

Milden Annual Parish Meeting
Held on Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 7pm
At St Peter's Church, Milden

Chair	Sara Godfrey
Treasurer	Sandy De'Ath
Clerk	Jules Isahak
Babergh District Councillor (BDC)	Bryn Hurren
Suffolk County Councillor (SCC)	James Finch

Present:

Joe Coulter	Jan Ditheridge	Christopher Hawkins	Mark Isahak
Adrian Miles	Sally Miles	Joy Morley	Stephen Morley
Denise Thomas	Justine Turner		

Part	Discussion	Action				
1	Apologies for absence					
1.1	Apologies were received and accepted from; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keith Grieve • Ken Hood • Antony Watson • Gilly Watson 					
2	Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 12th November 2024					
2.1	The minutes were agreed and approved as a true and correct record of the meeting. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Proposed</td> <td>Sally Miles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Approved</td> <td>Denise Thomas</td> </tr> </table>	Proposed	Sally Miles	Approved	Denise Thomas	
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Approved	Denise Thomas					
3	Matters arising from those minutes					
3.1	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">Part 7.1 – Village Website</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website has been set up and will be launched in a month or so, once formatting is complete. Classified as a 'static' site, it contains basic village information and archived documents along with hyperlinks to other relevant sites i.e.; Milden Pavilion, Cricket Club and Church. </td> </tr> </table>	Part 7.1 – Village Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website has been set up and will be launched in a month or so, once formatting is complete. Classified as a 'static' site, it contains basic village information and archived documents along with hyperlinks to other relevant sites i.e.; Milden Pavilion, Cricket Club and Church. 			
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is being co-ordinated by Justine, who was thanked for the work she has put in to date. 	
	Part 7.1 – Public Liability and Indemnity Insurance	Annual insurance cover was purchased following the last meeting, renewable in six months’ time.	
	Part 8.2 – On-line banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up through Lloyds Bank and working efficiently. With thanks expressed to the Treasurer. • Signatories are the Chair, Treasurer and Sally Miles. 	
	Part 8.3 – Parish Precept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal to increase the Parish Precept to £1,670 as agreed at the last meeting, was accepted by BDC and is reflected in Council Tax bills received by village residents earlier in the year 	
	Part 9.3 – Veranda Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justine and the team on the Pavilion Committee were thanked for the fantastic work done to achieve a sustainable solution for future generations. • Similarly, thanks were expressed to Milden Parish Meeting, Milden Cricket Club and Milden Singers for their financial contributions, and fund-raising activities, which have supplemented the Capital Development Grant received from BDC. • Further thanks were expressed to Martin Beresford, in his absence for renovating the outside benches and James Smith, contractor. 	
	Part 10.4 – Email addresses	<p>Dedicated email addresses have been set up as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chair@mildenpm.co.uk • clerk@mildenpm.co.uk 	
4	District Councillor’s Report		
4.1	<p>Councillor Bryn Hurren shared his report as follows:</p> <p>Firstly, my sincere thanks to the many who have enquired and wished me well with my knee replacement operation, six weeks last Friday and all going brilliantly well and, hopefully soon, more mobile and pain free.</p> <p>On the local government front, the biggest bombshell to be sprung upon us in years arrived just a week before Christmas, with the government white paper to revamp and re-align the way we are governed and the wish to streamline local services with unitary councils and a mayoral upper tier to cover the Counties of Suffolk and Norfolk with a soon to be elected mayor. In other words, a different two-tier system.</p> <p>As it turns out the mayor will have far-reaching powers with staff and a precepted budget to match and will liaise straight down from national government. The new unitary councils will do the spadework of running local services and delivering them to residents, businesses, towns and parishes alike. During the consultation process,</p>		

the five district councils and Ipswich Borough have expressed a preference for two or preferably three unitary councils across Suffolk. Will this provide contact down to the lowest level? We will see, it probably depends on your local elected Councillor. I have come to rather suspect the motives of national government and its politicians but this could draw more finance and better services into our area, although I am not sure that having a mayor across two very different Counties is the best way to achieve this? However, we are now due to see Mayoral elections across the two counties in May 26.

BDC continues to punch way above its weight and size on green issues, such as bio-fuel on our vehicles, power generation from council house solar panels, waste reclamation, power from waste and encouragement of wildlife, flora and fauna and general diversity.

