

**HOLTON ST MARY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 8pm**  
**HOLTON ST MARY VILLAGE HALL**  
**Minutes**

**Present:** Jan Cheng (Chair), Faye Hall (Clerk), John Ward (District Councillor), Georgia Hall (County Councillor) and 14 Parishioners

1. **Chairman's Welcome:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Mike Hay, Liz Norton, Frances and Paul Torrington, Bob Holmes and Geoff White.
3. **Minutes of 2022 Annual Parish Meeting:** Parishioners advised that they had not seen the minutes so Jan Cheng read the minutes out. It was agreed that for the next APM a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting are to be printed and attached to the copy of the agenda so Parishioners can review before the meeting starts. The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
4. **Matters Arising:** None
5. **Parish Council: Chairman's Report:** The Chair gave an update of the changes to the Parish Council which had occurred, and on planning matters that the Parish Council had been involved with during 2022-23. The Chair advised that this is her second year as Chair but will not be standing again as a Parish Councillor. The Parish Council have a sum of CIL monies that must be spent within the next year so Parishioners were asked if there are any improvements to infrastructure that they would like to see made. The Parish Council is looking at replacing some styles on a local landowners land with self-closing gates to make a circular walk more accessible – A Parishioner asked if the new self-closing gates would be accessible for pushchairs, Clerk to check. A Parishioner raised the solicitors fees mentioned under expenditure for the 21-22 accounts and asked what this was for. The Chair advised that the Parish Council used a solicitor for legal objection to the Rehabilitation Centre at Holton Hall Farm, as it was a complex area legal representation was needed.  
The Chair read out a message from Mike Hay which thanked Richard Appleton for his continuing sterling work keeping footpaths and signage clear/renewed and he has appreciated working alongside him.  
The Chairs full report is attached in Appendix A.
6. **Parish Council: Financial Report:** The Clerk presented a copy of the audited 2021/2022 accounts and explained why the total expenditure was lower than income. The Parish Council also has a remaining amount of £7543.30 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL is levied on the developer of new properties when any new homes are built, this money has to be spent within five years of receipt on infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on our Village). £5459.57 received 30.09.19, £1973.40 received 31.03.22 and £110.33 received 30.09.22.  
The full report is attached in Appendix A  
There were no questions.
7. **Speeding and Road Issues Report:** Mark Anderson's full report is attached in Appendix A. Speeding through the village was discussed – Mark wanted to thank Suffolk County Council for their support in getting the ANPR camera and advised it was a successful achievement for the Parish Council to get this. A Parishioner raised that Sandpits Lane/Bacons Green have high traffic volumes and concerns raised that traffic is coming down these lanes too fast and that it is dangerous. Mark advised that the Parish Council could alert the safety camera vehicle to see if they

can visit these areas. Speed bumps were also discussed but these generate noise. A Parishioner asked if mirrors could be put on the bends in Sandpit Lane – Mark advised that this could be looked into. Georgia Hall the County Councillor advised that permission would be needed from Highways and also as this is a Highways Issue the Parish Council would be unable to fund. The diversion route for the A12 was also raised as more people are using Sandpits Lane to cut through – Georgia Hall advised that she will report this back to advise that the diversion route is unsafe so can it be looked at again. Mark highlighted that there is an issue in Hadleigh Road where raised drain covers from previous work are now causing problems – Suffolk Highways have looked at the issue and will be doing some more work to resolve this problem. The Chair thanked Mark for his help over the past year.

8. **Parish Church Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. Paul Torrington was absent - report read out by the Chair. The Parish Council are looking into appointing another grass cutting contractor to continue cutting the grass in the church yard/village square. There were no questions.
9. **Social Club Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. Bob Holmes was absent – report read by Suzie O'Connor. In Celebration of the Kings Coronation the Social Club are organising another dance on the Millennium Green on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May at a slightly earlier time to give families the opportunity to attend. There will be a hog roast and the same swing band that played at the Queens Platinum Jubilee event. Please see full report for ticket prices etc.
10. **Village Hall Management Committee Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. The meeting was asked if there was support for the current 4 Trustees continuing in the role. This was proposed by Claire Rowan, seconded by Suzie O'Connor with no objections, the motion was carried.
11. **Millennium Green Trust Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. Trustees had decided against installing play equipment on the green and had withdrawn the CIL funding request. The Chair stated that the Parish Council were disappointed with this decision but accepted the reasons why the request had been withdrawn.
12. **United Charities Trust Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. Francis Torrington was absent - report read by the Chair. It was noted that there are some funds available for anyone in the Village who may be needing support, there have been no applications for the past 2 years.
13. **District Councillor's Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. John Ward advised that his report has reviewed the last 4 years and has highlighted the key achievements. John is standing as an independent candidate in the forthcoming election. Parishioner raised parking in Hadleigh as people seem to park wherever they like – John advised that parking enforcement officers are patrolling and tickets are being issued. The Chair thanked John on behalf of the parish for all his hard work.
14. **County Councillor's Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. Georgia Hall advised that the ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) camera will be on rotation more in Holton St Mary and will eventually have an impact on speeding. Points raised by Parishioners about having the speed limit reduced to 20mph in the village and that councils should be consistent with their policies for 20mph zones across counties. Georgia advised that there are certain criteria that has to be met to have this implemented. A Parishioner raised that Stoke by Nayland have a 20mph zone – Georgia advised that she will look into what criteria they met to have this implemented. The Chair thanked Georgia on behalf of the parish for all her hard work.
15. **Constable Country Medical Practice Patient Participation Group Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A, Jan Cheng advised that the group meets every other month and they are looking for new members so if anyone would be interested in joining, she can advise how to do this.

16. **FFOTMLC (First Friday of the month Lunch Club) Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. There have been some changes to dates due to Easter and the Kings Coronation but Quartet has dates and who to contact to book.
17. **Slow Stitch Group Report:** Report attached in Appendix A; The club is thriving and they have about 15 members - everyone is welcome to come.
18. **Green Gym Group Report:** Report attached in Appendix A; The Green Gym have had another busy year and also had an increase in their numbers and now have 11 members. The Chair thanked them for all the work that they do in the village.
19. **Litter Picking Team Report:** Report attached in Appendix A; The Litter Picking team aim to keep the village and it's 2 principal approaches litter free and have started to collate data for everything that they collect.
20. **HSM Womens' Book Club Report:** Report attached in Appendix A- Liz Norton was absent- report was delivered by Jan Cheng.
21. **Facebook Report:** Report attached in Appendix A
22. **Village Recorder Update:** Report attached in Appendix A
23. **Any other business:** A Parishioner raised County Broadband and asked if there was any update on when they would be in Holton St Mary. The Chair advised that the Parish Council had given permission for County Broadband to have access to the pole in Church Square but haven't received any confirmation of when they will start work in the village.  
Claire Rowan thanked Jan Cheng for all her work on the Parish Council and Jan Cheng also thanked Sally Thurlow who will also not be returning as a Parish Councillor.  
A Parishioner raised that in 2013 there was a leaflet circulated with all the clubs in the village and who the Parish Councillors are etc and asked if this could be updated. Jan/Sally to send to Clerk and then this will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.  
No further update on Pylons.

