

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Acton Village Hall at 7:30pm on
Thursday 18 May 2017**

The Annual Parish Meeting was chaired by Cllr Paul Chaplin, Chair of Acton Parish Council.

Present: 30 residents, 2 visiting speakers and the Clerk.

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Cllr Paul Chaplin welcomed residents to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors Christine Johnson, Nick Antill and Jonathan Matthews, County Councillor Colin Spence and resident, Janet Moss.

3. Community defibrillator demonstration

Carl Carrington, East of England Ambulance Service, outlined the procedure to be followed when medical assistance requires use of the community defibrillator.

Carl concluded the training by inviting the Parish Council to consider whether a course which offering more detailed training would be helpful.

4. Local Community Speedwatch presentation

Harry Taylor, local Community Speedwatch Assistant, outlined the work undertaken by community speedwatch volunteers. Harry advised that local teams usually comprise a minimum of 6 volunteers who typically give up one hour per month. Volunteers receive training in order to operate within rules laid down by the police, they are equipped with high-viz jackets and are vetted by the police.

Residents were invited to provide personal contact details if they wished to help launch an Acton Community Speedwatch Team.

5. Report from PC Rob Sippitt on behalf of the Sudbury Safer Neighbourhood Team

PC Sippitt was unable to attend.

6. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 13 April 2016

It was proposed by Christopher Moss, seconded by Susan Chaplin and agreed that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 13 April 2016 were an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

7. Chairman's report

The report (Appendix 1) of the outgoing Chairman, Christine Johnson, was received.

Cllr Chaplin commented that the Parish Council had recently been notified that outline planning permission was being sought for development of Chilton Woods. Residents were encouraged to watch out for parish council notices giving details of a June meeting to consider this application.

8. District Councillor's report

Cllr Margaret Maybury referred to her report (Appendix 2) commenting specifically on the forthcoming boundary review and the issues arising from the loss of a 5-year land supply in Babergh.

Cllr Maybury encouraged residents to consider a neighbourhood plan for Acton.

9. County Councillor's report

Cllr Spence was unable to attend as he had another commitment. His report (Appendix 3) was received.

Signed:.....

Date

Page 1 of 2

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Acton Village Hall at 7:30pm on
Thursday 18 May 2017**

10. Open session

- (i) Cllr Maybury thanked all residents who had assisted with litter picks during the year.
- (ii) Residents welcomed the recently installed speed indicator device which will alternate between approved sites on Waldingfield Road and Melford Road. It was noted with regret that speed calming measures were unlikely to be implemented along Vicarage Lane.
- (iii) It was noted that the planning application to site an aerial on land near the allotments on Barrow Hill had been approved.
- (iv) The Clerk outlined the various ways in which overgrown hedges can be reported to the County Council Highways Department noting in particular the online facility provided by Suffolk County Council. The Clerk indicated that he is willing to pass on the concerns of residents if sufficient information is provided.
- (v) Residents welcomed the Parish Council newsletter noting that the next issue will be distributed in September 2017. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council are happy to publish society/club news but asked that, due to the constraints of space, articles be brief.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR 2016/17

This is my report on the parish council's activities over the past twelve months.

Firstly I must offer my apologies for being unable to attend this meeting tonight due to my family circumstances. However, I think it is the only one I have missed since 1967 so my track record is not too bad.

There have been no changes in the membership of the council during the year but we were pleased to welcome our new clerk, Paul MacLachlan, last May. Paul has done an excellent job during a very busy year and has made sure that your council has complied with all the necessary rules and regulations, of which there seem to be an ever increasing number, and I would like to publicly express my personal thanks to him for the support he has given me. I would also like to say a big thankyou to Paul for taking on the task of reviving our parish council newsletter. The first edition of The Bulletin has been very well received by village residents and Paul has agreed to produce future editions at regular intervals.

As you will have seen, our local shopkeeper, Tim Mukunthan, has allowed us to erect new noticeboards for public and official use on his shop forecourt and has also allowed the emergency defibrillator to be installed there. We are very grateful to Tim for his co-operation and also to Roger Lane who made the notice boards for us.

Additional dog waste bins have been provided at various points in the village and the upgrading of all our street lighting columns, including those leading up to the village hall, has been completed. The new LED lights are more environmentally friendly and have reduced our maintenance costs considerably.

