

MINUTES OF THE ONEHOUSE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 17 APRIL 2023 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

Present – Mrs Willshere – Chair Onehouse Parish Council
County Councillor Otton
District Councillor Matthissen
10 members of the public

1. To receive apologies for absence.

These were received from Mr Cook.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 9 May 2022

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

3. To receive the audited parish accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022

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 2022 is £16,832.62. Funds held in earmarked reserves total £9,746.63.

4. Parish Council Report – Mrs N Willshere

We have faced another year of the continued encroachment of Stowmarket into our Parish. We challenged the decision to grant the permission for the Bloor development but lost the judicial review. We have fought MSDC wanting to change the sports provision at Chilton Leys to housing and are now looking at taking on 6 acres of land beside the Pauper's Graves. It is hoped this area will progress during the coming year.

At last it looks like progress is being made on the continuation of the footpath to Chilton Leys bend. SCC Highways is in the process of drafting a design which they will consult with us on.

Our thanks to Ron Raisey as Editor of OHSMag and all the distributors. We have had to increase the number of copies to be able to provide to the residents of Mill Grove. We have received very positive feedback from them and they are very pleased to be part of Onehouse. My thanks to Peggy Fuller as Parish Clerk and my fellow councillors for their work during the year, also the working party that keeps the Paupers Graves so well.

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

There were none.

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

A year has passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It was on the 24th March that Councillors cross-party shared a single motion in support of Ukraine. Our Group recommended the motion, condemning the actions of Putin, as well as committed to support and welcome refugees to become a part of Suffolk communities. The 'Homes for Ukraine' programme continue to provide hosts for

refugees but is in dire need of more households to come forward and offer temporary accommodation.

HIGHWAYS; Much work has been done on Starhouse Lane but there continues to be problems on and off. I met with a highways officer and member of the public to see if we could do something about parking issues.

EXTENSION OF 30MPH FOREST ROAD; I was happy to support this but felt it should be connected with the footpath proposal.

FOREST ROAD FOOTPATH; the ongoing saga continues but we have now been told plans are being prepared. I have asked that we see them as soon as possible and that an officer attend your meeting.

BURFORD BRIDGE; after some time this was eventually repaired.

UNION ROAD DEVELOPMENT; there have been numerous changes to the road layout but concern at the loss of trees onto Finborough Road.

A14; MAJOR WORK; we need to make sure that traffic is not using the side roads as a diversion.

LOCALITY BUDGET I am happy to have been able to support the refurbishment of the Trinity Hall

CORONATION EVENTS; Suffolk County Council will waive any fees for street closures.

FULL COUNCIL: Over the past 12 months my Group have submitted motions for Full Council meeting.

In July, we asked this Council to declare a cost-of-living emergency in the county of Suffolk. With Winter looming, we believed more emphasis was needed on providing emergency support to the most vulnerable households. This was voted down.

In December, we ask the Council to commit further to Community Transport, as well as investigate further into why the council failed in their Bus Back Better bid. Rural bus services have been frequently cut, and the council's failed bid meant millions for investment in restoring the bus network was lost. Again, this was voted down.

I am very proud that the motion I put to promote cleaner rivers in Suffolk was agreed unanimously. We believe every community should have access to safe waters. The motion committed the Council to investigate further into what further work can be done to protect biodiversity and address polluting run-off in rivers, as well as working with farmers to encourage better practice.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY; in 2019 our motion to declare a climate emergency was agreed, however as there are now 31 new councillors, we decided to ask for that commitment again last month which was approved

Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track to achieve Net Zero by 2030 – a declaration made by SCC in 2019. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ in 2030 – As SCC has had 31 new Cllrs since the original declaration, our Group will be asking Cllrs to redeclare their commitment to Net Zero by 2030 today.

2023/24 Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined

At the beginning of February 2023, the Council's budget for 2023/24 was voted in. The Conservative budget will now increase tax by 3.99% - broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in general tax.

My Group proposed to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a stronger pathway towards Net Zero. We proposed a review into Suffolk's speed limits,

We proposed using £1m to actively recruit, retain and reward frontline staff in adult social care, as well as providing more for Suffolk Libraries to help maintain services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we wanted to invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage.

The administration voted against our budget amendments, saying our proposals were ill thought-out and not appropriate.

Suffolk Devolution: Big Deal?