Meeting closed at 2159hrs

## **Appendix One – Reports**

### **Report from the Parish Council**

All meetings of the Parish Council are now face to face, by law. They are held every other month from May in the village hall and always at 8pm on 2nd Wednesday evening. All meetings are open to members of the public. The meetings are usually also attended by both John Ward, our elected Babergh district councillor and Georgia Hall, our elected Suffolk County Councillor.

#### **Parish Council**

Janice Cheng continued as Chairman for a second year from May 2022. Sally Thurlow continued as Vice-Chairman.

Matt Toone has recently stepped down from Council due to family commitments. I would like to thank him for the valuable contributions he made while serving on the Parish Council

The current Councillors are Mark Anderson, Janice Cheng, Oliver Greene, Mike Hay, Claire Rowan, and Sally Thurlow, and one vacancy

May 4th is the date of local elections and every member of your Parish Council will be elected then. It is likely that not everyone currently a Councillor will stand, and we know we currently have a vacancy, with Matt Toone's resignation.

Faye Hall was appointed as Parish Clerk in April 2022 following a successful interview. The parish clerk can be contacted on [hsmparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:hsmparishclerk@gmail.com) regarding any queries you may have about Council business. We thank Liz Sims for her time as our Parish Clerk.

#### **Events**

The Parish Council organised The Lighting of the Beacon event to mark the late Queen Elizabeth 11 Platinum jubilee in June 2022. The beacon was lit by our oldest current resident, Mrs. Eileen Starling, who had also attended the Coronation in 1953. The plaque recording this has been prepared to fix to the beacon.

#### **Planning**

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee for all planning applications within the village boundary. Holton St Mary Parish Council responds to all applications, whether in support or to raise concerns. We discuss all planning applications at the next Parish Council, or at a dedicated planning meeting if a response cannot be delayed. Both meetings are open to the public.

The application for the large rehabilitation facility on agricultural land at Holton Hall Farm remains live. Further revised plans have been submitted. At the time of press, no decision has been made about the development and we understand that it will go to the full Planning Committee in due course. No date has been given for this yet. The Parish Council intends to seek to express its objection at that meeting.

Brett Vale golf club also has a current application to build chalet holiday homes on the golf course. The Parish Council submitted an objection to this on the basis of its proximity to the AONB.

Further information about applications can be seen on [www.babergh.gov/planning](http://www.babergh.gov/planning) You can also register so that you will receive notice if an application has been made in the area.

#### **Finance**

The Council receives a precept to pay for things that includes maintenance of Parish assets, hall hire, some grass cutting, dog bin emptying and councillor/clerk training.

The village sign has been professionally painted and maintenance work undertaken to the supporting post. We would like to thank Dr Richard Appleton for undertaking the maintenance of the post. The village notice board in Church Square was also repaired after the lock jammed.

Dog poo bag dispensers (and bags) have been mounted on finger posts on the circular walk around Squirrels Hall Farm. Thank you to Geoff White for installing these

Funds were also used for grass cutting in Church Square and the Churchyard in summer 2021.

There is another funding stream - community infrastructure levy (CIL) - which arises from new builds within the area, a portion of which has to be allocated to the relevant Parish Council to use on infrastructure. This fund has to be spent within 5 years.

It was agreed with the Millennium Green Trustees that the plan to link the Green to an electricity supply is not feasible at this time, therefore the sum previously earmarked for this initiative is now reverted to the Parish Council for re-allocation.

The Parish Council have agreed to provide financial support to remove the styles around the field on the footpath route 25/18/23 and to replace them with livestock proofed, self-closing gates. We believe this will enable some of the less nimble amongst us the opportunity to enjoy the walk around Squirrels Hall Farm. The landowner has agreed to this initiative.

Details of Council finances are published for each meeting and are publicly available.

### Highways

Mark Anderson will report separately on highways issues.

Janice Cheng  
Chair, HSM Parish Council

### Parish Council – Financial Report for Year 2021-22 (Parish Clerk- Faye Hall)

This report may appear to be a year behind but this is because the accounting year ends in April and the accounts are then audited and agreed before they are reported to the Parish.

The audited end of year accounts for Year 2021/22 are summarised as follows:

<b>Income</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Precept	£8175.00	£8,016.00
VAT Reclaimed	£123.06	£561.55
Interest	£4.90	£1.01
CIL	£0	£0
Insurance claim (post & rails Church Sq)	£821.41	£0
Bank Compensation (received for poor customer service)	£40.00	£0
Locality Grant	£829.20	£0
Parish Grant	£0	£67
	<b>£9993.57</b>	<b>£8,645.56</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Payroll	£3700.00	£3,639.96
Admin	£48.59	£475.80
Hall Hire/Zoom Expenses	£105.61	£173.95
Grass Cutting	£600.00	£490.00
Defibrillator	£0	£82.00
Insurance	£420.00	£379.28

Audit	£175.00	£189.60
*Subscriptions	£190.00	£145.33
Website	£60.00	£60.00
Poppy Wreath	£25.00	£30.00
Dog Bin	£50.00	£52.19
Elections	£0	£0
Flowers	£60.00	£0
Training	£118.80	£0
Infrastructure	£32.95	£0
Noticeboard (funded by locality grant)	£829.20	£304.80
Post and Rails Church Sq ( Part funded by Ins claim)	£821.41	£0
Expenditure covered by CIL Funds (balance remaining after Ins claim for fence and posts Church Sq/ Gate posts)	£1717.39	£200
Phone Box	£0	£400.00
ICO Fee	£0	£35.00
Solicitor Fees	£0	£1,440.00
	<b>£8,953.95</b>	<b>£8,097.91</b>

The total expenditure was lower than income in 2021/22, this is mainly due to additional income received of VAT reclaim and a Parish Grant being received.