You may also have noticed the Speed Indicator Device which has been installed at the Waldingfield Road entrance to the village. This has been funded by our county councillor Colin Spence from his Locality Budget and we are grateful to him for his help. The device has to be moved periodically from one end of the village to the other and we are still looking for volunteers to do this. The more volunteers there are, the less often each one will be called on. Although Acton is joined with neighbouring villages in funding the Community Speed Watch programme we have still been unable to provide enough volunteers to make up a team in our own village. Again, volunteers would be welcomed.

People and traffic do not mix well and in an effort to provide a safer pedestrian route from Clay Hall Lane to the village centre the council had planned with the help of our county councillor to improve the surface and drainage of Bun Meadow footpath. Unfortunately this proposal met with strong opposition from a minority of people and the scheme was eventually abandoned.

In my report last year I mentioned that some of the lime trees in Jennens Way were showing signs of distress. We had hoped they would recover but unfortunately they did not and some of them have had to be felled. Although these trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order we have been advised by Babergh District Council not to replant them at present. We shall continue to monitor the remaining trees and also those in the avenue leading up to the church.

A lot of people use the public footpaths in our parish and in order to keep them walkable, the parish council has agreed a revised cutting schedule with Suffolk County Council. The majority of paths will now be cut three times a year with the cost of the third cut being met by the parish.

The children's play equipment at Limetree Green continues to be very well used and in order to ensure our children's safety the parish council has entered into a new contract with Sovereign under which regular inspections will be carried out and routine repairs dealt with promptly.

During the year the parish council has made recommendations to Babergh District Council on 27 planning applications; seven were new builds, three related to tree preservation orders and the remaining seventeen were for minor alterations or additions to existing buildings. I am pleased to say that of those 27 there were only three instances where the district council disagreed with us.

As I expect you are all aware, there are two major planning applications in the pipeline: one at Tamage Road and the other for the field between High Street and the allotments. Either or both of these would make a big difference to our village and it does point up once again the need for a Village Plan. Acton has made several attempts to get a village plan process started but there has never been enough enthusiasm from the general public to make it happen. I know that our District Councillor Margaret Maybury feels very strongly that this is something we should address. Perhaps these applications will be the catalyst.

I would like to say thank you to Richard Fish for continuing to keep our village free from litter and to Ray Wright for continuing to act as our odd job man. The work of both of them is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and support throughout the year and to offer my support to the council's new chairman in the coming year.

End of Year Report 2016/17

For Babergh District Council the year of 2016/2017 has seen many changes, successes and some disappointments. The Council agreed to calling in the Boundary Commission when it was noticed we were approaching the 10% (plus or minus) rule on electorate representation. The process is still on-going but the Council agreed to recommend reducing the number of District Councillors from 43 to 31 with effect from 2019. This, although logically explained, has caused concern for me representing a rural Ward with the unique culture of the area. I believe this will have an effect on the Ward but as yet I do not know what. The Council also agreed changing to a Leader/Cabinet model for Babergh, taking effect from May 2017. This model will involve a Leader plus members of cabinet following the style already adopted in neighbouring councils. At the moment the number proposed for cabinet members is seven in total but the model can accommodate up to ten inclusive of the leader. The Council Constitution has also been streamlined and updated. Babergh has also seen the appointment, in January, of a new Chief Executive, Arthur Charvonia, after the resignation of Charlie Adan. The biggest change for the Council will be the move to Endeavour House, Ipswich, later this year which will include our colleagues in Mid Suffolk joining us and County under one roof. This will allow full sharing of district council staff and facilities. Centres for access will be available in Sudbury and possibly one in Hadleigh too but decisions have not been finalised.

Considering successes at the Council includes, building new council homes with the closest to the Ward being the twelve under construction at Meadow Close, Lavenham. This is part of a project of building twenty-seven new homes within the district, with hopefully more affordable housing on the way after Babergh received just on £190, 000 in a grant to promote community led housing. £460,000 of income has been generated this year from the Solar PV project which is almost 70% up on last year and comes from solar panels installed on council housing. And across the two districts ninety-seven empty homes have been brought back into use generating more income, together with helping tenants avoid eviction through the Financial Inclusion Project, this is good news. Neighbourhood plans in Lavenham and East Bergholt have been accepted and others are in the pipeline.