In 2022, the Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation to devolve powers. A public consultation will now follow, asking residents if this is what communities want. The deal will look to install a directly elected leader, commonly known as a Mayor. Politically, there is a real risk of a stalemate in politics. Not enough information has been given to show how to prevent a gridlock if a Mayor from a minority party is elected. Overall, our Group will always welcome devolving more power to local authorities. The public will now need to decide whether this is something they want.

PUMPKIN COMPETITION; I was delighted to have been one of the judges at such a successful event.

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

In the 2022/23 budget a scheme to provide two electric buses, proposed by our group, was agreed. This scheme was put on hold by the Cabinet and it is hoped to get this going in 2023.

The budget for 2023/24 was approved for approximately £15.5 million on core services (up from £13 million the year before, mainly due to inflation) with no increase in council tax. Council home rents increased by 7% (against 4.1% last year) and a 7% increase in sheltered housing service charges (against no increase last year) as well as increase in utility charges. All these increases are due to inflation, costs of energy and other cost increases.

Our group put forward budget proposals for a £2 million investment in energy efficiency measures for housing in the district and this was agreed. We hope to see this implemented in the next six months or so.

The Council has reserves of over £21 million as at the end of the financial year. This is expected to increase to nearly £23 million over 2023/24. We hope this funding can be allocated to projects across the district.

Investments The Council has continued with local projects and after some delays the café at Needham Lakes opened in 2022 and the solar car port at Stowmarket Leisure Centre came into use.

Work continue on Gateway 14 and a first contract was signed with The Range for the company to move to the site. Discussions continue with other potential companies to be located here.

In Stowmarket, investment for a new Sports, Health, Education and Leisure facility was agreed and also funding to develop a new site for a depot for Mid Suffolk and Babergh districts.

Mid Suffolk District Council continues to hold investments in commercial property, outside the district, via its company CIFCO. This property, all outside of the Mid Suffolk area, ranges from gyms to car showrooms, in places including Epsom, Harlow, Lincoln, Peterborough, Norwich and Milton Keynes. Approximately £1-1.5 million is earned each year via rents however the overall value of this property portfolio has fallen.

Economy The Council continues to support the development of Gateway 14 which is now part of Freeport East. The Council is investing in an “innovation hub” specifically to support businesses in the Mid Suffolk area.

A new partnership with the University of Essex was set up to provide innovation opportunities for businesses.

The Women’s Cycle Tour was calculated to have brought about £1 million of economic benefits to the region. There is unlikely to be a Women’s Tour in 2023 due to a lack of funding nationally.

Climate Change The Council invested in new environmentally-friendly bin lorries – 22 out of a fleet of 35 across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. They are fuelled by HVO (Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil) produced from waste cooking oil and will reduce the carbon footprint of this service by 90%.

There was continued support for parishes with advice from the new post of biodiversity manager.

The Council encourages local groups to improve areas for wildlife and continues with the Tree for Life scheme as well as tree-planting across the district.

Cost of living In conjunction with the County Council, Mid Suffolk provided a number of initiatives to help with the cost of living crisis. This included an increase in the amount of funding available for those in hardship, community funding for “warm rooms” and a change to council tax for those on very low incomes.

A team at the Council worked to encourage groups and individuals to apply for funding.

Planning and Housing For most of the year, the Council’s planning policy team continued to work on the Joint Local Plan following the Plan having been spilt into two parts as agreed with the Planning Inspectors last year. Part 1 covers all the social, environmental and economic policies and Part 2 covers those relating to housing numbers, distribution etc. Part 1 was progressed and is currently out at consultation. It is expected that, if agreed, this might be adopted in late summer / early autumn of 2023.

With regards to Part 2, the Inspector had acknowledged that 90% of Mid Suffolk’s housing target is already allocated (either via existing permissions or sites allocated via Neighbourhood Plans) and that this is central to future policies. It is expected that work will commence on this during 2023 but that full adoption of a Part 2 would not take place until 2025.

Mid Suffolk’s annual monitoring report showed that 862 new dwellings were built in the district in 2021/22 - 168% of the current annual target (513 dwellings) set by

the national standard methodology. There are 7,929 outstanding planning permissions (as at 01/04/22) which are either not started or under construction. Separately, it was confirmed that Mid Suffolk now has 10.88 years of housing land supply, well above the Government target of five years.