**Assets** £2935

#### Balances at 31.3.22

Current Account £3,623.94  
Reserve Account £10,866.34 (Including CIL funds)

#### Financial Year 2022/2023

The Budget was set at £6,816.00.

The accounts will be audited by the Internal Auditor within the next few months. All the required documents including a copy of the Asset Register, the Certificate of Exemption and the Governance and Accountability Statements for the year will be published on the village website over the next few months. You are welcome to email the Parish Clerk if you have any queries about the accounts. [hsmpparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:hsmpparishclerk@gmail.com)

#### Budget for 2023/24

The Budget has been set at £7,154.00. This includes costs towards general maintenance, training, subscriptions, insurance, defib batteries/pads, and other maintenance as required. This budget also allows for the cost increases for services.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Parish Council also has a remaining amount of £7543.30 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL is levied on the developer of new properties when any new homes are built, this money has to be spent within five years of receipt on infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing

the demands that development places on our Village). £5459.57 received 30.09.19, £1973.40 received 31.03.22 and £110.33 received 30.09.22.

### **Speeding and Road Issues Report**

Speeding traffic remains an issue for road safety in the village, because of this, we get regular safety camera visits with continued support from Suffolk Police. In 2022, we have seen the introduction of a new a speeding camera system (ANPR cameras), we get the cameras on a regular basis and in rotation with other villages in Suffolk.

During one of the weeks that we had the cameras set up, the data showed that only 23% of the traffic was driving at 30mph or under.

Local businesses that have HGV's and regular use of large vehicles (LJ Transport, Phillips Brothers, IT Fleet) have continued to be very supportive to make sure their vehicles drive slower through the village.

We still have the ongoing support from Suffolk County Council with the placement of the temporary speed warning sign.

Quiet Lanes Scheme - we put forward Stubbins Lane for this scheme and it has been accepted, new road signs were installed by the Parish Council.

The purpose of this scheme is to make such rural roads safer to use for residents when walking or cycling for example and with designated signage that will let drivers know that the area carries the Quiet Lane status and that extra caution should be applied.

Regarding road issues, work was carried out in 2022 to address various problems with the road surface with water running off the road into residents driveways when we get heavy rain and also the many number of uneven spots where the drain covers had sunken and were lower than the road surface, causing loud noise disturbance when HGVs and other large vehicles drive over the area. Despite this work being carried out, we have some new problems with drain covers now being raised and above the road surface in some places, causing new noise disturbances, we also see that water does not run into some of the drains now and puddles appear on the road side, these additional matters are being addressed by SCC Highways.

Any road issues identified can be reported at any time by a resident using the online tool : <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Mark Anderson

### **REPORT ON HOLTON ST MARY PARISH CHURCH FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL: 2022/23**

During 2022, our services followed the regular pattern of one communion service a month in Holton St Mary, usually on the third Sunday of the month, with services held in the other three churches, Stratford St Mary, Higham and Raydon on the other Sundays. We also held the occasional Evensong in Holton, usually on the first Sunday of the month.

There were 2 weddings held in the church on 2022. The usual Advent Carol Service was held on 18<sup>th</sup> December which was well attended. In addition, we also held an All Souls service in early November at which the names of those who had died in recent years were read out by their loved ones living in the village. This was a welcome new idea and we hope to repeat it this year.

We continue to be led by the Rev'd Manette Crossman and Rev'd Nicola Tindall. Tragically, Nicola's husband Richard passed away in March after a short illness, and we continue to hold her and her family in our thoughts and prayers. People might like to be reminded that a children's / family service is held once a month in Higham led by lay people (keep an eye on the website and the Quartet for more details). Everyone is always welcome.

The fabric of the church is generally sound. May I take this opportunity of thanking the Parish Council for the support it has continued to show us in 2022 and in particular for keeping the churchyard tidy with regular mowing. Sadly, Keith Jeffries is no longer doing this, but we hope to find his replacement in the near future.

The church finances are in good order. I would like to thank those donors who generously give on a regular basis, whose support we could not possibly do without. I would also particularly like to thank Sally Thurlow and Marjorie Haste for being the prime organisers of the recent March Lunch, as well as all the other volunteers, which was well attended.

Finally, as always, may I take this opportunity to thank those in the village who assist with the upkeep and administration of the church in any way, whether that be serving on the PCC, helping with fundraising, participating in services, assisting with churchyard clean-up days, cleaning the church, decorating the church with beautiful floral displays, polishing the brass, cleaning and starching the linen, reviewing the church accounts, locking and unlocking the church, and anything else which serves to keep the church a living and vibrant part of our community.

PAUL TORRINGTON

Churchwarden

### **Social Club Report**

After 3 years of planning and disappointment we were finally able to host a celebration event on the Millennium Green. What had started out as a VE Day celebration actually ended up as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Holton St Mary Social Club originally approved a budget to subsidise the event to the tune of £4,000, this was in order to keep the ticket prices down, surprisingly we were actually £200 under budget. The actual night was a huge success with tickets being oversubscribed and there were numerous acknowledgments of how well it was run and enjoyed.

The Holton St Mary Social Club made a loss of £834 for 2022, which was made better than expected considering the subsidy of the Platinum Jubilee event. Fortunately, the other events that were held, 2 quiz nights, Bonfire night and the New Year's dance, all made money. There is also the Progressive Dinner, but this is run jointly with the Church Fundraising Committee, with all proceeds going to support the church. All these events will hopefully be run again in 2023.

It was not originally planned to have another large event in 2023, but a Kings Coronation is such a rare celebration, that it has been decided to have another dance on the Millennium Green. This will take place on 6th May at a slightly earlier time in order to give families the opportunity to attend. There will be a hog roast and the same swing band that entertained us for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We will not be using a large marquee this time, instead we will use the 4 marquees owned by the Holton St Mary Social Club, this is to keep the costs down. The tickets prices are £20 for members, £25 for non-members and children under 12 are £10.

There is no cost to becoming a member of the Holton St Mary Social Club. To join please come to the village hall on a Friday to sign up or let a committee member know. We are also undergoing a trial to open the social club on the last Sunday of the month at lunchtime from 12.00 noon until 3pm, so please join your neighbours and catch up on village life.

Don't forget that the marquees owned by the Holton St Mary Social Club are free to use if you live in the village.

I would like to thank all of those who have helped during the year, especially the committee and the bar rota volunteers, as without your support the Holton St Mary Social Club would not exist.

Special praise must be given to Erik Ellis who has supported the club in many different roles for decades, he has decided to step down from the committee and will be sorely missed.

