

Milden Annual Parish Meeting – Wednesday 28th May 2014

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th May 2014 in Milden Pavilion at 7pm

Chairman: Angus Cundey
Treasurer: Rosy Porteous-Butler
Clerk: Sara Godfrey

Present: Myranda Cundey, David Porteous-Butler, Dick Hicksted, Stephen Morley, Christopher Hawkins, Janet Meyer, Joy Morley, Justine Turner, Tony Ditheridge and Joe Coulter.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. **Apologies for absence**

were received from Jan Ditheridge, Mark Isahak, Julie Isahak, John Fulcher, Amanda Fulcher, Adrian Miles, Sally Miles, Tissa Rigby, John Rigby, Sandy De'Ath, Pearl Gee.

2. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th November 2013**

The minutes had been distributed before the meeting. These were accepted as an accurate record of that meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Joy Morley Seconded: Tony Ditheridge

3. **Matters arising from those minutes.**

A new treasurer is still required following Rosy Porteous Butler's decision to resign from the post. Discussions are in progress and hopefully an announcement will be made at the next meeting.

Ideas for the use of the phone box are still required. A book library and a collection of old Milden photographs were both considered. Any other ideas will be welcomed.

The meeting is still awaiting a quote for a larger noticeboard. Tony Ditheridge suggested he would ask his carpenter to have a look at it and provide a quote if appropriate.

The Chairman expressed thanks to John Fulcher for removing the tree that had been causing damage to the bus shelter.

4. **Parish Liaison Officer's Report.**

No report as no officer attended

5. **County Councillor's Report.**

James Finch had provided a written report prior to the meeting. The full copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

In addition to the matters discussed in this report there was also a lengthy discussion regarding the closure of Monks Eleigh school. Councillor Finch stressed that he had worked hard with others including the County Councillor for Cosford to try and save the school. Parishioners at the meeting felt that communication between the school, local authorities and parents had been poor and this had been a significant contributing factor in the dramatic reduction in numbers and ultimate closure.

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Potholes and highway maintenance were also discussed at length. David Porteus Butler raised the issue of a poorly made up area of highway just outside Milden church that had caused a fall and injury to a parishioner. The repair had been made to the incorrect part of the highway. Councillor Finch undertook to correct this mistake and emailed the relevant department later in the meeting. A number of other issues were raised regarding timing and efficiency of pothole repairs. Councillor Finch explained in detail both the technical and contractual aspects that drive some of these issues. He currently chairs the Scrutiny Committee on SCC and there had been a recent review of the contractor and a number of the issues raised at the meeting had been highlighted by the committee to the contractor and will hopefully be addressed. Councillor Finch also commented that if anyone was having trouble getting repairs seen to in a timely manner that he was happy to be contacted by email and hopefully he would be able to expedite matters.

Finally Janet Meyer placed on record her sincere thanks to Councillor Finch for his assistance in obtaining agency care for her late husband when she had been left without any support at short notice. She had turned to Councillor Finch for help when all other avenues had been exhausted and was extremely grateful for the help he gave. She also expressed thanks to Christopher Hawkins who had provided accommodation for a “live-in” carer.

The Chairman expressed the meeting’s thanks to Councillor Finch for his detailed and interesting report and appreciation of his attendance after a long day stewarding at The Suffolk Show.

6. District Councillor’s Report

Bryn Hurren provided a written report at the meeting. The full copy of the report, Putting Babergh in Perspective, is attached to these minutes and as it is a .pdf file will be sent as a separate email if you are receiving these minutes electronically.

The Chairman expressed the meeting’s thanks to Councillor Hurren for his detailed and interesting report and appreciation of him coming directly to the meeting from a late Council meeting in Needham Market.

7. Finance Report

Section 7 Financial Report 28/5/14

Our funds at the bank stand at £479 of which about £200 is committed leaving a true carry forward amount of about £280. Our bank has changed its name to Lloyds Bank from Lloyds TSB. The Treasurer explained that although the total income has stayed the same as last year at £850 we received a grant from the council of £79 (to compensate for new legislation causing a large reduction in tax bases), so our precept was only £771. Last meeting we agreed to increase our precept slightly, to give us a total income of £900. This is the first increase in 4 years and equates to 1.5% per year. However, for 2014/15 our tax base has risen from 48.04 to 51.40 causing our grant to be cut by 51%. In addition this grant is cut by a further 25% per year until it is phased out. It has now been announced that the new law requiring a referendum, for increases in precepts, will not apply to small meetings such as ours.

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2014 were explained by the Treasurer, accepted by the meeting (proposed Miranda Cundey, seconded Stephen Morley) and

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signed by the Chairman. Thanks were conveyed to Howard Webb for auditing them internally. Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman, Clerk and Treasurer. It is likely that we will not need our accounts audited again as our income is small. The suggestion is that such accounts are published online for scrutiny instead. There is presently a consultation on how much this would cost. At present we pay nothing for the audit.

