

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Acton Village Hall at 7:30pm on Monday 23 April 2018**

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

**Present:** 30 residents, Sally Connick (Community Action Suffolk), County Councillor Colin Spence, District Councillors Margaret Maybury and Frank Lawrenson 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 Nick Antill, Trudy Fisher, Jonathan Matthews and Will Shropshire.

### **3. Sunday Outings Scheme**

This session was due to be led by Cally Boardman, one of the two County Council Local Area Co-ordinators who cover the wider Sudbury area. The County Council have advised Cally that she will no longer be undertaking this work beyond June 2018 and have directed that she stops doing any further development work. As a result she was unable to attend. The Sunday Outings initiative will continue as a legacy of her work and further details can be obtained from Go Start.

### **4. Acton Good Neighbour Scheme**

Jennifer Bacon, a local resident, together with Sally Connick, Community Action Suffolk's Good Neighbour Scheme Development Officer provided the following headline information about the Acton Good Neighbour Scheme:

- the Acton scheme is one of 34 schemes in Suffolk;
- it is intended to enhance existing acts of neighbourliness and provide help and support with low level tasks such as shopping, transport and jobs around the house;
- an organising committee already exists;
- set up costs are approximately £500 to £600. Thereafter, costs are approximately £150 per annum;
- those willing to help can offer as few or as many hours as they are able;
- those in need of support telephone a central support number and contact is then made with those who have indicated a willingness to provide the sort of support required;
- a questionnaire has been distributed within the community to assess need and to invite volunteers;
- the Parish Council offered to assist with the distribution of literature as an insert within its community newsletter.

The Chairman thanked Jennifer and Sally for their presentation and work within the community.

### **5. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 18 May 2017**

It was proposed by Rev Hallett, seconded by Lisa Franks and agreed that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 18 April 2017 were an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

### **6. Chairman's report**

The written report (Appendix 1) of Chairman, Paul Chaplin, was received. There were no questions on the report.

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### **7. District Councillor's report**

Cllr Margaret Maybury gave an oral report the content of which is shown at Appendix 2. Cllr Frank Lawrenson endorsed the comments made by Cllr Maybury.

### **8. County Councillor's report**

The written report (Appendix 3) of County Councillor Colin Spence was received. Cllr Spence responded to questions on:

- the proposed Chilton Woods development commenting that it may take 10 years to complete;
- the traffic congestion in Sudbury and concerns that the 1,150 homes to be built as part of the Chilton Woods development will only add to the problem;

### **9. Open session**

- (i) Residents expressed disappointment that the Planning Authority had approved the construction of up to 100 homes on land south east of Barrow Hill and were particularly concerned about drainage issues arising from the development;
- (ii) Cllrs Maybury and Lawrenson encouraged the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan in order to take some control of local development. Cllr Maybury also highlighted the merits of Community Land Trusts;
- (iii) Cllr Lawrenson encouraged residents to respond to the next iteration of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan which is likely to be published in the next few months;
- (iv) Cllr Chaplin reported on the work of the Acton Playing Field and Village Hall Association highlighting significant fabric improvements and an increased level of bookings. He thanked Cllr Spence for his financial support made from his Locality Funds and concluded by commenting that the Village Hall is a thriving place.

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

### **Appendix 1: Parish Council Chairman, Paul Chaplin's report**

One of the main tasks of the Parish Council is to respond to planning applications; these are usually of a domestic nature, for example extensions and one -off dwellings. This past year however has seen three applications for major developments; the first at Chilton Woods where we had a joint meeting with councillors from Acton, Chilton, Long Melford and Great Waldingfield, all opposed the scheme, but Babergh decided to grant permission for 1150 residences plus additional works. Secondly, the Bull Lane Industrial Estate, which we opposed and Babergh decided not to grant permission. Thirdly, land to the south of Barrow Hill for permission to build 100 houses which we vehemently opposed. Disappointingly, Babergh granted outline permission for this development. As a Parish Council we can only advise and, as can be seen, we can be overruled.

A team of Parish Councillors met to give Acton's response to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Plan and I would like to thank those who participated; our views have been put forward.

We are in discussion with the Boundary Commission regarding the new electoral boundary arrangements; the issue is whether we join with Long Melford or alternatively with Lavenham and Great Waldingfield. Acton Parish Council favours the latter.

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I am pleased to advise that the long awaited defibrillator has now been installed outside the Village Shop and hopefully this may well save lives. I would like to thank the owners of the Village Shop for their assistance and for supplying the power for this unit.