If anybody is interested in volunteering for the committee or the bar rota, it would be greatly

welcomed.

Thank you

Bob Holmes (Chairman)

### **Holton St Mary Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) Report for the Year 2022-2023**

Hall usage/booking has for the second consecutive year increased, resulting in increased revenue for the year, yet is still in the order of £2k down on pre-covid times.

Our regular Hirers are the Social Club, Dance Club, FFOTMLC, Slow Stitch, Table Tennis, Young Mums and of course the Parish Council.

Early last year the VHMC produced a survey that was circulated around the village. The objective being to get a sense of what the Hall means to villagers, and what part does it play in village life for them. What the VHMC were looking to get from survey was should they be considering such topics as wide ranging as would it benefit from a make-over, to would knocking it down and starting again from scratch be the best way forward. It would also enable the VHMC to look at the improvements suggested as part of a recent Occupational Therapy Consultation.

There are grants available for Village Halls as they are seen as being very important to communities, as meeting places, almost a village hub so to speak. We are very lucky in Holton to already have such a place, but I think that you would agree that it is in need of a makeover at the very least.

It is our intention to investigate the possibilities of a refurbishment, with a view to embracing a green and renewable energy brief wherever possible. The first stage will be to engage with our clients (our Hall users) as to what they would like to see improved/changed. The next stage would be to set up a feasibility study, after which point, we would then be involving the village by holding an open meeting. It is our intention to communicate with villagers throughout the process.

I would finally like to thank my fellow committee members for their time and effort over the past year, as we are so lucky to have this type of facility in our community.

This brings us nicely round to those positions on the committee. We as a body are due for re-election, and it is at this Annual Parish Meeting that this takes place. We as a body, minus one, have said that we would like to stand for another term of office.

So I ask the meeting if we could have a proposer and seconder for the motion to re-elect the VHMC.

Thank You

Peter Longmate

Acting Chair

### **HOLTON ST MARY MILLENNIUM GREEN TRUST – AGM REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO DECEMBER 2022**

The Millennium Green Trust has 8 volunteer Trustees who maintain the Green on behalf of the village.

**GENERAL MAINTENANCE:** The year was quite challenging because of the extremely dry summer. The newly planted hedge on the church side needed the occasional watering and removal of large stinging nettles. The Green Gym team watered the newly planted willow tunnel in the hope that it might 'take'. In addition, the hedge on Rose Acre was faced in the autumn and some dead branches removed from trees/plants around the Green. In late summer, Richard Parmee, Babergh District Council Biodiversity Officer visited the Green to give advice on the lack of wild flowers in the wild flower meadow. He has suggested extending the area a little and also leaving a swathe of uncut

grass on the west side of the field. As the Green was originally a hay meadow there could be a seed bank of wild flowers seeds lying dormant. Eight of the bird boxes had nests and thanks go to Chris Haste for monitoring and maintaining the boxes.

**RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL USE OF THE GREEN:** The Green is used daily by many villagers and occasional visitors. In the summer months it was a venue for informal gatherings, especially in the cooler evenings. The beacon was lit in June to celebrate the late Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee and a large marque erected to host a hugely successful Jubilee celebration. The very popular fireworks and bonfire was held in November but due to the dry summer, the bonfire was smaller to protect the trees and there was no village collection of material.

The Trustees were made aware that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money was available to buy potential children's play equipment for the Green. Mindful that one of the principle aims in the Trust Deeds is to maintain, 'open spaces', the Trustees proposed having 2 – 3 pieces of play pieces for small children within the area of the willow tunnel. The Trustees applied for CIL funding but the Parish Council could not endorse this bid suggesting it was not enough and did not cater for a wide enough age range. After further discussion the Trustees decided to withdraw the CIL application.

Finally, my thanks go to all the Trustees, Chris Haste, Richard Appleton and the Green Gym team for their support and hard work in maintaining the Green for the benefit of all villagers.

Pam Quare, Chairperson

#### **HOLTON ST MARY UNITED CHARITIES TRUST**

Balance as of 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	£4694.36
Interest accrued 30/11/21	£2.34
Interest accrued 31/05/22	£6.98
Interest accrued 30/11/22	£17.48
<b>Total as of 30/11/22</b>	<b>£4721.16</b>

Capital (from sale of Charity Field)	£3931.75
Accrued rent and interest to 30/11/22	£789.41

The sum of £789.41 is available for charitable works.

An application to access these funds can be made to the trustees via Paul Torrington.

No such application has been made in the last year.

Frances Torrington  
28/3/2023

Trustees: Incumbent (Reverend Manette Crossman), Peter Cheng, Richard Noel, Sally Thurlow, Paul Torrington, Treasurer: Frances Torrington

#### **Brett Vale Annual Parish Meetings 2023 Babergh District Councillor's Report**

Rather than providing an annual report, summarising the contents of my monthly reports for the last year, I thought it would be good to review the past four years as we approach the district council

elections in May. We published our End of Term report – ‘What have we done for you 2019-22’ – in December. This provides a very informative summary of our key achievements in an easy-to-read visual format. It can be found at: Babergh District Council - What have we done for you, 2019 - 2022 report ([bmsdchosting.net](https://bmsdchosting.net))

I would like to take the opportunity to talk about what I think have been the highlights of the past four years.

It has been a very different and unusual term, characterised by the changes in the way we work that were imposed by Covid but which have now been embedded in agile and flexible work patterns. This has been supported by the recently opened new office floorplate. Our officers rose to the challenge of Covid magnificently to support our businesses, communities and vulnerable residents, including the homeless and rough-sleepers.

As we emerged from Covid, our Economic Development team put together a very comprehensive and successful Economic Recovery Plan, covering town centre regeneration, business support and skills development. I have to say, for me this has been one of the best things this council has done in my time as a councillor. It didn't just include things that our councils have done on our own, but, crucially, it also linked with wider county initiatives from the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' Group and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

Over the past four years we have built or bought about 180 new council houses across the district and our Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan commits us to further increases in our stock to help meet the affordable housing requirements of the emerging Joint Local Plan.

Talking of the JLP, the part 1 modifications required by the inspectors have been completed and are now out for consultation. Part 1, containing the development control policies, including important social, economic and environmental objectives, will be ready for council to adopt towards the end of the summer. Meanwhile, work requested by the inspectors for part 2, addressing spatial strategy matters and site allocations, has started.

