairman's Award to a Parishioner who has continuously given over and above the normal amount of time, energy and caring to our village over a great number of years. This was not mentioned in y report last year as it fell just after our APM and was given to Sheila Beckett in 2014. This year Angie Banks is the well deserving recipient.

The old Village Hall site as you see is now under offer and we most sincerely hope this will be completed very soon, so we can move forward with our new projects.

Don Reynolds (Chairman)

County Councillor, Jenny Antill - Annual Report to Monks Eleigh. 9th March 2015.

The Budget

The financial position of the county council remains very difficult. We have managed to set a budget for the next financial year that reduces expenditure by almost £40m from that spent in the current year while at the same time freezing council tax for a fifth successive year. The main source of savings is a series of transformation programmes through which we hope to be able to deliver services more efficiently and reduce demand for our services in a number of different areas.

We are now starting to try to work out how further savings can be made to bridge a budget gap that approaches £80m over the following two years, around 18% of next year's total budget. This will prove very challenging and it is probable that by 2017/18 if our expectations of reduced funding remain the same, there will be no option but to cut some services which are discretionary and which we are not obliged by law to deliver, and to reduce the quality of services elsewhere.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the current way in which Local Government is financed is unsustainable. This was recognised recently in an independent report commissioned by the Local Government Association and CIPFA (the body for public sector accountants). They stated that many councils are facing a 'cliff edge', and that unless a future government takes the matter of reform seriously and simply continues to reduce funding many services that are taken for granted will come under threat.

Education

The small improvements in educational standards that were discernible last year have continued to be seen this year. Progress is slow, but the appointment of a senior OFSTED inspector as an Assistant Director has seen a step change in the way we address school standards. This more robust approach has not been universally welcomed and indeed has caused some controversy, particularly among teachers at schools that continue to show disappointing performance. I believe however that it is essential that the needs of Suffolk children should come first and that all should have as good an education as possible, together with prospects of a good future career.

Adult Care.

Our provision of adult care is the area in which we are seeing the most pronounced financial pressures. It is likely that in the current year the Directorate will overspend by some £2m, a sign that increased demand for our services and reduced budgets is taking a toll. Over the past year we have been trying to access some of the government's Better Care Fund from the National Health Service, to support the provision of care in the community to relieve hospitals. This is proving very difficult since the Fund does not represent new money and the NHS is running at a deficit.

On a more optimistic note, the transformation programme, Supporting Lives, Connecting Communities, which aims to give a better, more personalised form of care to those still living

at home, is being introduced across the county and is working well with both customers and social workers. The aim of the scheme is to make the best use of care options in the community with the aim of keeping people in their homes for as long as possible.

Highways

The pothole experience has, I understand, been better this year than last, and winter gritting has been carried out on priority routes as and when necessary. This has been achieved with the help of a state of the art pothole mending machine a fleet of new and refurbished gritting machines. There is however an issue with a long list of minor works that are outstanding in a number of areas. The backlog, which was very long a few months ago, is being steadily worked through, although I think it is fair to say that some parishes in Cosford have been waiting an excessively long time for work to be done. I have done my best to continue to chase up these, sometimes with success, sometimes not.

Suffolk County Council has recently launched a new online reporting tool. The new system is map based, which means that provided you know where you are, you can plot exactly where the fault can be found. This is a key issue for our engineers, who previously, it seems, sometimes could not work out where the problem was situated. A link to the online tool can be found on the front page of the CC website.

Despite budgetary problems there have been a number of good news stories from the County Council over the last year.

One of these was the opening of the MyGo youth employment centre in Ipswich which is the first employment centre in the UK specifically for 18 to 24 year olds.

Also on the subject of young people, a £1.5million campaign aimed at doubling the number of apprenticeships in Suffolk and creating new jobs and training opportunities for young people was launched last month in co-operation with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

The council has been very successful in bringing in grants for specific projects, including funding to merge fire stations with police facilities and also to encourage co-operation between the Districts and the County Council in a number of areas

We recently joined forces with Norfolk County Council to support an initiative to encourage cultural tourism in the county.