There is also, now a slackening on rules for listed buildings, in respect of solar panels and double glazing, and encouragement now for solar panels on business units and commercial buildings.

We are now having, as a nation, to provide a million and a half new houses in this parliamentary term of 5 years, in local terms this means 775 houses for BDC per annum, up from 446 last year.

My main concern is that most of these really need to be smaller houses that enable people to downsize from bigger properties or move up from smaller homes and the shelter of family providers.

The current coalition have prioritized having a good six-year supply of building land, but this rate of domestic building will put a strain on that. Also, can we find the building staff and materials to keep up this rate of expansion?

Nearer to home I am pleased to see the considerable upgrade of the causeway area to Back Lane which provides a valuable link between the two parts of Monks Eleigh Village.

I am also looking forward to the pavilion upgrade here in Milden for the 102 residents of the village.

Along with the continuation of the twice weekly 112 bus service that runs from Sudbury through to Bildeston, is the possibility of the new digi-bus running through to Stowmarket from Hadleigh, which should improve connectivity throughout our rural area.

I am very happy to help out again with monies from the District CIL budget, that has funded many projects across our whole District this year. There has at least been some gain from all the extra housing, but our infrastructure will become ever more stretched.

	<p>My big concerns for our District in the immediate future are how we will implement the changes in our refuse collection service, once we have to meet the Government's requirements of kerbside collections of Glass and Compostable materials.</p> <p>This along with the horrible poverty amongst some of our residents, that has led to the necessity for foodbanks, and the homelessness that we can no longer quite cope with have become major concerns to this Councillor.</p> <p>There is so much more going on in Milden than I have time to put in my report today but I am happy to answer questions now, after the meeting or at any time in the near future.</p> <p>Just remains now to thank our new clerk Jules and chair Sara and all who work hard to achieve the very best for our lovely village.</p> <p>All Best regards to all who live in and around the village of Milden and happy to answer any questions that may arise now or later.</p>	
4.2	<p>Questions raised to Councillor Hurren as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Norfolk County Council feel about the new unitary authority proposals? <i>They favour just one unitary council whereas Suffolk favours one or two. Suffolk and Norfolk do not have to be the same but they do need to have the same number of people in the Mayor's Team.</i> • Is Suffolk County Council in favour of a single unitary authority? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Yes. It has power over a big area but has transferred a lot into the district councils. The latter do a lot to support green issues.</i> ▪ <i>The Mayor will have control over bigger planning permissions that the Secretary of State would normally have.</i> ▪ <i>I would hope that social care would overarch the whole authority.</i> • In the absence of a Local District Council would our Parish Meeting have to become a Parish Council? <i>No, but you would only have one councillor, who would cover a larger area rather than the two currently available to the Parish.</i> • <i>There will likely be elections for some kind of shadow cabinet and a Mayor, put in place for 2026, until the unitary elections are held in 2028 but this could change. Nothing will be decided until September 2025.</i> • <i>BDC is currently a coalition authority shared amongst Liberal Democrats, Greens and Labour, who all work together with a rolling leader. Priorities are investment in energy saving which prevents council tax increases.</i> 	
4.3	<p>A discussion took place concerning the expectations for new builds in the village. Councillor Hurren advised that BDC has a good six-year land supply and will have to work for at least five years, with developers. However, labour and skills are hard to find, and the type of houses being built, often do not meet community and affordable housing needs.</p>	