Whilst frustrating, the additional time that the JLP is taking is not unusual and doesn't affect the validity of our current local plan due to the good delivery of housing over recent years, giving us a 7.13 year land supply – which means we meet the statutory housing requirement of at least 5 years. This is being confirmed by our success in defending appeals: in 2021/22, we had 35 appeals decided – about average – and only two of them were allowed, making us the fourth best council in the country at defending appeals.

Our Carbon Reduction Management Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan are starting to deliver a real impact on improving the environment. Moving from diesel to Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil for our vehicle fleet and the installation of solar panels on our leisure centres and on carports in their car parks are now delivering significant reductions in the carbon emissions of the two councils as well as generating a substantial proportion of the electricity used by the leisure centres. We have completed a ground-breaking Tree Canopy Survey so that we now know where to target new tree and hedgerow planting for maximum benefit. The survey has quantified the environmental benefits provided by trees, including carbon capture, carbon sequestration, stormwater reduction and pollution removal. The data is all publicly available online in ward-by-ward web maps.

I just want to list several other highlights – it is by no means an exhaustive list, but it does represent the breadth of what we have been able to do:

- Virtual High Street, Innovation Labs, Innovate Local, and the Innovate to Elevate programmes, two innovation awards events, and business events and competitions for school children and young adults entering the workforce
- Cultural, Heritage and Visitor Economy Strategy
- New customer access points, digital improvements, with a new website imminent, and digital skills sessions for residents
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Hadleigh commercial workspace project
- The new Hadleigh swimming pool
- Refurbishment of the Kingfisher leisure centre in Sudbury
- Communities and Wellbeing Strategies
- The new combined in-house public realm service
- Our support for Gainsborough's House and St. Peters in Sudbury
- The many community grants and Community Infrastructure Levy grants we have made for projects and groups across the district
- Cost of Living Action Plan

In addition to awards we won in 2019, 2020 and 2021, we have already won two this year: silver for the Tree Canopy survey at the Public Sector Transformation awards and gold for our Wellbeing Support Programme at the Smarter Working Lives awards. It really does help with staff morale when we win national awards and for councillors it is great to know that we are being recognised by others in the country, so we must be doing something right for our residents.

All in all, a very busy term which has delivered a huge amount for our residents. But, of course, there are still some unresolved issues that the new council and cabinet will have to address, the most important being:

- The perennial struggle with balancing the budget each year
- The further development of our partnership with Mid Suffolk
- Building services and our programme of repairs and energy-saving retrofitting for our council houses.

The new council term will, I am sure, see a significant change in the membership of the council. These are still difficult times, although, as you have heard, we have had many achievements that have helped our businesses and communities. All the new councillors will have to grapple with the ongoing challenge of how to deliver services with continuing pressures on funding and costs, but they will inherit a council that is in good shape to meet that challenge. However, we must remain responsible and credible and not make promises that are impossible to deliver, or which may impair our ability to deliver, or, indeed, waste money.

John Ward  
Babergh District Councillor  
Brett Vale  
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## SAMFORD DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT 22/03/2023

### Contents

<b>April 2022</b>	
£350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.	Page 2
Suffolk Highways will resurface 150 miles of new roads across 173 different sites across the county.	
<b>May 2022</b>	
Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years.	Page 3
<b>June 2022</b>	
Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.	Page 4
<b>July 2022</b>	
A new map for hauliers plotting routes for journeys across Suffolk has been drawn up.	Page 5
<b>August 2022</b>	
The council submitted a bid of £1,362,000 to the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme.	Page 6
<b>September 2022</b>	
Mobile number plate recognition system to be rolled out across Suffolk.	Page 7
<b>October 2022</b>	
• The Council agreed a new wave of funding to provide places for children and young people with SEND.	Page 8
<b>November 2022</b>	
A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion.	Page 9
<b>December 2022</b>	
A landmark devolution deal, which puts money and power over building, regeneration and skills into the hands of leaders in Suffolk will be signed.	Page 10
<b>January 2023</b>	
Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals.	Page 12
<b>February 2023</b>	
Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023.	Page 13

## April 2022

Violence Against Women and Girls funding announced.

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Suffolk County Council has announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022. This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

The fund is to be launched in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation. Any organisations wishing to make an application can do so by visiting [Suffolk Community Foundation](#) or contacting them on [grants@suffolkcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@suffolkcf.org.uk) or 01473 602602.

Organisations can make an application for funding for up to £5,000 for pilot projects or up to £50,000 for projects which have already been piloted. These grants are available for up to 3 years.

The Strategy is available to view online at: [Suffolk VAWG Strategy 2022-25](#)

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### 150 miles of new road surfaces in Suffolk

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Suffolk Highways begins its programme to resurface and surface dress 150 miles of new roads across 173 different sites across the county this year. The two separate programmes provide new surfaces for vehicles to travel on, with the treatments expected to last between 5 and 20 years; depending on the type of treatment and volumes of vehicles using the roads amongst many other factors.

Road resurfacing is a process where the old surface is either overlaid with a new surface or removed to a certain depth and a new surface is applied, whereas surface dressing is a preventative process that is used to seal and improve the surface of the roads, slowing down the deterioration of the road surface and improving its skid resistance. The rapid speed of this process means that disruption to road users, local businesses and emergency services is minimised. The process involves an application of hot bitumen emulsion, followed by a layer of stone chips. Sites may be patched and prepared in advance of the surface dressing.

Following several trials across the UK, it has been demonstrated that the removal of some road markings can have a positive effect on road safety by reducing vehicle speeds. Therefore, road markings may not always be replaced like for like. This approach also supports the need for Suffolk Highways to reduce its ongoing maintenance liabilities.

As part of the surface dressing process, it is essential that once the road is reopened to traffic, the 20mph speed limit is adhered to, this avoids damage to vehicles and the slow-moving traffic further embeds the chippings. The road is swept at regular intervals to remove any excess chippings.

- First sweep: within 24 hours after completion of the works
- Second sweep: within 7 days after works are completed
- Third sweep (if required): within 14 days of works being completed.

## May 2022

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Council on course to plant 200,000 trees

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Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years (at an average of 272 per day).

Much of this was possible thanks to £400,000 of the council's own Suffolk 2020 Fund, to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county.

In one year, 198,547 average adult trees could absorb the equivalent CO2 emitted by:

- 8,845,898 miles travelled in a typical petrol car
- 903 typical household gas boilers running for a year
- 199 Suffolk residents each year

The planting includes 12 miles of new mixed native species hedgerows across 15 county farm holdings, delivering new wildlife habitat, ecological corridors and enhanced landscapes.

The council worked with many partners to make the tree planting a success, including The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Warden Network, county farm tenants, landowners, local authorities and communities, and contractor Giles Landscapes.