Finally the Better Broadband project is reported to be slightly ahead of schedule, and additional funding has been found to extend high speed broadband from 85% to 95% of the county from 2016.

Monks Eleigh

Officers from the County Council and the Parish Council have agreed a way forward in respect of how we will settle the future of the Monks Eleigh School site. However, there can be no decisions about the future of the site until the issue of the sale of the playing fields is resolved which is likely to take several months. The necessary consultation process, which has to be undertaken before permission of the Secretary of State to sell the playing fields can

be applied for, is currently taking place. Once this process has taken place, which, it has to be said is something of a formality in this case since the school is already closed, suggestions, proposals and bids with regard to the future of the site will be considered by the County Council. These will be invited both from commercial interests and also from the Monks Eleigh community.

Normally the ultimate decision would be made by the officers sitting on the corporate property board in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resource Management. Since this may well be me, I will be asking my assistant, Robert Whiting from Kesgrave to make the decision alongside officers. I know that he will take my views as the local member into account. I would expect that any option would include some form of contribution for the community, whether in kind or financial, but at this stage it is difficult to be more precise than this.

I would like to thank Don Reynolds and also Mrs Waples for working with me over the past year, and look forward to continuing in 2015/16. I hope that any resident who has a problem that I may be able to resolve will not hesitate to get in touch with me.

March 2015

2015 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MONKS ELEIGH

9th March 2015

This year marks the end of another four year term, with District elections in May. This report will update you on how things have progressed over the last four years.

Back in 2010 there was still a faint possibility that Local Government Review in Suffolk might happen. Replacing County and District Council in Suffolk with new Unitary Authorities had the support of the County Council and Babergh District Council, but by the time the new Council was elected in May 2011 it was clear we would have to look at other options to reduce costs. A full merger with Mid Suffolk District Council was rejected, but we agreed to the joint delivery of services with Mid Suffolk, and the two councils integrated under one chief executive to deliver revenue savings for the tax payer. Some elements of that integration over the past four years have been challenging and the issue of a joint headquarters has yet to be resolved. We have a Joint Strategic Plan and are currently working on joint Local Plan documents to agree proposals for growth and a common set of Development Control policies for both Councils. They seek to meet the needs of an ageing population whilst also providing for identified shortages in housing types to sustain balanced communities and protect facilities. We will also be building Council Houses again (for the first time in over 30 years), and installing solar (pv) panels on over 2000 existing council houses across the two districts.

Waste and recycling

I am most proud of our achievements with waste and recycling. It was sixteen years ago that I became involved in formulating a joint strategy for the whole County to reduce landfill. Back in 1999 we were landfilling nearly 90% of all household waste with most of our recycling through “bring sites”. Over the last sixteen years we have introduced a three wheeled bin collection system for the whole of Suffolk, and together with other initiatives, including a wide range of recyclables collected at Household Waste and Recycling Centres, Suffolk is now recycling over 50% of household waste. My involvement on the Suffolk Waste Partnership has continued and last year the final piece of the jigsaw for waste treatment in Suffolk saw the Energy from Waste plant at Great Blakenham coming on stream to take residual (black bin) waste and burn it to produce electricity. A tomato growing enterprise is also planned to use some of the heat from the plant. We have a new contract for dry recyclables (blue bin) and are now in a position where less than 5% of household waste will end up in landfill.

Council Tax

Over the past four years the savings through integration together with specific government grants have led to no increases in Council Tax for Babergh District Council, and this year there is again no increase.

Monks Eleigh

Over the past four years another five Local Needs homes have been provided in the village, and the various issues surrounding this Village Hall and its replacement have, I hope, finally been resolved.