Work around the village continues; grass cutting is carried out to Lime Tree Green and other areas. Permission was sought to fell the dead lime trees on Jennens Way, which has been carried out. In addition undergrowth and hedges were removed from the edge of Lime Green which has considerably enhanced the outlook; the footpath, Jennen's Way has been resurfaced with shingle.

We have entered into a contract with Sovereign to inspect the Lime Tree play equipment on a regular basis and ensure that everything is in proper working order. In addition to this the parish councillors inspect the Lime Tree play area on a weekly basis throughout the year.

Dog fouling and litter continue to be a problem in the village; I would like to thank Richard Fish for all his efforts in trying to keep the village tidy and the volunteers who carry out litter picking in their spare time. Dog fouling is particularly prevalent on the playing fields; the bin has been re-sited in a more prominent position in the hope that it will encourage more people to pick up after their dogs.

On a more positive note the Wildlife Area is being transformed under the supervision of Stuart Ricketts and Colin Muddimer. We would like to thank them, together with Peter Bacura and Ted Donovan, for all their hard work.

The provision of allotments is appreciated by many residents; however, there have been some break-ins to the sheds and we would ask everyone to be vigilant, and report any incidents.

Following requests for facilities for teenagers in the village a Saturday morning was set aside for public suggestions but regrettably there was no response from any residents.

LED lighting has been installed around the village providing savings to the budget and a special shield is being constructed where light is shining into a particular house.

Speed indicators are in operation at both ends of the village and in the main seem to have a calming effect, however there are still drivers ignoring the speed limit.

We would like to thank Christine Johnson for her fifty years of service to the village; I am pleased to report that following her retirement as Chair of the Parish Council, she was awarded the freedom of Acton. We look forward to her words of advice in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Parish Councillors for their support over the past year and also express my appreciation for the outstanding contribution of our clerk. Paul MacLachlan, who due to his efficiency has made the past year as easy and enjoyable as possible.

Councillor Paul Chaplin  
Chair, Acton Parish Council

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### **Appendix 2: District Councillor Margaret Maybury's report**

One of the top priorities for the District Council this year has been to increase the number of affordable homes available for local people. New affordable homes are now occupied in both Lavenham and Glemsford with more being built under a Community Land Trust scheme in Lavenham under a partnership with Hastoe Housing. Sadly it is a fact that the ratio between salaries and the cost of housing is rising with MSDC residents needing 9 times their salary and BDC 11 times to purchase an average priced home. Across the joint districts 1,751 active households are looking for affordable housing. Chilton Woods having gained outline planning permission should bring 25% affordable housing for the District over the development.

CIL, Community Infrastructure Levy, came into being this year and the increased benefits for parishes as well as the District is now filtering through. Acton is due some £81 at the moment.

Supporting local economy is another priority and Sudbury is a key focal point for this. A Vision for Sudbury initiative commenced in October and priority plans to revitalise the town centre is foremost. Funding of £3.4 across the two Leisure Centres in Sudbury and Hadleigh has been agreed which will allow the centres to become self sufficient with increased facilities.

A Leisure Strategy has been introduced enabling a structured approach to encouraging an active life style along with Eat Out Eat Well Awards. These together with Hygiene Rating star listings make for healthy life styles.

Local government has a challenging time balancing the budget but still maintaining services and this year has been particularly challenging with funding from central government soon to end and New Homes Bonus being reduced. Our move to Endeavour House in Ipswich made savings as has our continued working together with MSDC. The merger as it is called, the dissolving of two district councils to form a new one, is now on hold after the move by the Leader of SCC, Colin Noble, to revisit the idea of a Unitary council for Suffolk. We await further outcome.

The move to Endeavour House, Ipswich, by both District Councils has seen customer access points located in Sudbury and Stowmarket. The Sudbury Town Hall access point was selected after it emerged the majority of callers at Corks Lane, Hadleigh, originated from Sudbury and surrounding areas. Working in the same building as SCC and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (Health) will save £5.4m over 5 years. Agile working for staff has been embraced and the building is a focal centre for all Councillors.

Council Tax increased by 3.25% with those residents most in need only having to pay 5% of their council tax, a reduction from 8.5%. Tenants have benefitted from a 1% reduction in rent too. As a District we collect the Council Tax on behalf of SCC, the Police, Town and Parish Councils as well as ourselves but we only receive 10%.