## June 2022

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Extra funding agreed by Cabinet to fund new SEND places

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Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has today agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools.

Plans for new SEND places under phase 3 will come before Cabinet from September. The newly-approved £15.9million includes £6million to complete phase 2, £4.6million to cover overspend and a grant from the Department for Education of £5.3million.

The special schools include Castle EAST, a new communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a new social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

## July 2022

### New routes added as Suffolk County Council issues updated HGV map

A new map for hauliers plotting routes for journeys across Suffolk has been drawn up.

The Suffolk County Council Lorry Route Plan now incorporates new developments and roads, schemes such as Air Quality Management Areas, and changes in road safety on lorry routes.

Changes to the map include utilising new by-passes and link roads at Beccles, Eye and Haverhill to divert traffic away from town centres, and downgrading of routes at Leiston and Stowlangtoft. The new edition also features, for the first time, routes in Ipswich.

The map, compiled following a three-month consultation with all parish and town councils in Suffolk, was last updated in 2011 although a minor review was held in 2017.

While hauliers are not compelled to use the routes it does help them identify the best roads for their journey. It also discourages them from taking routes that can cause disruption, road safety concerns and environmental concerns to local communities.

[Read more about the review and view the new map here](#)

## August 2022

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### Council to boost electric vehicle charging across Suffolk

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The council submitted a bid of £1,362,000 to the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme.

Suffolk's residents and visitors will see further improvements to the county's electric vehicle (EV) charging network, following Suffolk County Council's successful bid to fund more charging points.

With additional contributions such as commercial funding, the project will see a total investment of around £2.75m.

The new LEVI funding will allow the council to develop the county's EV charging network by:

- PV solar power and battery storage upgrades to approximately 10 existing sites
- Installing community EV charging, PV solar power and battery storage at over 30 further sites in urban and rural areas
- Identifying key commercial sites for 7kW, rapid and ultra-rapid chargers, which will benefit the local community

Suffolk County Council has led the way in electric vehicle charging, following the launch of Plug In Suffolk in 2019. It was the UK's first 'fully open' public EV fast charging network and has seen other local authorities around the country follow that model.

Plug In Suffolk has now installed 100 charging points around the county, with an emphasis on installations in rural locations and supporting households without off-street charging capabilities.

## September 2022

Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership rolls out ANPR devices to target speeding motorists

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Speeding motorists are to be targeted with a mobile number plate recognition system to be rolled out across Suffolk.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) will be rotated around sites where there is a problem with speeding or rat-running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

The devices, 10 in total, will display the speeds of drivers to them as they approach, encouraging them to slow down.

If they continue to ignore the speed limit the ANPR camera will take a picture of them and record the date, time, speed, vehicle registration and a photo of the vehicle.

In certain cases, persistent offenders will be reported to Suffolk Constabulary and, while no one will be prosecuted as a direct result of the devices, they may be visited by a police officer who will speak to them about their driving.

The information shared with the police may also influence the deployment of speed enforcement vans to problem areas.

This project is part of the Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership between Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary.

Suffolk County Council provided £400,000 from the 2020 Fund to support a two-year trial.

A grant of £30,000 has also been awarded by the Road Safety Trust to evaluate the project and establish whether the camera scheme is effective in reducing speeding.

## October 2022

### Next round of new SEND places agreed by Cabinet

The Council's Cabinet has this afternoon agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND.

The £3million agreement marks the start of Phase 3 of the Capital Programme to create three additional specialist units providing 42 additional places for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This follows Phase 1 of the programme which created 825 new places across Suffolk and Phase 2, which was signed off in June 2022, and will create up to 73 new places.

So far, £45million has been allocated by Suffolk County Council to deliver the new places for Phase 1 and Phase 2 - £15million of which has been provided by the Department for Education.

In addition, Cabinet also agreed to support the Department for Education's High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) for 2023/24 of £7million to be spent on the development of units attached to mainstream schools to support students with social, emotional and mental health problems and speech, language and communication needs. This will create up to 168 new spaces, and is an addition to previous funding agreed from the Department for Education in 2022/23 for up to 78 new places.

The third item signed off today was Cabinet's support for the application for funding for two free schools from the Department for Education. One of these will be in east Suffolk and support children with severe learning difficulties and the second will be built in Sudbury for those with autistic spectrum disorder and complex social, emotional and mental health problems. If the bids are successful, both schools will teach children and young people from across Suffolk.

In total, Suffolk will deliver up to 1,317 new places for children and young people with SEND by 2025/26.

The next step for Phase 3 is for schools across Suffolk to express an interest in having a specialist unit and, following these expressions of interest, the most suitable sites will be chosen. This programme for improved provision is informed by the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2022-25.

New special schools opened in Suffolk include Castle EAST, a communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

## November 2022

### £2.5 million saved on energy costs as LED streetlight project nears completion

A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion.

It has saved more than £2.5 million pounds so far.

The change to LED streetlights supports Suffolk County Council's aim to reduce carbon, light pollution, and bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the council, all whilst providing the best value to residents.

It was expected that the council would reduce costs by around 76%, however, the target was exceeded, with 77.64% savings made to date.

In June 2021, Bouygues Energies and Services were announced as the partner to deliver the project to upgrade 43,400 Suffolk streetlights with new, reduced energy LED lanterns. The total number of upgraded streetlights is currently at 40,692 excluding any of the Ipswich Borough Council, or Town/Parish council owned streetlights. There are approximately 1,700 upgrades outstanding, which includes any remaining heritage lantern upgrades. It is hoped that around 1200 of the remaining lanterns will be completed by the end of the year.

Prior to the commencement of the project, Suffolk Highways contacted towns and parishes to provide them with the opportunity to have their parish-council owned street-lighting upgraded at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns are also being upgraded as part of the project.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights.

This smart technology will increase the control the council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

## December 2022

Historic half a billion pound devolution deal hands Suffolk regeneration and skills powers to level up

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A landmark devolution deal, which puts money and power over building, regeneration and skills into the hands of leaders in Suffolk will be signed today.

Suffolk will be devolved power over their Adult Education budget, so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of the local community and will receive immediate support to build new affordable homes on brownfield sites, as well as more capital funding to improve energy efficiency in houses.

The deal will also see Suffolk County Council handed control over a £480 million investment fund – this will be guaranteed for the next thirty years. This will enable the county to drive growth and plan for the long-term with certainty as it looks to level up and unlock its full economic potential.

