

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7th May 2024 at the Milden Pavilion at 7.00pm

Chairman: Simon Frost
Treasurer: Sandy De'Ath
Clerk: Sara Godfrey
District Councillor – Bryn Hurren
County Councillor – James Finch

Present: Joy Morley, Stephen Morley, Justine Turner, Sally Miles, Joe Coulter, Bridget Hawkins, Denise Thomas, Adrian Miles, Sarah Harrison, John Harrison, Christopher Hawkins.

1. Apologies for absence

were received from Tissa Rigby, Amanda Fulcher, John Fulcher, Jan Ditheridge, Mark Isahak, Julie Isahak, Juliet Hawkins, Sarah Offord.

2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 21st November 2023

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: Adrian Miles Seconded: Sally Miles

3. Matters arising from those minutes.

Justine Turner gave a progress report on the SIDS. She has received written permission from the landowners where the posts for the sign will be located. One will be located on the verge south of Powney Cottage, the other to the north of the green broadband cabinet at the other end of the main road through the village, SCC approve the locations and install the posts, the forms for this will be sent to SCC following this Meeting. The quotes from sign manufacturers previously received remain valid and we need to decide which manufacturer to choose, Justine will liaise with Alan Braithwaite of Monks Eleigh PCC for advice. We have to purchase the SIDS before the posts are installed.

4. County Councillor's Report.

Councillor Finch gave his report for the year. He kindly provided a written summary which is attached at the end of these minutes.

Justine Turner asked why the recycling centre at Hadleigh no longer accepted hard plastics. She had been told that there was no longer a contractor to accept it. Neither councillor was aware of the issue. Bryn Hurren to follow-up.

Simon Frost asked whether Milden was included in the Project Gigabit broadband upgrade mentioned. Councillor Finch replied that the detail was not yet available. James and Simon to follow-up. Please register your interest for FTTP broadband for rural/remote areas at www.cityfibre.com

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

Denise Thomas raised the issue of potholes and enquired why all potholes in an area could not be repaired at the same time. There followed a lengthy discussion. James Finch informed us that there was high demand and limited resources so priorities were set by Suffolk Highways, He would however, report the concerns expressed by Parishioners.

5. District Councillor's Report

Councillor Hurren gave his report for the year. He kindly provided a written summary which follows:-

"This has been a pivotal year for all local authorities, whether they be District, County or Unitary. Lack of funding from national government, combined with a huge increase in price of all commodities, including the rate of borrowing, has hit councils and constituents very hard. As a small District Council, we like others have been hit with increased costs along with increased demands for our services due to the cost-of-living crisis, big rises in mortgage rates and almost double the rate of tenants and homeowners declaring themselves homeless. There are now 2000 homeless people in Babergh and 250 in serious difficulty.

Through and despite all of this, we have set a balanced budget for year 24/25 but to achieve this, we have had to make some cuts to services, leave vacancies open, edge charges up a little, look at making Babergh/Mid Suffolk one sovereign council, instead of two councils working together, and look seriously at making very modest charges for parking cars in our towns. While we run all our 20 odd car parks for the benefit of all and to support our high streets at the modest sum of £140,000, the horrendous £300,000 in business rates levied upon them and us by the national government is the straw that has broken the camel's back and is a disgrace. We have always regarded our car parks as a tool to support and enhance our High Streets and it is regrettable that the national government use them as a tool to impose upon us more stealth taxes. Feel free to lobby our local MP or government minister if you feel as strongly about this as I do.

Although BDC collect all of the council tax as a statutory duty, we only keep just under 9% to run the District Council. With Police and Crime Commissioner coming in at 12%, SCC at 77% and towns, villages and boroughs at 2%. Babergh's share equates to £188 pa on a Band D property, £3.50 a week and excellent value for all we achieve for all our residents.

As a well-run local council BDC has always entered the National Council awards scheme in various categories including the biggest one, which is National Council of the year award. We are past winners of a digital tree mapping scheme along with top awards for our CIL management and various housing awards and we have had several commended gongs for the way we perform and run BDC.