The Budget was reviewed and accepted by the meeting. (Proposed Justine Turner, seconded Tony Ditheridge)

It was decided that once the new treasurer is in place, Rosy will remain as a signatory on the bank account in place of Michael Hawkins as it is best not to trouble him if he is unwell.

8. Pavilion/Recreation Ground.

In the absence of Adrian Miles (holiday) and Pearl Gee (illness), Stephen Morley gave the Pavilion report. The Milden Ball held last autumn was very successful, huge thanks to Christopher and Juliet Hawkins for their hospitality. The next ball is planned for 2015.

The Milden singers have given two concerts since the last Parish meeting, a Christmas Show and a “Hits from West End and Broadway” Show at the beginning of May. Both shows made considerable sums for the Pavilion.

The next event is the Milden/Monks Eleigh cricket match on 5th July. A fun event for everyone in the two villages, not just the cricket lovers.

Bookings for the Pavilion could be higher, so the meeting was encouraged to put the word out. Contact Pearl for bookings.

Many thanks to Graham and Jane Mastern for their work on maintaining the grounds. They have now moved and Ian Leader will be taking on this role.

Post meeting note provided by Justine Turner – Pavilion funds are very healthy – currently standing at £6191

9. Stansted Expansion

Dick Hicksted updated the meeting on Stansted expansion. Stansted is currently running at 50% capacity and is not shortlisted for expansion at this time.

10. Village Plan

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the purpose of a Village Plan. As was highlighted in Councillor Hurren’s report there is considerable pressure to build more homes, particularly affordable homes. The current focus is on core and hinterland villages. Milden is not classed as either, but as “open countryside”. Building is only permitted on “open countryside” in exceptional circumstances or if there is a proven need. Currently there is no proven need. The Chairman felt that if Milden had an agreed Village Plan then we would be in a better position to deal with potential developers and Babergh in the event of a proposed development. Councillor Hurren explained that developing a Village Plan required expert input and was costly and time consuming. It was agreed that Councillor Hurren would speak to Paul Bryant at the Planning Department of Babergh council to get

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his views and to see if it was worthwhile convening a meeting to discuss such a plan for Milden.

11. Road Signage

Justine Turner showed the meeting some speed awareness signs (laminated posters) “Think 30” that she had prepared based on some that had been used in Higham. These posters are advisory and not legally enforceable. There is continuing concern about speeding in the 30mph limit along Powney Street, especially during commuting hours. There was general agreement that a few of these posters placed along Powney Street could be useful. Councillor Finch stressed that these should be placed on private land, not illegally on the highway. He also suggested that similar signs tend to be more useful if used episodically. The meeting agreed that Justine would canvas opinion, get agreement from the residents of Powney Street and identify suitable locations before putting the signs up.

Dick Hicksted ask whether the 30 mile limit could be extended southwards along Boxford Road past his house and possibly all the way to the Milden village sign at Bulls Wood. Councillor Finch advised the meeting that this was an expensive thing to do as a Road Traffic Order (approx. £3000) was required. Councillor Finch will ask the Highways Department to conduct a review of traffic in Milden.

Justine Turner also suggested that road name signs in the village – for Powney Street and Church Road - might be useful, particularly for delivery drivers. There was little enthusiasm for this suggestion, with the general feeling being against the proliferation of road signage.

12. Correspondence

There was no correspondence

13. Any Other Business.

There was none.

The next meeting will be in November, a date will be advised in due course.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.45p.m.

**A Summary Report for Milden Annual Meeting – 28th May 2014
from James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley
12 months of Achievements at Suffolk County Council - 2013-2014**

➤ **SCC delivers on council tax freeze pledge**

SCC's portion of council tax will be frozen at its 2010/11 level for the fourth year in a row, after the council voted through its budget proposals for 2014/15 in February this year. The council will be saving £38.6million over the next year to meet a budget gap caused by on-going reductions in government grant and increased demand for services. This is the first part of plans to save £156million over four years. Despite the tough financial climate, the council will be pushing ahead with important projects, such as 'Raising the Bar (driving up attainment levels in education), the roll-out of super-fast broadband across the whole of Suffolk, investing in apprenticeships, and supporting the development of 10 new, state-of-the-art care homes for older people. At the same time, the road maintenance budget – used for fixing potholes - has been protected from cuts. With plans to freeze council tax each year up to 2017, **this will mean seven years with no increase.**

➤ **Raising the Bar in Education**

A report which produced a series of recommendations aimed at driving up educational standards in Suffolk was endorsed by the county council in July last year.

The report was produced by the RSA, under the auspices of the county council's 'Raising the Bar' initiative. Raising the Bar was launched last year, as a major project to improve attainment levels and build a stronger aspirational culture around education in Suffolk. The RSA's report, 'No School is an Island', contained 20 recommendations. Among these was the idea that small rural schools with fewer than 100 pupils should enter a federation with others to maximise resources. Other suggestions included: for Suffolk to form a partnership with a London Borough with a record of improvement in educational standards, to learn from the huge progress they have made; for every school to establish a Parents' Council to ensure voices are heard, and also for all Suffolk schools to join together to form a new county-wide, school-led Suffolk Partnership for Excellence in Learning.