	<p>Concern was expressed by Mark Isahak over a published target for Milden to build 20 new houses over a 20-year period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Councillor Hurren advised that this was a meaningless figure with no foundation.</i> • <i>He advised that the Joint Local Plan will be re-designed and will include references to nature and infrastructure. There is similarly talk of Neighbourhood Plans for which funding will be available. This would however be difficult for a small village like Milden to achieve alone, although it could potentially link up with Monks Eleigh.</i> <p>Councillor Hurren went on to explain that BDC was caught unawares by the recent development of four houses on Powney Street, over which it had no influence. Things are now being reined in and local plans will give residents the opportunity to almost design their own future.</p>	
4.4	<p>Denise Thomas challenged the success (or lack of) the recent implementation of car park charges.</p> <p><i>Councillor Hurren advised that BDC would happily give over the complete management of car parking to Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham, where the charges have been implemented, in order that these locations could benefit from charity loop holes. None of the three areas wished to take on the responsibility. Babergh, as a council, is not able to take advantage of the loop holes but has no option than to apply charges, having put off the inevitable year after year, in the past.</i></p>	
4.5	<p>A discussion took place concerning recycling with residents concerned that hard plastics are going into landfill rather than being recycled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Councillor Hurren advised that recycling is dependent on the market price that the County Council can achieve; sometimes plastics are not worth recycling but if this is the case, they will be directed into energy.</i> • <i>To set minds at rest, Councillor Hurren would be happy to arrange a trip to the recycling plant for anyone interested.</i> 	<p>Opportunity available for all interested/Cllr Hurren</p>
5	County Councillor's Report	
5.1	<p>Councillor James Finch shared his report as follows:</p> <p><u>10 Key Activities for the year</u></p> <p>1) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Independent Chair was appointed to drive forward SEND reform in 2023. Kathryn Boulton has been appointed as the new independent chair of the Local Area Partnership's SEND Improvement Board. She has 37 years of experience working in children's services, most recently acting as Corporator Director of Children and Family Services at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. • (SEND) provision is delivered by the Local Area Partnership in Suffolk, which includes Suffolk County Council, NHS Suffolk and North-East Essex Integrated Care Board and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board. • The SEND Improvement Board was set up in response to the inspection of SEND services in Suffolk in November 2023 	

- Councillors approved an extra £9.1 million for SEND services in July 2024.
- In January 2025, the Department for Education welcomed SEND improvements and the evidence of impact, but all recognise that there are still challenges to overcome.

2) Roads

- Over 400 Suffolk roads are set for an upgrade. The largest ever surfacing project got underway in May 2024.
- Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year (1 April – 31 March), almost doubling the number of roads completed last year, as Suffolk Highways’ largest ever resurfacing programmes got underway. This will be completed in early April 25.

3) Fostering

- East of England local authorities collaborate to appeal for more Foster Families.
- Eleven local authorities across the East of England have joined forces in a bid to collectively recruit more foster carers to look after some of the region’s most vulnerable children.
- Suffolk is taking part in a new initiative for fostering under the banner Foster East. There is an urgent need for foster carers in the East of England with more than 7,000 vulnerable children already in the care of their local authority, and a further 150 children coming into care every month. This has led to having access to powerful new films promoting the importance of local fostering. – on the Suffolk website. Visit <https://www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk/>

4) Suffolk Youth Justice Plan

- Suffolk County Council backed the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 at a meeting of Full Council on 11th July, with a focus on keeping families together.
- The plan has a focus on supporting young people into education, training and employment and reducing the numbers of young people offending, supporting the council’s ambition to keep more families together and to keep Suffolk safe. Each year the Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board produces a Youth Justice Plan for Suffolk.

5) Sunnica Solar Farm – August 2024 – Post Election

- Suffolk County Council expressed its extreme disappointment that a huge solar farm has been approved in West Suffolk. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband MP, has announced that approval had been granted for the Development Consent Order, as proposed by Sunnica Ltd. The project will see 2,792 acres of solar panels and battery storage, installed across parts of West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. – Surrounding 3 villages.

When questioned Councillor Fitch advised that the solar farms would be the responsibility of the new Mayor, with one near Mildenhall and one near Eye.

6) Electric Vehicles

- A trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk, with the tender process beginning this autumn. Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing sixteen electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Planned locations include Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Sudbury, Needham Market, Stowmarket, Lowestoft and Woodbridge.
- Members of the public interested in this project are urged to sign up to the mailing list to receive updates as the project progresses. Visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/plug-in-suffolk/electric-vehicle-car-clubs>

7) Solar Together

- Launched in Suffolk in September 2024. Residents of Suffolk can come together to invest in renewable energy sources through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers. Over 3000 residents had signed up by October 24. Richard from Bures, near Sudbury, recently shared his experience with Solar Together Suffolk, saying: "Excellent! Solar Together Suffolk took all the hassle of finding a provider, and the group-buying secured me a better discount than trying to do this on my own. It was a no-brainer."

8) Flood protection

- Suffolk County Council is set to agree £1.5 million to deliver first phase of works identified in initial flood investigation reports.
- The Authority called on the Government to recognise the ongoing impact of Storm Babet and fund £20 million of further prevention work urgently needed.
- Extensive work has already been completed since Storm Babet including more than 111,000 drains cleared and significant road repairs.