The Council has invested £50m across the two Districts under CIFCO as a vehicle to support the Councils revenue Fund. The Councils have also introduced charged pre-planning application advice achieving an income of £88,000.

The Councils continue to grant fund which has enabled external funding of over £1.7m. Babergh has supported the purchase of Shotley Pier, encouraged fit villages, and celebrated the 80th anniversary of Arthur Ransome's book "we didn't mean to go to sea". BDC has also gifted Gainsborough Chambers to the Gainsborough House Museum.

The Council has embraced environmental issues with the Trees for Life campaign whereby every new child born during the Summer of 2018 to the winter of 2019 will receive a tree which can be planted in their family's garden or donated to a community wood, orchard or project. The

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Council has also encouraged food hygiene grading for food premises with 60% gaining the top scoring.

Locally, I have attended parish council meetings regularly and listened and advised where applicable on issues raised by residents. Proposed Planning Applications still cause concern either on size or location and I have strived to represent the parish views on these. I still urge residents to comment on the Boundary review consultation which ends on 30th April. I also still urge the parish to consider a Neighbourhood Plan.

Unfortunately a spell of ill-health did restrict some of my duties.

Personally I have been honoured to represent the Waldingfield Ward these last three years and thank residents for their continued support. I was appointed to the very first Cabinet in May 2017 as the member for Communities and I am very pleased to report that I have retained that position. I believe my greatest success in this role has been to secure the futures of the Leisure Centres in Sudbury and Hadleigh with a new swimming pool being planned in Hadleigh to replace the creaking tank currently being used. I am also proud to be able to state that the recent Public Realm consultation concluded a satisfactory review which stated the Council gained value for money from its contractors, but as always there is more to be done.

I extend my best wishes to all residents of Acton.

Margaret Maybury  
District Councillor, Waldingfield Ward

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**Appendix 3: County Councillor's report**

During the past year the County Council has attempted to move forward on a number of key major issues whilst meeting the serious continual challenges of reductions in its budget including:

**(a) Consulting on the future Record Office Service in Lowestoft**

The storeroom in the current Record Office building is not sustainable to continue holding Lowestoft's archive material. Its basement location means that it is prone to flooding and damp hazards, at risk of mould growth and fire resistance is not up to the required standard.

This, along with the general decline in visitors and the council's ongoing requirement to make savings in line with its objectives to fill the budget gap of £56m by 2021, means that changes need to be made to the service in Lowestoft.

The results of the formal consultation will be presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Committee later in the year for a final decision to be made on the future service provision.

The proposal has just been awarded National Heritage Lottery Funding of £10.3m

For further details of the consultation process, visit [www.suffolkarchives.co.uk](http://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk)

**(b) Proposal to change home to school travel**

On Wednesday 28 February 2018 the consultation to help find a long-term solution to providing affordable home to school transport closed.

In Suffolk, £21 million of taxpayers' money is spent every year getting children to and from school. Suffolk County Council has already introduced a number of efficiency changes to the service saving around £2.6 million. Now, like many other councils across the country, the authority needs to consider making more significant changes across a number of areas, including home to school travel.

The consultation highlights the challenges faced with funding and asks residents for their thoughts on how we adapt to the changing education landscape in Suffolk as schools continue to become more independent, moving away from being historically under local authority control, with new powers to set their choice of admissions, adjust term dates and manage school travel plans.

The Council's current school and post-16 travel policies go above legal requirements, the consultation seeks views on changing these policies, giving the opportunity to explore local solutions as well as three alternative options for children aged 5-16 and 16 plus.

Over 3500 people have already responded to the school and post-16 travel consultation surveys, over 151 people attended one of the consultation workshops and 36 people attended the 'Have your say' event where alternative solutions were presented.

All of the feedback gathered will be carefully and thoroughly considered by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet in June 2018. Website: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/schooltravel](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/schooltravel).

**(c) Suffolk to use drone technology to help manage blue light service incidents**

February 2018 saw the official launch of the use of two Small Unmanned Surveillance Aircrafts in Suffolk. The technology, commonly referred to as drones have been developed and funded by the Suffolk Resilience Forum for use across the County. As part of a multi-agency Air Support Unit, the drones will be used by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue and Norfolk & Suffolk 4x4 Response.