This year we were awarded the honour for being simply the best council across the whole of the UK outright. A fabulous achievement and a tribute to the coalition of political groups who work together to run the council and to all our officers and staff who despite the pressure of the lockdown years and even worse now, continue to give sterling service to our residents. The remarks given by the judging panel included praise for the way our two councils are run together by one team of staff, the solar panel scheme, fitted to our council house roofs that provides cheaper power for our residents as well as £350,000 in feed in tariffs per year, as a financial

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

benefit, our initiative in changing our fleet of vehicles to HVO, fitting air source heat pumps to our leisure centres and our recycling initiatives. To name but a few.

The CIL continues to fund many community projects across our area and now it has been widely accepted by most developers, works well and delivers much need infrastructure projects across our District, we currently have just in excess of £16m in a ring fenced budget to award to our villages and communities across the joint Districts.

Our newly adopted part one JLP continues to bed in and is being accepted by developers and inspectors alike, we are also trying to get part two up to speed and have already put in a call for sites appeal to get acceptable land into the land bank for future needed development. It should be noted at this point that the 64 house proposed development up to the Boxford by pass was eventually turned down by the Government inspector. Apart from traffic concerns and the impossibility of providing a safe pedestrian access down Ellis Street into the village centre, the fact that it was also contrary to the JLP and village Neighbourhood Plan was also noted.

Matters local to Milden and Monks Eleigh

I have been thrilled to be part of the Monks Eleigh CIL applications for funding for the new playground and also the Community shop with its much needed all new fridge and freezer additions. Let's hope the cost of running these appliances goes down as much as the noise level.

I am pleased that the 112 bus service continues to run two days a week and provides such a vital lifeline and link as part of our transport network. Regrettably my friend, John Phillips, who started and continued to promote Community Transport through GoStart, very sadly passed away last week.

I am also pleased to help with any scheme that may come forth here in Milden in the near future. Namely to help with the viability and structure of this building.

Thank you to Sara our clerk, Sandy our finance officer and Simon our chairman and all who attend here tonight and those that help maintain and run this lovely village."

Justine Turner asked for an update on car parking charges. Bryn reported that the plan had been to start introducing charges in August, but this has now been delayed. Bryn is in favour of at least the first hour being free.

It seems that many villagers are unaware that national government charges business rates on all car parks, This accounts for 2/3 of the cost of running Babergh's car parks, some £300,000 per year. If the car parks were run as CICs by local Town Councils the business rates could be avoided, however, neither Sudbury nor Lavenham are interested in doing this. This is the context in which Babergh are considering car parking charges.

6. Finance Report

The Treasurer gave the finance report. The Governance Statement and Accounts (attached) had been circulated to the village distribution list before the meeting. Adrian Miles has audited

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

the accounts. The Treasurer requested a proposer and seconder for the Governance Statement and Accounts.

Governance Statement

Proposer: Denise Thomas

Seconder: Christopher Hawkins

Accounts

Proposer: John Harrison

Seconder: Denise Thomas

The Treasurer proposed a vote of thanks to Howard Webb who has audited the accounts for many years. It was unanimously agreed to purchase some wine to give to Howard as a thank you gift.

There is £4,431 in the bank account. The precept is £1001, which was all spent last year.

There is £11,683 in the CIL account, £4,000 of which is earmarked for the SIDs sign.

An additional £3,000 CIL money is overdue on a recent village development.

7. Pavilion/Recreation Ground Report

Adrian Miles provided a written Pavilion report, which he presented to the meeting.

As expected the Pavilion has been quiet through the winter with not much to report. However the committee have been busy looking to the future sustainability of the buildings and grounds to ensure its long term future.

The sewage system was inspected for compliance by GTS & Sons, they reported that the current system was adequate for our needs but required a small amount of work on the cover to ensure long term suitability. This is good news as it could have been a very expensive project.

The front veranda is starting to show it's age and needs to be refurbished. The committee's view is that the base needs to be concreted and the balustrades to be made from composite material to ensure longevity. Initial quotes have indicated a cost of around £10,000 to achieve this. The view is that we should see if we can use some of the CIL money which has become available to the village. This will need the consent from the Parish meeting. More detail on this is for discussion in AOB

The Pavilion is still in reasonable financial health with about £9.5k in the current account and £11k in the deposit for long term back up. However we need to continue with the fundraising as it is expensive to maintain and run the property.