Suffolk will also get a directly elected leader of the council. This not only provides a single person who is accountable to the people of Suffolk but gives the county a local champion who can attract investment and be a stronger voice in discussions with central government.

The Levelling Up Secretary will today attend a ceremony in Bury St Edmunds with Cllr Matthew Hicks to officially sign the deal. Michael Gove will also visit Norfolk to sign a

devolution agreement with Norfolk County Council, which will transfer further money and power out of Whitehall. The deals follow Cornwall Council who just last week signed their own devolution deal with the government, unlocking powers and long-term funding of £360 million.

The deal also sets out the government's plans to devolve more power to Suffolk County Council through:

- **Investment:** It will bring decades of funding worth £480 million to improve the lives of Suffolk's residents and spend on their local priorities.
- **Housing:** The deal will provide £5.8 million to regenerate brownfield land into beautiful, affordable homes and drive economic growth across the area; Suffolk will also receive greater compulsory purchase powers.
- **Education:** The agreement devolves the Adult Education Budget so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of residents and the local Suffolk economy.
- **Transport:** An integrated transport settlement starting in 2024/25, to support the area to improve key transport infrastructure priorities.
- **The Environment:** The new deal will help Suffolk deliver on its ambitions to be the country's greenest county with £3 million to improve energy efficiency in homes.

The deal is now subject to local consultation, a council resolution to change their governance model so that electors directly elect the council leader, and elements, such as the transfer of new powers, require parliamentary approval to secondary legislation. The deal envisages the election of a directly elected leader in May 2024. Subject to the passing of the relevant measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, Suffolk and Norfolk would call the directly elected person the "elected leader" of the County Council.

Proposed agreement for a devolution deal between the government and Suffolk County Council ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

## January 2023

[Council to protect frontline services and increase funding in budget proposal](#)

Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals, published today.

Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals, published today.

Despite an incredibly challenging economic climate, the council has been able to produce a balanced budget. This will protect the services that people rely on the most and continue to care for the most vulnerable, which accounts for 75% of the whole budget.

Adult care services will have £34m more in their budget, and children's services will have a further £13m. This will help with the extra expense needed to meet the huge increase in demands for services, as well as higher costs due to inflation.

The budget-setting has been achieved with input from the council's partners, officers, departments and notably, Suffolk residents. Over 2,600 local people contributed to an online survey and focus groups, asking where they would spend more money, spend less money, and their views on Council Tax.

The top service areas where people wanted to spend more, were social care services for adults and children.

Some of the service areas where people also said they wanted to see more money spent, will receive additional funding:

- £700,000 for SEND services to support new recruitment, which is on top of the £1.1m invested this year
- £500,000 for Highways: to use environmentally friendly weed treatments, and stop using glyphosate which can damage wildlife
- £110,000 for tree management: to support the 'right tree right place' policy, having an appropriate inspection regime and supporting the resulting tree management requirements.
- £45,000 for Citizens Advice: to support work during cost of living challenges

A budget gap for next year - the difference between what money is available and what needs to be spent - had already been identified, resulting in savings of £15.5m for next year.

Under the proposals, the council's budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in funds from the Government for adult and children's social care.

Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 3.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

This means costs for a household would look like:

- Band B property: £22.32 per week (85 pence per week increase from 2022-23) (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23)

Read [papers for the SCC Scrutiny meeting on 10 January 2023 here](#).

## February 2023

### New highways services arriving in Suffolk as multi-million-pound contract awarded

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Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023.

Following an extensive procurement exercise, Suffolk County Council has confirmed Milestone will be its new contract partner for up to 20 years. The new partnership, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will be delivering highway projects and improvements across Suffolk, including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

When searching for its new highways partner, the county council worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace, and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk.

The council wanted the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment.

A rigorous procurement exercise was carried out over many months, with various stages of discussions with service providers, to evolve their solutions to meet the various contractual requirements and deliver an effective and efficient highway service for Suffolk. Final submissions were evaluated and extensively moderated before the final winning contract was awarded.

### Report from the PPG April 2023

The Practice Participation Group is aligned to the Constable Country Medical Practice and its purpose is to represent patients' views to the Practice with the aim of improving services where possible.

Since April 22, meetings have been held in person at the surgery. The number of meetings have been halved and are now held every other month.

Mr. Andrew Ravasio has agreed to continue as Chairperson. There are seven members altogether. The group is always keen to hear from registered patients who would like to join.

The Practice continues to evolve with the parameters of the changing face of general practice with a wider range of clinicians now involved.

Mr Jack Ingram has been appointed as operation manager to support the Practice Manager in the day to day running of the Practice.

The PPG has suggested that the practice considers establishing a virtual patient participation group to enable a wider demographic representation. Contact would be via email with patients who agree to be contacted in this way, no more than 2-3 times per year. Further work is ongoing to consider things such as data protection and topics to consult about. This potentially facilitates working people and young parents to be able to offer their views.

It appears that, after much pushing from the PPG, the Practice has updated and published its compliments/complaints and comments procedure which is now easily accessible on the website.

J Cheng

### **First Friday of the Month Lunch Club**

The First Friday of the Month Lunch Club has continued to run, for between 20-30 people each month and although there are changes to the dates in 2023 we will be holding lunches every month except May (Coronation) and as normal, August. The April Lunch is also a week later to avoid Easter weekend and is on 14th. You just need to tell Frances or Sally (details in Quartet) if you want to come and we will make sure our band of volunteers cater for you. The cost remains £4 except for December when it is £5 and we are very grateful to everyone who helps deliver these - the cooks, the servers, the setter uppers and the clearer-uppers - we could not do it without you. Thank you all, so much.

### **Slow Stitch report 2022**

Slow Stitch has welcomed several new members to the group during 2022. The highlight of 2022 was decorating Church Square for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June. Residents of the village helped with donations of essential materials to make the various elements, as well as helping to stitch everything in place.

The Corgi dogs were sold after the weekend's celebrations and the money donated to the Queen's Green Canopy charity.



As well as members of the group bringing their own projects, the group have also made Fiddle Muffs for residents in the dementia wing of Canterbury House in Hadleigh and items for a stall to raise funds for Marie Curie charity. We have also helped people with repairs and alterations to clothing.

We continue as a drop-in group meeting on the third Thursday of the month between 2 and 4pm.

