

MINUTES OF THE ONEHOUSE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON  
MONDAY 9 MAY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

Present: Mrs Willshere – Chair Onehouse Parish Council  
District Cllr Matthissen  
5 members of the public.

**1. To receive apologies for absence.**

These were received from County Cllr Otton, Mrs Copping, Mr Raisey and Mrs Jones.

**2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 5 May 2021**

It was proposed, seconded and carried to approve the minutes.

**3. To receive the audited parish accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2021**

During the year a precept of £13,500.00 was raised. Donations were given to Suffolk Accident Rescue Service, Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau, East Anglian Air Ambulance, Ipswich & East Suffolk Headway.

The balance of the Income and Expenditure Account as at 31 March 2018 is £21,803.14 Funds held in earmarked reserves total £13,185.72.

**4. Parish Council Report – Mrs N Willshere**

This has been an interesting year coming out of COVID and moving forward into normality.

We have still used technology for some meetings particularly with planners and developers. We have faced another year of the continued encroachment of Stowmarket into our Parish as development has continued across from Chilton Fields, Hopkins Homes and the recent grant of permission for the Bloor development south of Union Road. There is still no progress on the continuation of the footpath to Chilton Leys bend, there has been various correspondence and confirmation but no action.

OHSMag is now back in a printed format but also remains online too. Our thanks to Ron Raisey as Editor and all the distributors. My thanks to Peggy Fuller as Parish clerk and my fellow councillors for their work during the year, the working party that keeps the Paupers Graves so well.

I am looking forward to the celebration events to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee now that we can all meet up again.

**5. Matters arising from the previous items on the agenda.**

There were none.

**6. County Councillor's Report – Mrs P Otton.**

This year has continued to be "dogged" by COVID which is even now affecting many schools. However, I'm sure we all agree the war in Ukraine has left us all feeling shocked and helpless. I know many people are now registering to house refugees and I have sent all my parishes the current information we have on how Suffolk will respond, and what is required to house them.

At long last SCC Highways seem to be taking some action on the footpath onto Forest Road. Starhouse Lane continues to be an ongoing problem with continually needing resurfacing. I have reported the lack of work on the Burford Bridge, apparently will need a road closure.

Following a request by a resident I have asked whether the 30mph can be extended on Lower Road. So far it is not looking hopeful.

I have met with SCC highways, a parish councillor and member of the public to look at the parking problems around the housing estate. We have sent photos to highways but are waiting for any ideas.

I am delighted to have been able to help with the cost of the headphones/microphones for the Jubilee Players from my Locality Budget.

### **Biodiversity Recommendations to Enhance**

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirmed plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions.

### **Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined**

Suffolk County Council voted in their budget for 2022-23 and the Conservative's did not take the maximum social care precept to fund adult care allowed by Government. Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care.

### **Carbon Budget**

The Carbon Budget is aimed to help us understand the level of emissions the Council are responsible for and helps to achieve the Council's ambition of being carbon-neutral by 2030.

### **Report into SEND Provision: Review & Recommendations**

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision. The report found severe failings in the delivery of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans for children.

### **Bus Back Better: Initiative from the Department for Transport (DfT)**

The Bus Back Better scheme was launched this year, aimed at updating, expanding, and improving our bus services in Great Britain. The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council approved a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submitted to Government, while Suffolk County Council which was unsuccessful. I have asked if a KATCH response service can be set up in this area.

### **New Investment in Drainage and Footway Infrastructure**

The Cabinet approved £10m to replace broken pipes and new installations, as well as an additional £10m to increase the maintenance of selected footways in Suffolk.

### **Lorry Route Map Review in Suffolk: Interactive Map to be Published**

Suffolk County Council undertook a review of recommended lorry routes across the county on their communities. The review will be completed in Spring 2022 where the County Council plans to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For further information, please contact [lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk),

## **7. District Councillor's Report – Mr J Matthissen.**

I first pay tribute to all who have contributed by supporting local people through a second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Babergh & Mid Suffolk (BMSDC) staff

have taken on a variety of extra tasks and maintained a reasonable service despite the practical difficulties of working from home and safe procedures.

**Governance.** Many decisions are being decided on the Chairman's vote and there has been little collaborative working between the administration group and the Green and Liberal Democrat group. The Green party had a very successful result in a by-election in the Thurston Ward, so the Council remains hung at 17 each side. The opportunity to reconsider the Cabinet model was rejected.

Council meetings are now being held in person, but virtual platforms continue to be used for briefings and internal meetings. It is hoped that the Council will in future be able to hold 'hybrid' meetings where voting Council members need to be physically present at meetings, but some officers and members of the public will be able to make presentations and representations online.