As such we have the Milden Singers Spring Concert on Friday 7th June with an uplifting selection of songs, poetry and sketches. There will also be a raffle to support Leukemia UK

The popular and fun Quiz night with Andrea and Laure is scheduled for 14th September

We have pencilled in a date for the return of the Milden Ball on 8th November. More details to follow once more arrangements have been made.

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

EV Charging

Plug in Suffolk are organising a tender for companies to provide EV charging points to village halls and other public buildings in the county. It involves no upfront cost and there could be some income from this. We have registered our interest and wait to see the proposals. There is no commitment to proceed unless we are completely happy with the arrangements. There was some discussion about the desirability of leaving the gate unlocked to facilitate use of this charger. This will need to be considered if the project moves ahead.

Cricket

Nothing much to report at this point as all home matches have been cancelled due to a wet pitch. It is reported that the club is in good health with some new players. They would welcome support during their games, it's a nice place to socialise when the weather is good!.

There is still a vacancy on the committee for someone to look after the Pavilion accounts. Tasks involve recording of financial transactions and organising payments in and out of the bank accounts. The role does not need a qualified accountant and currently involves relatively simple spread sheet work. If anyone is interested please raise your hand at this meeting or contact Sara who will pass on my contact details.

In conclusion we are pleased to say that the pavilion remains in a sustainable position so it can continue to provide a great facility for the village.

8. Any Other Business

Discussion regarding the replacement verandah at the Pavilion. It is unlikely that this will qualify for CIL money as it is a repair/replacement not an entirely new project. This has to be confirmed. The project is likely to qualify for a Babergh Capital Grant, the latest round of which is opening on May 13th. These fund projects up to £10,000. There has to be demonstrable village support and fundraising. Ticket sales from The Milden Singers Concert on June 7th will be the first element of this with other events planned. All those present unanimously agreed to support the effort. It is also expected that the cricket club will be involved as they will be a major beneficiary of the improved verandah. The first step is to get in contact with the grants team at Babergh and complete a grant enquiry form. Bryn has offered his help and support.

The first Milden Fine Art Exhibition will take place in St Peter's church from 21st-23rd June, preview evening with refreshments and canapes (donations appreciated) 6pm-8pm on Friday 21st. Proceeds to support the fabric of the church.

Denise Thomas asked about the 30mph repeater signs along Powney Street. Justine Turner has already tried to get this sorted with SCC who have advised they are under no obligation to repair or replace. Landowners are encouraged to keep signs clear of vegetation.

9. Date of next Meeting

We will aim to hold the next meeting in November, date to be advised nearer the time.

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

A Summary from James Finch of the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Annual 23/24 report for the Milden Annual Parish meeting on 7th May 2024

- Library Services –

The Council has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans in May to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, now an independent charity. This will enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024 when a new contract will be drawn up.

- Suffolk Fire Service to bring control room back to the County.

SCC Announced plans in June to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk independently of Cambridgeshire. The company behind a project to deliver a new IT system as a joint venture, initiated in 2019, has run into technical and financial problems, causing a significant delay. This will protect and upgrade the call centre specifically for Suffolk residents.

- £100m broadband investment in Suffolk under government's Project Gigabit

Better broadband is on its way for around 80,000 properties across rural Suffolk in a £100 million investment under a £5 billion government infrastructure programme. This will build on our Better Broadband for Suffolk programme which has helped to deliver wider access to superfast broadband to be installed by City Fibre.

- Highways Repairs

Following the ever-increasing demand for road repairs, the SCC Cabinet approved an extra £10 million in November to repair and resurface local roads in villages and residential areas across Suffolk over 3 years. This was followed by the Government announcement to invest £609m into highway maintenance in the East of England of which £107.5m has been ringfenced for Suffolk over the next decade, including £3.4 million in financial year 22/23 just ended.

- Almost £1 million extra committed to investigating the flooding following Babet

Since the storm, targeted recovery work has been carried out across the county to ensure damaged highway infrastructure is repaired, those whose properties were flooded get help and that investigations can start which will identify how to reduce flood risk. As lead local flood authority, the county council has a duty to investigate significant flooding and establish the source of flooding, factors which may have caused the flooding, the impacts on people, services and infrastructure and any actions which could be taken to increase resilience to future storm events. In any usual year, Suffolk County Council carries out around 3 or 4 of these investigations. Following Babet, up to 100 are likely to be needed.