The drones will provide a range of surveillance options to support emergency services and voluntary organisations across a wide range of incidents including:

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- large-scale open fires or complex structural fires
- urban area search and rescue
- major incident or disaster response
- investigative support
- hazardous materials response including Environmental Impact Assessments
- road traffic accidents
- significant multi-agency events
- missing persons searches
- pre-planned operations and risk information gathering

By improving the ability to see and understand what is happening from the air, the drones will **support** emergency services and voluntary organisations to inform the decisions they make when dealing with an incident. They will also help to reduce risks to the public and emergency service workers.

The drones and camera equipment cost around £42,500 and they are based at Woodbridge Fire and Police station, have 24/7 emergency response capability and can be used by 17 specially trained remote pilots.

**(d) More than 97% of students receive their preferred Secondary School on National Offer Day**

This year, Suffolk County Council received its highest number of applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to be educated at from September 2018 in Year 7. The total was 7,447. Last year it was 7171.

91.61% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and 97.23% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools. This percentage figure of 91.61% equates to a total of 6822 pupils.

Any parents or carers with children born between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2007 and who have not yet applied for a school place should make an application immediately by downloading the CAF1 application form from the council's website: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions)

**(e) Alignments of Ipswich's Upper Orwell Crossings unveiled**

The preferred alignments of Ipswich's Upper Orwell Crossings have been announced by Suffolk County Council.

The main crossing is proposed to connect to the existing highway at the Rapier Street roundabout on Wherstead Rd, west of the river, and at a new junction, north of Cliff Lane on Holywells Road, east of the river. The bridge crosses the river at an angle and incorporates an opening section over the navigation channel.

The second crossing, will provide a new vehicular link to the Wet Dock Island site and is proposed to be accessed from Felaw Street. The third crossing is a refurbishment of the existing swing bridge over the lock for use by cyclists and pedestrians.

These crossings will improve journey times through and around Ipswich, benefiting those that live and work in the town.

**(f) 2018/2019 Budget Setting**

The council has recently agreed its budget for the forthcoming financial year. Set within the landscape of further reductions in budgets coupled with a continuing increase in demand for services the County Council has for the first time in seven years increased its general council tax levels by 2.99% and, in accordance with Government guidelines, approved a further council

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tax increase of 2% to cover the National Social Care Precept to meet the growing and serious demand for Adult Social Care services.

The total increase in the County Council's share of the Council Tax for 2018/19 is 4.99%

Recent news of the financial situation with other Councils struggling to balance budgets whilst trying to deliver services underlines serious concern for the future financial planning of local government both in Suffolk and across the Country.

### **(g) Suffolk Highways goes to war on potholes**

Suffolk Highways has declared war on the potholes which are opening up on the county's roads, following one of the worst winters in recent years.

Since the start of 2018, Suffolk Highways has received in excess of 11,000 customer reports, which compares with approximately 6,000 reports in the same period last year. This demonstrates the impact the bad weather Suffolk has experienced since November has had on the county's road surface.

Suffolk Highways has put in place the following measures with immediate effect to help cope with the demand:

- Deploying additional gangs to undertake pothole and road repairs across the county.
- Switching to a different temporary material to repair emergency potholes which, although slightly more expensive, provides a longer-lasting repair in damp conditions.
- Considering for large areas of intervention-level pothole defects whether 'making safe' (through organising traffic management and temporary road closures) is required in advance of making extensive repairs.
- Bringing in extra resource to undertake larger-scale patching works as part of a planned programme for dealing with sites on which traffic management or road closures have been arranged or areas where small-scale repairs will not sufficiently address the road deterioration.
- Moving internal resources from other teams to support the inspection of customer reports, particularly from staff with previous experience of dealing with customer reports and inspections.

This extra push to repair the high volume of potholes in the county is being assisted by the extra £21 million funding which has been borrowed to resurface a quarter of all roads managed by Suffolk Highways, by 2021.

### **(h) Suffolk Waste Partnership awarded £10,000 to help tackle blight of litter**

Suffolk Waste Partnership have been awarded £10,000 from the Government's Litter Innovation Fund to run innovative local projects aimed at reducing litter.

Suffolk Waste Partnership's member authorities are responsible for clearing litter from public land and highways, with the cost of removing litter from Suffolk's major A-roads the A14, A12 and A11 standing at £300,000 per year.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership's project will:

- Work with businesses such as drive-throughs, service stations, garages and logistics firms to seek their support in promoting responsible attitudes to litter disposal.
- Trial new style litter bins at key layby locations and improve labelling and signage of litter bins along the A11, A12 and A14 in Suffolk.