**Financial** Mid Suffolk's general fund budget continues to be in a healthy condition, and the District element of council tax will be frozen. The council agreed the proposal from the Green and Liberal Democrat group to spend some of the Growth and Efficiency Fund to provide 2 electric bus services to help residents get into Stowmarket for a 2 year period. The Council's investment in CIFCO continues to provide revenue despite the value of the assets deteriorating.

**Climate Change and Biodiversity** The Council has recently adopted the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan to encourage more residents to travel actively. As part of the Tree and Hedgerow planting scheme over 200 trees and c2,500 hedgerow plants have been delivered to parishes. Over 250 trees were given to celebrate births during 2021 as part of the 'Tree for Life' scheme.

The construction of a solar carport is well underway at the Leisure Centre and the new visitor centre at Needham Lake will be opened this summer. The waste lorries are now all operating on hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) which should cut carbon emissions by 90%. MSDC adopted a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit as technical guidance for both developers and homeowners to help reduce the carbon footprint in new and existing buildings.

**Housing** The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget was agreed by full Council, and as the Government have now lifted the rent cap, Council tenants will see a 4.1% increase in their rent. The HRA business plan is to be developed and hopes to include a programme of improvements to existing Council stock as well as building and acquiring dwellings. Part of the housing development on the old HQ site in Needham Market has been completed and this included 3 new council homes, and a further 15 affordable homes were acquired across the district in 2021. Over 100 residents were prevented from becoming homeless and the Council provided 16 dedicated beds for Rough Sleepers courtesy of grant funding.

**Ukraine War** As part of the response to the Ukraine crisis, BMSDC officers are carrying out housing checks on the properties which will be accommodating Ukrainian refugees, once the applications have been processed by the Home Office.

**Planning** Following the examination interim report on the Joint Local plan, the Councils have agreed a 2-part local plan process with the inspectors. This will enable the important social, economic and environmental objectives to be published in a Part 1 Joint Local Plan which will be adopted first, whilst the remaining work on spatial strategy matters and housing allocations will be addressed in a Part 2 Joint Local Plan. MSDC currently has over 9 years housing land supply.

**Wellbeing** The council adopted its first Wellbeing Strategy this year. A number of initiatives across the district took place during the year including *Family Park Cooking* session in Stowmarket, free Christmas Holiday activity session, *Our Parks* (free outdoor fitness sessions) in Stowmarket and the *Active Schools* programme. MSDC together with Suffolk County Council and Stowmarket Town Council supported the launch in July of the Chilton Fields parkrun held every Saturday morning.

**Economy** The Council continues the development of Gateway 14 which is now part of Freeport East. The business case has now been agreed by Cabinet. Almost 200 young people attended the Careeriosity event focussing on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and cultural industries. The Council held a Local Energy Showcase which attracted over 200 visitors and several local businesses. BMSDC's Virtual High Street project won an award.

**Communities** Almost £400,000 worth of grants was distributed to support communities across the district. I was pleased to be able to allocate all my locality budget to community groups. The next tranche of locality funding is open for bids, so please get in touch with requests.

I have been working with the Parish Council and I continue to try and resist the town encroaching towards the village. The fate of the final section of hedge in Union Road was sealed 18 months ago, when the principle of development was forced through on the casting vote of the planning committee chair. The County Council requires a visibility splay, but I am pleased to have persuaded the developers to retain hedges on the other 3 sides of the site. Next week I will be arguing in the planning committee that there is no need to breach policies to allow another 20 houses opposite the bungalows on Forest Road. After months of argument, the idea of building on the land between Paupers Graves and the village has been withdrawn. Overall, too much large scale development is taking place, which is inevitably damaging, and has often not been carried out sensitively. I can only hope the end results will eventually mature into proper communities.

## **8. To receive reports from Local Organisations**

### **OHS Village Hall and Playing Field Trust**

The new outbuilding is now almost complete. The pre-school, jubilee players and the social club have all moved everything into the new building. The electricity supply is yet to be connected. The next thing to do is take down the old building. We think we may already have a buyer for the tiles and possibly the bricks. We intend to get a team up there over the summer to take the building down and clean

the bricks before selling on. Once this building is gone, the soak away for the new build can be completed and then we can think about the parking and garden area. We have been looking into getting the floor replaced and sourcing grants to do this. However, it would transpire it's not as simple as just getting a new floor. The floor underneath is in poor condition so we will need to have this repaired before we can put new flooring in. So it's currently an ongoing affair.