- Suffolk County Council's Adult Social Care service rated Good overall by Care Quality Commission

Following a period of intense inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Suffolk County Council has become one of the first councils nationwide to achieve this standard. CQC's final report rated the overall quality of Suffolk County Council's Adult Social Care services as "Good" and highlighted areas of strength including, the quality of its leadership, the culture of learning and support for staff, the range of digital care options available under CASSIUS, the good relationship between social care and health colleagues and locality team knowledge and understanding of

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

community needs. This rating is also a testament to the high levels of financial investment the council has consistently put into Adult Social Care over the years, especially during the dark days of the pandemic, and shows how through imagination and service transformation, they are delivering on the priority of us all to put people's health and wellbeing at the top of your local authority our agenda for adult social.

- Budget 23/24 Overspend

Over this last 12 months, budgetary control and forecasting has been a major challenge for the County Council. Special Educational Needs, SEND school transport and care costs are the main factors for SCC forecasting to spend £22.3m over its original £688.1m budget for the 23/24 financial year.

- 24/25 SCC budget Approved with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable adults and young people.

Suffolk County Council has confirmed its financial budget for 2024-25. The £752.8m package was approved at the Full Council meeting on Thursday 15 February 2024, with the priority to protect vulnerable adults and children across the county. This represents an increase of £64.7m over the 23/24 financial year.

Despite the recently announced uplift in government funding and asking for an increase in Council Tax of 4.99%, it is still not sufficient to cover the rising costs imposed by inflation, or more importantly the increasing levels of demand for services - in particular children's care, special educational needs, and disabilities (SEND) and home to school transport.

Focusing on those children who have extremely demanding needs and no-one else to turn to, is the right thing to do. SCC have therefore confirmed that 60 new members of staff will be recruited to drive forward important reform to the way special educational needs and disability (SEND) services are delivered in Suffolk. This includes an increase in permanent SEND staff of nearly 15%. These new posts will support the improvement of the quality and timeliness of assessments, plans, reviews, and communications with families.

To provide care and services for vulnerable children and adults, the next two years will see an additional £42.7 million allocated to children's services, and an additional £29.9 million for adult services. However, this means £64.7 million of savings needs to be found at the same time over 2 years which include:-

- £11 million of staffing costs through changing the way services are delivered and restructuring across the council.
- £30.6 million of additional savings from an extension of the council's hugely successful Adult Social Care Transformation programme.

The council's budget will therefore increase by 8.6% (from £693.0 million to £752.8 million), some of which is generated by a 4.99% increase in the council's share of Council Tax, and additional Government funding. The increase of 4.99% to Council Tax is made up of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care. This will see the council's share of a Band B property's bill rise by £1.12 per week, compared to last year.

James Finch - 5 May 2024

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

MILDEN PARISH MEETING

Receipt and Payment Account For year 1st April 2023 March 31st 2024

31/03/23		31/03/2024	
£	Receipts	£	Variance
962.64	Precept Babergh DC	981.89	19.25
962.64	TOTAL	981.89	19.25
PAYMENTS			
38.67	SALC	30	-8.67
62	FIT Insurance	62	0
151.65	Anglian Water	92.37	-59.28
0	Milden PCC (Grass)	480	480
79.81	Justine Turner Misc	113.35	33.54
122	Jubilee coins	0	-122
50	SCC Quiet Roads	0	-50
0	Defib Training	78	78
0	CHB Trust	198	198
504.13	TOTAL	1053.72	
Receipts and payments summary			
4045.10	Balance brought forward as of 1 st April	4503.62	458.52
	962.64	Add total receipts	981.89 19.25
5007.74	Total	5485.51	477.77
504.13	Deduct total payments	1053.72	549.59
4503.62	Balance carried forward as at 31st March	4431.79	-71.83

Cumulative Funds Represented by:

Milden Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

4503.62	Lloyds Treasurers Account	4431.79	-71.83
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Signed

CHAIR

Date

Approved at the Annual Parish Meeting held on the above date. The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31st March 2024 and reflects its receipts and payments during that year.