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- Trial new remote monitoring technology to help councils coordinate litter bin emptying more efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure that any person taken to court and convicted for a littering offence anywhere in Suffolk is named and shamed publicly.
- Run an awareness campaign to remind residents and visitors alike about the issues and the consequences of littering.
- Educate residents and businesses about how to prevent their waste inadvertently escaping their control and ending up as litter.

### **(i) Volunteers needed to help Suffolk get composting**

Suffolk Master Composters are inviting green minded enthusiasts to join their ranks and master the art of composting this spring.

New volunteers will receive expert training from the Suffolk Waste Partnership and Garden Organic to enable them to act as composting ambassadors – encouraging the public to compost.

Composting resources and ongoing support will also be provided throughout the volunteers' involvement. In return volunteers are asked to commit a minimum of 30 hours to the scheme – promoting the composting message through talks to local organisations, visits to schools, writing articles and running information stalls at public events. No experience is required to join the scheme – all that is needed is an interest in composting and a desire to support your local community.

More information on the Suffolk Master Composter scheme and the training course is available at [www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk](http://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk).

### **(j) Residents are invited to take part in Suffolk's biggest walking festival to date**

With up to 125 walks on offer, this year's Suffolk Walking festival is shaping up to be the biggest yet.

Whether young or old, a novice or an expert, there is something for everyone! You could kick start your day on a Dawn Chorus walk or end it on a Twilight Safari. You can have a go at Nordic Walking and realise the power in your legs or spend a day discovering GeoCaching and seek out the treasures dotted around the landscape.

The festival launches with two walks at St Peter's Brewery in Bungay, on Saturday 12 May, each walk including a brewery tour.

Once again, the festival will include a challenge walk and this year's walk covers over 60 miles in just four days. The walk explores The Sandlings, a landscape of sandy soils, heathlands and forests stretching between Southwold and Ipswich.

This year also sees the launch of the Festival Fringe, a series of events that get you close to nature in the very heart of Suffolk's countryside. Fringe highlights include "Twilight Safari", where you'll experience night life waking up in an ancient woodland; "Suffolk Sketchbook" where you can learn to sketch in the iconic setting of Snape Maltings; and "Iconic Images", a series of photography workshops with one of Suffolk's leading professional photographers.

Tickets for the events and walks are now on sale. Buy tickets at [www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk).

### **(k) Suffolk to host opening stage of OVO Energy Women's Tour**

The OVO Energy Women's Tour will return to Suffolk this June, as the county hosts the opening stage to the UCI Women's World Tour race on Wednesday 13 June.

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Over 100 of the world's top cyclists will race from Framlingham to Southwold, home of race sponsors Adnams, taking in a 130-kilometre route through Suffolk, including Wickham Market, Woodbridge, Ipswich, Stowmarket and Halesworth.

It will mark the fourth time that Britain's biggest women's cycling event has returned to the county, and in a boost for fans there will also be a chance to ride much of the route, in the OVO Energy Tour Ride sportive event supporting Breast Cancer Care on Sunday 1 July.

In total 17 teams will compete in the 2018 OVO Energy Women's Tour, including four British squads, Wiggle HIGH5, Trek Drops, WNT Rotor and Storey Racing, with the riders set to compete in the race being announced during the early summer.

You can find further details of the [OVO Energy Tour Ride](#) supporting Breast Cancer Care on their website, including how to enter.

### **County Councillor's Locality Budget**

Every County Councillor has access to a small budget to support local initiatives and projects. The budget was set this year at £8000.00 and covers my whole Division i.e. Sudbury East and the rural parishes of Acton, Chilton, Great & Little Waldingfield.

During the past year I have been able to financially support Acton Village Hall and Playing Field Association with a grant of £800.00 to purchase Junior Goals.

I have also supported the Acton Village Hall Committee with a grant of £600.00 to purchase Kurling and Boccia sets.

### **Chilton Woods Planning Development**

The proposed Chilton Woods development plan, which is over 95% within my Division was approved in outline at Babergh District Council's Planning Development Committee late last year.

Work is continuing within the County Council, who is over-seeing the implementation, to identify, plan for and agree the strategies for making the overall plan a reality. More detailed information is expected to be available soon. The County Council's Cabinet met last Tuesday 17 April 2018 to consider the next stages of the process on the approved planning application and confirmed the strategic way forward on delivery of this very large project

I had the opportunity of addressing the Cabinet and I was able to ask a number of questions on behalf of Constituents who had raised queries with me

### **Colin Spence**

Suffolk County Councillor, Sudbury East & Waldingfield Division