(There was a lengthy discussion regarding the closure of Monks Eleigh

➤ **GCSE results move Suffolk up five places in league table**

December's publication of the national league tables for schools, based on the most recent GCSE results, saw Suffolk move up to 137th out of 151 local authority areas.

This is a five-place improvement on last year. It also means Suffolk is climbing nearer to the national average. 54.6% of Suffolk pupils gained five or more GCSEs graded between A* to C, putting Suffolk 6.4% off the national average of 61%. This compares with the previous year's results, when Suffolk was 8.5% off the national average of 59%. As Lisa Chambers, SCC's cabinet member for education said: "The results are a reflection of the hard work put in by young people and all those individuals in the Suffolk education system who have been relentless in pursuit of improved standards in the county. I do however recognise that there is still work to be done to get Suffolk further up the league tables and performing above the national average. Crucially, the pace of improvement needs to increase. It's what our young people deserve from their education and it's what we are all determined to achieve."

➤ **Greater Ipswich City Deal signed**

Local councils and businesses have signed the deal with the Government which will bring in £millions of new investment for the local economy.

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The Greater Ipswich City Deal will see thousands of people supported into work and millions invested in Ipswich and the surrounding area. Suffolk County Council have worked closely with the borough council and local businesses to develop our local deal, which will aim to make Suffolk more prosperous by:

- supporting 3,500 young people into work in the greater Ipswich area;
- creating and piloting a Youth Job Centre;
- increasing local private and public investment in skills by at least £10 million;
- creating 5,000 new apprenticeships by 2019;
- creating 3,000 additional high-value jobs and 400 new businesses across Suffolk and Norfolk;
- developing a new approach to skills, led by employers, and a highly-skilled local workforce.

➤ **SCC Cabinet agrees investment in new apprenticeships across Suffolk**

SCC's Cabinet endorsed the Greater Ipswich City Deal in early December. At the same meeting, they gave the go-ahead to the investment of £1.5million to establish a local Apprenticeship service for Suffolk.

SCC leader Mark Bee signed the Greater Ipswich City Deal at the end of October, along with the leaders of other local councils, the Anglian LEP and the government. The deal will bring in investment to cut youth unemployment, develop local skills and work with businesses to help them create new jobs. In December, as well as endorsing this deal, the Cabinet agreed the new investment in apprenticeships – a three-year plan to increase apprenticeships across Suffolk. The plan involves three key programmes of activity:

- Making apprenticeships more accessible to employers, - particularly to small and medium-sized businesses;
- raising the profile of apprenticeships in schools and supporting young people to participate;
- community-based marketing and communications to raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships.

➤ **Government confirm funding for A14 and drop plans for a toll**

In June, the government confirmed that funding will be available to upgrade the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon.

The work to upgrade the A14 will go ahead at a cost estimated at being close to £1.5billion. It was originally proposed that this would be funded in part by local authority contributions, together with tolling of the road when completed. However, following a concerted campaign by Suffolk businesses, residents, media, councillors and MPs, the plans for tolling were dropped. The improvements planned for the A14 are much-needed, and will be a shot in the arm to the Suffolk economy, particularly with regard to the ports and the through-put of freight. SCC's cabinet agreed to commit around £1million to the project over a 25-year period.

➤ **Topping-out ceremony in Bury St Edmunds marks 1st year of care-home partnership**

In December, the first anniversary of the partnership between Suffolk County Council and Care UK - which is building state-of-the-art care homes across the county - was marked with a topping-out ceremony. This new care home and wellbeing centre, at the site of the former Davers Court in Shakers Lane, is part of a £60million three-year plan for 10 similar new developments. In December last year Care UK began operating SCC's 16 care homes and eight wellbeing centres.

One year on, construction of seven of the 10 new developments is under way as part of the phased modernisation programme.

➤ **Extra broadband funding confirmed as broadband roll-out reaches 27,000 properties**

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Suffolk is being given an extra £5million from the government to help make high-speed fibre broadband available to the hardest-to-reach communities.

The news comes as Suffolk's Better Broadband programme passes the 27,000 property mark. Last month's announcement about new funding means that the Better Broadband for Suffolk programme, currently working to make superfast speeds (24 megabits per second (mbps) or more) available to **85% of the county, can start working towards a higher coverage target of up to 95%**. Every three months between now and to the end of the project, a further 10,000 properties should receive access to broadband.

➤ **My County Council role in 2014 – 15**

I am honoured to have been asked to continue to chair the County Council Scrutiny Committee. Our most recent meeting has been reviewing the Kier MG contract and seeking improvements in this service for our communities. In addition I have been given the responsibility for the County Council Farms Estate and developing a programme more suited for those wanting to access the farming industry and providing better value for the residents of Suffolk. I also represent the County on our Dedham Vale AONB and Stour valley project as Vice Chairman.