Disappointments have included the fall in the five year land supply at Babergh which has been sparked by the Judicial Review of the planning application at East Bergholt, whereby developers have been disillusioned to apply for development potential. This unfortunately may have a knock on effect across the District with local planning rules being usurped by national guidelines, which would/may not be what we would hope or expect in the community.

However, good news is that a national Halifax survey ranks Babergh District as twenty-fifth out of a list of fifty, for best rural authorities with the best quality of life, up considerably in achievement from last year and the highest ranking in Suffolk.

On a personal level, this year has seen me join the administration team as the Portfolio Holder for Community Capacity Building and Engagement; a position I am enjoying immensely. I continue to attend parish council meetings as much as possible and other events where I can. I have been on my annual litter picking campaign this Spring and joined two of the villages within the Ward, Acton and Little Waldingfield on their efforts to keep their area tidy. I have also walked some of the roads in Great Waldingfield clearing as I go. I must say it is looking better with less litter collected this year but this may be the result of

those unsung heroes who go out on a daily walk, collect rubbish and dispose of it at home. I extend a big thank you to them. However, it must be said that fly tipping has seen a worrying increase across the district. It is the responsibility of the district to remove this waste and I urge all to report any instances to stop the unwanted attraction of rubbish as I feel that rubbish attracts rubbish. It costs Babergh £400,000 per annum for litter, dog waste, fly-tipping and general rubbish collecting.

To leave on a positive note, I enjoy the privilege of representing the Ward at Babergh District Council; I appreciate the responsibility given to me and I sincerely hope to be part of the senior administration team within the Cabinet system and I very much welcome the challenge.

Cllr Margaret Maybury (Member for Waldingfield Ward)

Appendix 3

Report of Suffolk County Councillor – Colin Spence to Acton Parish Annual Meeting – Thursday 18 May 2017

It has remained a very challenging time for all public services over the past year. Despite that the County Council has managed not to raise the basic level of Council tax during the past seven years.

If I can just highlight a few important issues which we have been managing:

- 1. Caring for Suffolk's elderly and vulnerable residents has remained one of the Council's highest priorities. With an aging population, it has supported residents to live active and fulfilling lives. To honour our commitment to adult social care, the Council has taken all opportunities presented to it to invest in front line services, for two consecutive years (2016/17 & 2017/18) it introduced the adult social care precept at 2% and 3% respectively. This money is ring-fenced and goes directly into front line services. In the 2017/18 budget the Council will be investing £12.3m in full to front line services and to those hardworking people who care for our elderly population. We will target this money into the care sector to provide a sustainability and safe, high quality care.**
- 2. Since the last election in May 2013 Suffolk Schools have gone from 60% 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rating by OFSTED to an amazing 90%. This means that 9 out of 10 children in Suffolk now have access to the highest standards of education thanks to the tireless work of those leading on this very important service area. The Council is now ranked in the top half of all authorities in the country for GSCE results. We will not rest until we ensure all children receive those highest standards.**
- 3. Over the past four years the Council has managed to work with partners to secure millions of pounds of improvement to the rail network, with brand new rolling stock and reduced journey times under the new rail franchise with Greater Anglia. Our continued investment in community transport through our Connecting Communities scheme has extended services in rural areas, allowing everyone to access public transport no matter how remote their location.**

4. The County's energy from waste plant has enabled the Council to save money on landfill tax, generate electricity and earn income. The plant was built to budget and on time. It takes all Suffolk's domestic waste for incineration and powers 30,000 homes. As a result, waste going into landfill in Suffolk has been cut from 44% to just 1%!

5. I have been able to support the following for the benefit of the local Community in Acton from my Suffolk County Councillor's Locality budget during the past year:
 - Acton's Youth Club and joint Scout Group (with Great Waldingfield) - Equipment
 - Acton Primary School pupils who visited the Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds for the children's Summer Festival
 - The provision of a Petanque (Boules) pitch on the Playing Field
 - The installation of security Closed Circuit TV at the Village Hall to protect the Hall and surroundings from damage

Colin Spence

Suffolk County Councillor: Sudbury East & Waldingfield Division