User groups are going well. As well as the pre-school, we now have a Pilates instructor hiring the hall twice a week. Hall bookings are slowly picking up as well. The social club has re-opened and is open every Friday from 8pm. Visitors to the bar are scarce and we are looking to do some advertising to remind people it is open and available to all.

We will be hosting 2 events for the Queens Jubilee. On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June, we will be having Music on the field. This is free entry but food and drink will be available for a small fee. On the Sunday we then intend to do afternoon tea. This will be free but a ticket only event, mainly so we can get an idea of numbers and get the catering sorted. Hopefully, weather permitting this will also be on the field. A group of people will be door knocking around the village in the next week or so to canvas interest, and get numbers.

### **Tree and Footpath Warden**

Footpaths to the south of the village appear to be well maintained, and signage in place. There are no instances of dog fouling however one of the paths has some rubble nearby, but this belongs to the farmer and wasn't fly-tipped or restricting the footpath. The North of the village footpaths are in good condition. There is, as seems typical for the area, some bagged dog mess thrown in the ditch adjacent to the footpath at the rear of Northfield Road, but none was encountered on the footpaths themselves.

### **Jubilee Players**

After two years of absence the Jubilee Players were finally able to get back onto the stage in February this year with a pantomime performance of Aladdin. We were delighted to welcome some new enthusiastic young players as well as some familiar faces and after much hard work and dedication, with rehearsals starting in September 2021, we put on a very successful show. Audience numbers had to be reduced as a result of the pandemic but the audiences were very supportive at each of our four performances and a great time was had by all concerned. I'm also pleased to be able to report that we actually managed to make a small profit.

All the work involved in setting up for the show in the Community Centre was made considerably easier with the purchase of a brand new, light weight, easy to assemble and store stage to replace the old wooden one which was built in 1977.

We also purchased a new carpet for the stage and new head microphones for which I understand Penny Otton is very kindly organising the funding.

We are holding our AGM on Wednesday at 7.30 in the Community Centre when we will discuss our next performance and hopefully continue going from strength to strength.

## **Paupers Graves**

We are a team of six 'Old Boys' who met regularly twice a month throughout the winter and keep the grass area cut during the Summer Months.

We have had quite a busy year working on different projects one project is to improve the hedging around the borders of the site to make it a bit more secure!! During December and January some of the site was flooded due to the heavy rain and we now have dug out two of the ditches allowing water to flow to the ditch around the adjoining field. During Covid Lockdown we had a huge increase of people walking into the Graves, about 300%, most of them amazed at the beauty and tranquillity of the Area and very complementary to the hard work put into making it such a serene little spot and still visiting the area, a lot of them confessed that they have lived in Stowmarket all their lives and didn't realise it was there!! The three Rowen trees we planted over the last two years have grown quite a bit and produced lots of red berries for the birds last winter. Two years ago, we cleared the centre area and scattered a lot of wild flower seeds in the area to create a wild flower section. We are still waiting to see which flowers appear!!

We are quite a friendly team who not only do an excellent job in the area but we put the world to right over a coffee and cake (as we have a cake rota) and have held three Woodman's Dinners along with our wives.

We have a much-debated concern and that is: - there are six of us and our total age is 547 four of us are in our Eighties and the other three are in their seventies. The concern is; what will happen to this beautiful tranquil little site when in maybe a few years' time we are too ancient to care for it.

## **Onehouse Church**

2021 was a challenging year for all our parishes in the Combs and Finborough Benefice. The Revd Chris Childs and Wendy left on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 before moving to a new post in the Forest Heath team. Services were still being held on zoom because of covid 19 and pandemic restrictions.

The Benefice faced several challenges including the reintroduction of services in our churches as regulations allowed but with a different timetable, the continuing use of zoom services and the search for a new Rector. Pew sheets and sermons were posted out to keep as many of us in touch as possible and the Messy Church team sent out 55 activity packs as well as liaising with Gt Finborough C of E Primary School to provide items for their on-line work. The Pew Sheet and Zoom links for services and meetings were emailed to many people. Work in Chilton Meadows Care Home, Finborough Court Bible Study and Hospital visiting continued to be suspended. Rules about numbers attending weddings and funerals were constantly changing which was difficult for the families concerned and we had to use a great deal of ingenuity at the services which were held. Fifteen weddings were held and on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2021 the law of the land changed and churches were no longer permitted to issue marriage Certificates at the time of the wedding. Instead the local Registrar has to be notified of a forthcoming wedding in our churches and a Marriage Document prepared by the member of the clergy officiating at the

service. It is then up to the officiating clergy to deliver the Marriage Document to the Registrar as soon as possible and subsequently for the couple to apply to the Registrar for their Marriage Certificate.