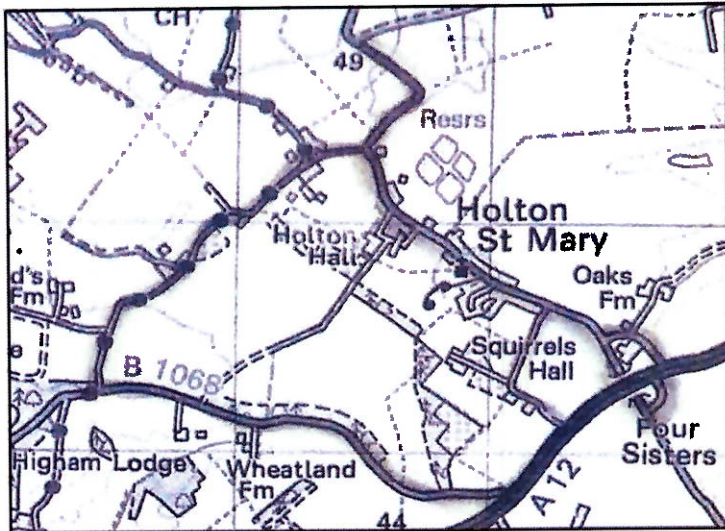
Jeanette Appleton

### **Green Gym Group: 2022-2023**

Green Gym has been busy sweeping, cutting, pruning and planting throughout the past year. Planting has been manifest by an explosion of daffodils (which have been appreciated by residents and visitors alike) and an increase in our numbers. We now have a regular team of 11. We received a donation of over 200 daffodils from Peter and Sally Longmate and David and Sheila Morgan. The Group are sure that everyone will have appreciated the additional colour and warmth they bring to the village. This year, our schedule of tasks has seen a significant expansion. This has been to clear the footways (again...), including outside (and inside) the Village Hall grounds, in Church Square and the Millennium Green (helping to clean a major prune of trees and the planting of dozens of young hedging plants). In January 2023, additional planting with two and three year-old hornbeam hedge saplings was undertaken to enhance the willow tunnel. This was achieved through an extremely kind donation from the Millennium Green committee. We have also cleared public footpaths, cleaned 'Footpath', and 'Bridleway' signs, rejuvenated the village sign and begun the process of mending fences. As in 2022, only one month was lost and this was because of torrential rain. For most sessions we were blest with sunlight, although not always with its warmth... Maintaining our village's beauty is primarily our responsibility; there are far more worthy demands on Babergh Council and their limited budget. New members are always welcome to help maintain a beautiful village and to demonstrate to all road-users that people live here and this should be respected. Finally, the Group are immensely grateful to all the thanks and encouragement we have received over the past year. Saying 'thankyou' is a wonderful fillip and de-stressor. Thank you.

Richard Appleton *et al.*

### **Litter-picking team: 2022-2023**



### Our litter-picking route

The litter-picking team have moved up a gear over the past year. We are now a group of 10 whose aim is to try and keep the village and its two principal approaches as clean and as litter-free as possible. Sadly, but predictably, this is becoming increasingly challenging. In 2023, we are collating data on everything we collect. The main categories being: glass bottles; plastic bottles; cans; fast-food packaging; other food packaging (e.g. for crisp and sandwiches) and miscellaneous (which include the 'bizarre'). As a trailer for next year's APCM Report, in the first three months of 2023, we have collected: 103 glass bottles; 210 plastic bottles (six, two-litre bottles filled with urine and not all on the A12), 302 cans and 86 fast-food packaging (McDonalds; KFC; Burger King). We have also picked up 11 broken wing mirrors, most from the treacherous Ipswich-bound slip-road. At the end of March four of us (Anne and Bill, Trena and Brian) represented our team in its inaugural joint litter-pick with Raydon (who have no litter-picking team but *ad hoc* volunteers). This was specifically to collect all rubbish on Acacia Road which is the feeder road for Notley Enterprise Park and from both the Raydon and Great Wenham approaches; this road probably represents the densest concentration of litter other than the A12. Finally, we have reported nine instances of fly-tipping this year; on the Colchester-bound slip-road (three instances); Sandpits Lane (two); the B1068 (two) and the ninety-degree right-hand bend between Holton St Mary and Raydon (two). We would be delighted if anyone would like to join us... Litter-picking sticks and high-visibility jackets will be provided...

Richard Appleton *et al.*

### Holton Women's Book Club Report 2023



Set up three years ago, Holton Women's Book club meets on the first Thursday of each month to share and discuss a range of books.

Members take turns to select a book for everyone to read and then the group give their views on the book, over drinks and nibbles; commenting on whether the story was enjoyable, characters plausible, ending good or not etc. There is no set format for discussion but rather we take a fluid approach depending on the type of book, how captivated as individuals we are by the story or how it resonates with our own life experiences. Individuals may lead discussions on their selected book but passions and interests of other book club members may develop the conversations to another level. Everyone's view counts and mutual respect and honesty have been cultivated at book club meetings, in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

HWBC is a great addition to our community social calendars and no matter how serious our book discussions are, just getting together and chatting on a regular basis is great fun!

Losing yourself in a book is the ultimate relaxation. This is particularly poignant in uncertain economic and political times when we are all craving a certain amount of escapism. Combining an activity like reading with village community friendship creates multiple benefits because it not only lowers stress and increases social connections but hopefully keeps our mental faculties sharp and ever developing through the stimulating debate!

We all come with different views, tastes and experiences but every once in a while a book captures us all. This year that book has been The Rose Code by Kate Quinn. Set in World War 2's code breaking operation at Bletchley Park, combining strong female characters, fact and fiction, resulting in an interesting and engaging novel.

HWBC continues to explore a broad range of genres and themes across fiction books, however, more recently we have also dallied with memoirs such as The Madness of Grief by Rev Richard Cole and Giving up the Ghost by Hilary Mantel. Ever open to expanding our horizons, no book is off limits and we eagerly anticipate the books we will devour during the remainder of 2023! As we move into another year at book club with hope and positivity, we look forward to more gripping stories, cheerful conversation and community camaraderie.

If anyone would like to join our friendly, informal meetings please contact Liz Norton.  
07745607713

### **Facebook Group**

The Holton St Mary Group on Facebook remains a closed group and is the go-to place to ask for things you need (as I type this update we have a recent request for the loan of a gazebo to cover a boat to be painted, a request for a recommendation and a request for cardboard boxes to store a vinyl collection). Your admins have restricted the number of people who join just to use the group as free advertising but there are plenty of other Village Groups you could join if this is what you are looking for. They can advertise their goods and services once a month but we felt it had moved away from being a community page with all the different adverts. Only one person ignored this so we ejected him. We hope you agree that it works well as a community information place. Sally and Frances are the Admins for the Group.