9) Unitary Authority

- County Council leaders have proposed one council for Suffolk. This would make delivering public services simpler, cheaper and quicker, and better meet the needs of residents and businesses, county leaders have said.
- Following a recent government announcement that Suffolk's county, district and borough councils will be replaced with a single-tier system, Suffolk County Council argues that consolidating all services under one unitary authority is the only effective way to deliver against the government's criteria for local government reform.
- The move would see all council services, such as waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, highways maintenance, leisure, school placements and travel and street cleaning, all provided by one authority - rather than the six that currently exist in Suffolk. Bringing together district, borough and county council functions is expected to reduce duplication, lower administrative costs and ensure a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to delivering essential services.
- The council warns that splitting services among multiple bodies would force the duplication of essential functions - such as social care, highways maintenance and schools - currently managed at a county level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key benefits of one council are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simpler for residents – one council would make it easier to understand and contact local government. ▪ Clearer accountability – there would be less confusion over who is responsible for what. ▪ Better use of funding – a more coherent, strategic, financially sustainable, countywide approach to budgeting. ▪ Better alignment of services – since everything is under one roof, services can be more easily coordinated, creating opportunities to improve services for residents. ▪ More efficient decision-making – with just one council, decisions can be made more quickly ▪ Stronger leadership – a single, visible and accountable body providing a clear strategic voice for Suffolk. • The council submitted its initial proposal to the government by 21 March, with a more detailed business case to follow later in the year. The government will then undertake a public consultation. <p>10) Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services. Suffolk County Council has unveiled its proposed budget for 2025/26, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable residents across the county. • Under the proposals, the council’s net budget would rise by 6.7%, from £752.9 million in 2024/25 to £803.7 million in 2025/26. Key allocations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £18.1 million extra for children’s services, ensuring continued support for young people and families in need ▪ £35.2 million extra for adult care, aimed at addressing the growing demand for social care services. ▪ To help fund these essential services, the council is proposing a 4.99% rise in Council Tax. This would consist of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and an additional 2% specifically for adult care services. <p>In conclusion may I thank all the Parish Council members and parishioners for their support to me during the year, having agreed to continue in the role of County Councillor after the 2025 local elections were cancelled</p>	
5.2	<p>Further discussion took place in respect of the proposed unitary authority. Councillor Finch advised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCC was asked by the Government to submit a draft plan, once that is accepted, it will be followed by a detailed plan. The Secretary of State will then decide how many unitary authorities there will be in Suffolk. SCC will consult externally and believes that 75% plus of the £600 million budget will be spread between the two costs of adult care and children’s services. Such costs against the budget would make it unfavourable to have more than one unitary authority. It will be a challenging year. The strong belief is that 	

	unitary authorities should manage everything under one umbrella so there is no overlap.													
5.3	<p>Stephen Morley and Denise Thomas asked for support in managing obstructions in the road in the area of the new build development in Powney Street. Overhanging hedges and parked cars are causing hazards for farm machinery and larger vehicles using the road (noted that objections to the original plans cited the potential congestion likely to be caused by additional parked cars).</p> <p>Noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns have been lodged on the BDC website but a Council Officer visiting the site saw no cause for concern. Hedges are the responsibility of the landowner and the first step is to contact the landowner direct. If no action is taken, SCC will cut the hedges, sending the bill to the landowner, although the preference would be the use of persuasion skills rather than taking this action. Denise agreed to forward the exact location and extent of the issue for Councillor Finch to assess. 	Denise/ Cllr Finch												
6	Finance Report													
6.1	<p>The Treasurer shared her report, advising as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increase in the precept was necessary as a result of increased costs to the tune of 59%, however the Parish Meeting ended the year with a higher balance (c£4k) than the previous year. In addition; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £300 was donated from Roundabout magazine £100 was donated by Milden PCC to cover the cost of the defibrillator upkeep (thanks were expressed to Jonathan Dancy, in his absence). Fund raising from Milden Pavilion contributes towards costs. The accounts are complete and have been passed, with thanks, to Adrian Miles, to complete the internal audit. The Governance Statement has been completed to comply with the law. <table border="1" data-bbox="213 1415 1321 1659"> <tr> <td colspan="2">The annual accounts were approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed by</td> <td>Sally Miles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seconded by</td> <td>Denise Thomas</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">The Governance Statement was approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed by</td> <td>Denise Thomas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seconded by</td> <td>Sally Miles</td> </tr> </table> <p>Noted that BDC is holding c12k in CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds on behalf of Milden, with a further £3k due from land adjacent to No. 3 New Cottages, subject to completion of the development.</p>	The annual accounts were approved		Proposed by	Sally Miles	Seconded by	Denise Thomas	The Governance Statement was approved		Proposed by	Denise Thomas	Seconded by	Sally Miles	
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7	Pavilion/Recreation Ground Report													
7.1	<p>Adrian Miles shared his report as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pavilion is still in reasonable financial health with about £7.9k in the current account and £11.3k in the deposit account for long term back up. 													