Elections May 7th

As I said at the beginning, it is the end of another four year term, and 2015 also brings my tenure as your District Councillor to twenty four years. I hope I have helped to keep your village an attractive, vibrant and rewarding place to live, and it has been a pleasure to be associated with you for so long.

Thank you.

Clive Arthey

Report to Parish AGM 9th March 2015 on Village Hall Progress

Original application which expired in March 2014 had no contribution for affordable housing or recreation facilities; however, it did have a requirement tying the development of the site with the completion of the Community Hall on the school grounds. We were in the process of re-negotiating this requirement to make it a requirement that development could commence once the contract for the building of the new hall on the playing field was signed.

Application submitted on 21st February 2014 with no changes whatsoever. There was a slight delay in getting the application registered as Babergh's procedure had changed and they now required an agreement to pay various contributions before they would register the application. After a number of toing and froing the application was registered and the consultation period was due to end mid May.

During the consultation period there were no objections and one letter in support.

However, they would not grant permission until we had agreed to pay a £30K contribution for affordable housing and a £7.5K contribution for recreational facilities, and still wished to tie in the development of the new hall with the start of the housing development. This was in addition to the £17.5K they wanted to allow access over their land for the garages for two of the properties.

After much letter writing and telephone calls we were summoned to a meeting with the Corporate Manager – Development Management of the Place Directorate. We were informed that they had reconsidered their position with regard to the financial contributions and would not be requiring any. To our amazement they also indicated they would “take a risk” in not requiring the linking of the two developments.

However, as this was against their established policy they would have to take it to committee who eventually approved it unanimously and we received the renewal of the planning permission dated 29th October 2014.

At this point we again placed the site on the market through Frosts of Hadleigh who initially suggested a figure of £225K for the site. In view of the market and the removal of the link between the two developments we requested it be placed on the market at £250K. We had several offers at that price so we requested they went to sealed bids. We received six sealed bids which when opened were all over the £250K mark bar one.

In discussions with Frosts the Trustees selected one bidder who we thought offered the best secured price. They were requested to complete exchange of contracts by the end of January with completion by mid February. As with all best made plans this has not been achieved as the developers solicitors have required that the site be registered with the Land Registry before contract could be exchanged. This has taken considerable time due to the very imprecise details on the original conveyance from Cosford Rural council in 1954 and the time it takes for solicitors to do the necessary. We are awaiting the result from the Land Registry.

Turning now to the new hall we have cleared five of the planning conditions required before work can commence including the Archaeological dig, which turned up nothing. Building Regulation drawings are being prepared so that we can go out to tender for the main building. This work, however, has thrown up a problem with the roof structure. The original design was a structure with a small lean to. Babergh did not like this design and wanted a symmetrical shape which we conceded to. This new shape, however, made it impossible to design standard roof trusses. To meet the Babergh design would have involved further input from a structural engineer and a more costly structure. By a small compromise this extra cost would be avoided but it would mean the eaves height would be increased by 200mm, eight inches, and the ridge by 500mm about 18 inches.

Upon consultation with Babergh this was considered suitable for their Non-Material Amendment procedure which is currently underway. This has cost more time, money, and delay as well as having to get the architect to draw up new elevation plans again something Babergh insisted upon even though the whole shape remains the same just the small height difference.

So you can see it has not all been plain sailing. I think it is fair to say the delays can be attributed to the workings, or rather the lack of workings, of Babergh. We now have planning permission without restrictions for this site and have sold it to a developer at a very good price. Until the contracts have actually been exchanged we are not disclosing either the name of the developer or the sum attained. It does mean however, that we have substantially sums towards the cost of the new hall without taking into account any further grants applications for which are in the pipeline. We also have an indication from a number of supporters for contributions to funds.

I am very confident that we will have sufficient funds and the approvals to start construction very shortly. With all the delays, none of which are of our making, I am hesitant in suggesting a completion date but I am extremely hopeful that we will be able to a Christmas Party in the new hall.