Over £2 million was provided to parish and town councils in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

A number of significant planning applications and housing developments have progressed during the year:

- Taylor Wimpey site is extending according to plan, with a scheme to build on the corner of Forest Road and Starhouse Lane being firmly rejected.
- Hopkins site in Union Road. Phase 1 is on land within Onehouse, and is nearing completion. I have not had a satisfactory answer regarding the footpath to Finborough Road, nor the sign indicating the boundary between Onehouse and Stowmarket. Attempts to change the boundary were halted amidst procedural confusion, and will not be decided for some years as may need to form part of a reassessment of District wards.
- Bloor site in Union Road has started with rather less trouble than Hopkins, apart from the unwelcome street lights. The adjustable timing of illumination may mean some of these are not turned on at all.
- Refusal of the houses in Forest Road has recently been appealed, and we can hope the recent good record of MSDC winning most appeals will continue.
- The sports and leisure hub project (SHELF) will be significant for the parish, although not within the boundary.

Supporting the community Almost £400,000 was allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council to communities across the district. My locality fund benefitted the following schemes:

- Bench for Paupers Graves
- Speeding Gates for Finborough
- Street lights replacement for Finborough
- Jubilee event in Onehouse
- Plants for Oaks Meadow – Combs & Little Finborough
- Trinity Hall floor – Onehouse, Harleston, Shelland
- John Peel Centre – sound system
- Tree work - Harleston

I would like to thank the Parish Councils for all their work done throughout the year.

8. To receive reports from Local Organisations

OHS Women's Guild

We have had a very good year since post Lockdown. Our membership has risen to 31 plus 2 honorary members. During the refurbishment of Trinity Hall over the Christmas period we were able to use the Stowmarket Scout Centre for our December, January and February meetings. It is great to now be back home in Trinity Hall in all its glory.

The committee have been very busy planning our programme, now up to February

2024. Changing our meetings to afternoons is working extremely well. Our programme and insurance certificates are displayed on our lovely new noticeboard in Trinity Hall. We also report each month in the OHSMAG. Our AGM will take place on 4 May with a Coronation theme.

Jubilee Players

Over the past two years the Jubilee Players have put on two successful pantomimes – Aladdin in 2022 and Rapunzel this February. I am also pleased to report that we have replaced the old stage, which was constructed in 1977, with a new much lighter and easier to assemble version. This was paid for with proceeds from previous pantomimes and other fund-raising events. This year we are hoping to put on a play in September as well as preparing for next year's pantomime. We had some new cast members and helpers but are always looking for more people to join us.

Tree and Footpath Warden

Over the last 12 months, we have been out several times and have walked all of the Parish footpaths. Most recently in the last fortnight. Details of these walks are:

- All footpaths are accessible with, no fallen trees or groundwork issues
- No flooding from blocked ditches
- Dog fouling was minimal
- Paths across field land have been maintained by landowners
- There have been notices posted on farmland warning walkers to stay to footpaths and keep their dogs on leads, suggesting there may have been issues
- Notices have been attached to many footpath signs around the parish with QR codes connecting people to information on footpath routes and Countryside Code

There have been no reports received regarding issues with trees in the parish, other than clearance of hedgerows surrounding the new housing developments.

Paupers Graves

At the moment we are a team of seven 'Old Boys' who met regularly twice a month throughout the year to keep the 'Paupers Graves Area' looking something special. We have had quite a busy year working on two different projects. In 2018 we were digging the ditch out on the North East boundary when we discovered a large metal object buried in the ditch. After digging around it we discovered that it was an old Cast Iron Victorian Bath!! We cleaned it up a bit and transported it into my garden (it took six of us to lift it!!) It stood there until last Summer when we decided to display it and do a write up about its history. A concrete plinth was laid, the bath scrubbed up, bolted to the concrete base and a professionally made notice with a Victorian map of the Workhouse area showing the Infirmary where it spent its working days many years ago. At the moment It is displaying some gorgeous daffodils and wild flowers. During Covid Lockdown we had a huge increase of people walking into the Graves, about 300%, increase most of them amazed at the beauty and tranquility 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!! But they still visit on a regular basis. 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. We have had another Rowen tree donated this last year in memory of a loved one who used to enjoy walking into the area when she was having treatment at the Day Centre at Stow lodge. Three years ago, we cleared the centre area and scattered a lot of wild flower seeds in there to create a wild flower section. As that was not too successful this last year one of our team actually grew hundreds of wild flowers from seed and we put the little plants into the soil. We wait to see if that has been successful!! We are very grateful for District Councillor John Matthissen who donated a recycled plastic bench to put in this area for people to enjoy the rather special spot.

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 four Woodman's Dinners along with our wives.

We have a much-debated concern and that is: - there are seven of us and our total age is 557 five of us are in our Eighties and the other two 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.

9. Any other business

There was none

The meeting closed at 7.59 p.m.

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