Funds need to be raised as the current account income has not been keeping pace with expenditure over the last 18 months and things are starting to get older and will need to be repaired. The committee has been busy looking to the future sustainability of the buildings and grounds to ensure their long-term future. Those present at the meeting will have noticed the new veranda has been completed. Sustainable materials have been used which should enable the veranda to be relatively maintenance free for many years. The work was undertaken by James Smith with the aid of a BDC grant and agreed contributions from the Pavilion fund and Parish Meeting. Many thanks to Justine for her huge efforts in obtaining the grant and getting the work sorted.

- The grounds are looking good due to the great efforts by the Groundhogs to maintain the field and the cricket wicket. This was rewarded with a resounding win by Milden CC in their first home match against Brockley last Sunday. Many thanks to Reg for keeping the engines running and the blades sharp on the mowers and to Stephen Morley for his assistance with the heavier aspects of the grounds work!
- We have had two successful fund-raising events so far this year with the wonderful Shanty Folk on 4th April and the excellent Milden Singers with the VE day concert on Sunday 11th May. These were both very well attended and made good money for the Pavilion and the events' respective charities. Sadly, it was the last Milden Singers concert we will see in the present format. However, Pearl may organise the occasional pop-up concert in the future. The committee would like to thank Pearl and the singers for the entertaining times and the money raised to support the Pavilion fund and numerous charities over the years.
- Events scheduled this year as follows;
 - The Fat Hen Inn pub night organised by the Cricket Club will be in the Pavilion on Friday 6th June from 6.30pm, with food and drinks on offer. Money raised will go to the Cricket Club, Pavilion and the Church.
 - The Milden Midsummer Barn Dance will be held on Midsummer's Day, Saturday 21st June from 5pm with Ceilidh group Cat's Whiskers for music and dancing, hog roast and bar. Tickets are £15 each with children under 14 free! This will be held with the very kind permission of the Morley family in their Lower Farm Barn. Tickets and information are available by emailing info@mildenpavilion.co.uk, calling Justine on 01787 248145. Or via Eventbrite Milden Midsummer. This will be the main fundraiser for the pavilion this year so we encourage you to come along and invite all your friends and families, it will be a fun evening.
 - In an effort to improve rural life Active Suffolk are supporting a series of Pilates classes starting in September, this will be free to participants. More detailed information and dates will be forthcoming when finalised.
- 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	
8.1	<p>Mark Isahak advised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit from the Pub Night on 6th June will be split three ways between Milden Pavilion, Milden Cricket Club and St Peter’s Church, Milden. • Milden Cricket Club is thriving and on good form having managed to recover very quickly after what appeared to be an existential crisis before the start of the season. The Tissa Rigby Trophy will be awarded to the victors of the Milden v Long Melford II match, to be held on 29th June, when Tissa herself will return to present the trophy. 	
8.2	<p>Justine proposed using CIL funds for the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The play equipment is reaching the end of its life and the swings need to be replaced. The cost for a new set of swings is c£5k and the cost for a slide is also c£5k. • The meeting could consider installing an outdoor gym. Grants would likely be available for such a facility although this may be through match-funding. • Installation of a second SID (Speed Indicator Device) at the opposite end of the village to the current unit, at a cost of c£3k with the additional cost of a battery at c£100. <p>The meeting voted unanimously to approve expenditure, from the CIL fund, of up to £3k for a second SID sign.</p> <p>Noted that CIL money cannot be used for repair and maintenance.</p>	Justine
9	Date of next meeting	
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 7pm, Milden Pavilion. 	
	The meeting closed at 20.50hrs.	