As we were allowed back into our churches more and more we used a timetable of services which Revd Chris Childs had adopted after the first “lockdown” had ceased rather than the full timetable of services which had been in use prior to the pandemic. This was done to enable our new Rector to come to be able to exercise more flexibility and to have a more free hand to consider timetabling of services and meetings. We also continued to have some zoom services and meetings. Many people said how much they appreciated zoom services as well as actual services in church and how much these things had contributed to a much closer “Benefice feel” which has led to people attending different churches in the Benefice and supporting each other’s activities even more.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 our Lay Reader Derek Ames died peacefully after a sudden illness although he had had one or two signs of ill health for a while. Derek contributed to Church life and to Community life in many ways. He was a great ecumenist and started the bi monthly Men’s Breakfast, he was also one of the instigators in setting up the Good Neighbour Scheme in Onehouse with its weekly coffee mornings open to all.

For several months of the year meetings took place in the different parishes to consider the salient points which should be included in our Benefice Profile in the search for a new Rector. Each parish had a representative through whom thoughts and ideas were sent and Lesley Steed then collated all the information so that the Benefice profile was ready to be sent to any interested parties. In addition prayers were said regularly at services and individually for our new Rector. Interviews were held at the end of July and the Revd Sarah Jenkins was appointed to the post. At the beginning of November two services were held for All Souls and we discovered the depth of the sadness there was and still is amongst many who have lost loved ones with all the pandemic regulations preventing them from visiting or being with their loved ones. Many have suffered in other ways during this most difficult and challenging time.

Our new Rector, Revd Sarah Jenkins, was licensed and installed by the Bishop of Dunwich on 4<sup>th</sup> November at St Mary’s, Buxhall. A full church appreciated the hard work undertaken by many to prepare for this service and, together with those who took part in the service, enjoyed the delicious refreshments served afterwards. Remembrance services were held in every parish on the 11<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> November and the patronal festival for St Andrew’s, Great Finborough was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November.

With a sharp increase in the number of cases of the Omicron variant of Covid, it was agreed that refreshments after services would be temporarily suspended. Congregations were requested to continue to wear masks during services, especially whilst singing. An extensive rota of services for Advent and Christmas was prepared and undertaken by members of the ministry team, supported by

church wardens, musicians and members of our congregations. In addition, 2000 Christmas cards, listing all services in the benefice, were delivered by volunteers throughout all parishes.

**Rectors Comments** Although only able to comment on the final two months of the year, I would like to thank everyone for the wonderfully warm welcome I've received, together with my appreciation for the support and hard work of our ministry team, church wardens, musicians, volunteers and congregation members. There's no doubt that 2021 has been a year of transition for the benefice but the positive responses when considering our performance, and looking forward to the future, are heart-warming and encouraging as we move through 2022. The new year has brought regular meetings with the ministry team and church wardens, a review of our safeguarding training needs, organising the recommissioning of Elders and finalising our regular pattern of services and there's much more that we have to look forward to.

**Local History Group**

The past 12 months has seen very little activity by the Local History Group due to covid restrictions, and generally the average age of our members, many of whom were reluctant to attend any face to face meetings, especially indoors.

We have only had one meeting, in April 2022 when we had Charlie Haylock as our speaker, telling us the story of his time as Suffolk Dialect Coach on the Netflix film The Dig starring Ralph Fiennes.

This was very well attended and it was good to see some new faces amongst our audience and it is hoped that some of them may become members.

Current Officers of the group are: Chairman: Michael Robinson, Vice Chairman: Sally Corker, Secretary and Treasurer: Ron Raisey. We are hoping to have more meetings this coming year

**OHS Women's Guild**

My report is quite different this year obviously due to the lockdown affecting 2 years of meetings. We managed to keep in touch with members via Zoom, emails and telephone calls. We started to meet in small groups in member's gardens keeping within the lockdown guidelines.

Since starting back in Trinity Hall after its refurbishment we were only meeting once a month and have changed our time to 2pm. to 4pm. Members are getting older and those who drive are not keen to drive at night. This will be discussed at our AGM on the 5th. May as to whether we will carry on with this change although our planned programme from September to December 2022 is for 2 meetings per month at the new afternoon time.

We still have 26 members plus 2 honorary members.

**9. Any other business**

There was none

The meeting closed at 7.41 p.m.

Signed..... Dated.....