

HOLTON ST MARY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
WEDNESDAY 13th April 2022 8pm
HOLTON ST MARY VILLAGE HALL
Minutes

Present: Jan Cheng (Chair), Liz Sims (Clerk), John Ward (District Councillor), Georgia Hall (County Councillor) and 16 Parishioners

1. **Chairman's Welcome:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Mike Hay, Claire Rowan, Chris & Marjorie Haste, Geoff White, Oliver Greene. Erik & Naomi Ellis, Richard & Jeanette Appleton
3. **Minutes of 2021 Annual Parish Meeting:** The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair. Proposed by Jan Cheng, seconded by Mark Anderson.
4. **Matters Arising:** None
5. **Parish Council: Chairman's Report:** The Chair's gave an update of the changes to the Parish Councillors which had occurred, and on planning matters that the Parish Council had been involved with during 2021-22. Celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee were discussed, full details will be in the April edition of the Quartet and in the full report in Appendix A, it was also noted that the FFOTMLC will be organising a lunch on Friday 4th June 2022 and said that it would be nice to see the Village decorated for the Jubilee which will include decorations being organised by the Slow Stitch Group. The Chairs full report is attached in Appendix A.
6. **Parish Council: Financial Report:** The Clerk presented a copy of the audited 2020/2021 accounts and explained and significant variances from the previous year. The CIL expenditure in 2020/21 was explained and the additional CIL funding received of £1,973.40 in April 2022 was advised. 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 and various options to control it. Mark informed the meeting about the ANPR trial occurring in the Village, Georgia Hall further advised that there are 10 devices within Suffolk being circulated, at the end of the trial Parish Councils may have an opportunity to purchase a camera. A Parishioner raised whether a zebra crossing would be a possibility, it was discussed that this could be explored but previously it had been unsuccessful because of the small number of pedestrians crossing the road. It was noted that Raydon are campaigning for a reduced speed limit of 40mph between HSM and Raydon which would be of benefit to the village, the suggestion of extending the 30mph speed limit going towards East Bergholt was discussed, it was noted that this had been explored before and permission to move the speed limit sign was not a simple procedure. Road condition was discussed, Mark advised that Highways had met with Councillors and inspected the road condition and although it has been agreed that work needs to be carried out it is not certain when this will happen, Georgia Hall advised that a further inspection is due on the potholes in Stubbins Lane but did advise that they were not classed as urgent at the present time. A Parishioner stated that it is their understanding that as Highways have identified the risk of the pot holes needing attention if a car is damaged the liability for any damage would rest with them. The clearance of mud from Stubbins Lane was raised by a Parishioner, John Ward advised that cleaning the roads was Babergh District Council's responsibility but advised that the machines only cleared the edges of the roads, they are in discussion with Highways to try to find a solution to the problem. Mark informed the meeting that Stubbins Lane had been accepted to be designated a Quiet Lane, a Parishioner asked if Sandpits Lane could be included, Mark advised that it had been applied for but not accepted because the volume of traffic was too large. The work waiting to be completed at Bacon's Green to stop water flooding driveways was discussed with the County Councillor. A Parishioner noted that there are many discarded roadwork signs on the road edges, Mark advised that this was pointed out to

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Highways when they inspected, they are aware and advised that contractors should be removing them after works.

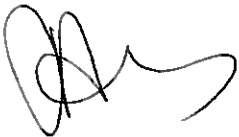
It was noted that the Parish Council does contact local businesses to ask for drivers to be considerate when passing through the Village, The Chair thanked Mark for all his help with this over the past year.

8. **Parish Church Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A, a thank you was given to all who attend fund raising events and who assist the Church in any way. It was noted that on 5th June 2022 a Songs of Praise will be taking place in the Church at 5.30pm.
9. **Social Club Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A, it was noted that the Social Club in conjunction with Sally Thurlow will be organising a Progressive Dinner on 9th July 2022, there will be a further Quiz night in October and a New Years Eve event. Thanks were given to all who support the Social Club Committee.
It was noted that the Village Hall Management Committee had been able to provide the subsidies for the hall use because of grants received for start-up following COVID.
10. **Village Hall Management Committee Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. Thanks were given for all the work Chris Haste has given over the years.
It was noted that following the recent survey monkey carried out with Parishioners and report for accessibility for people with a disability completed those various areas of improvement in the hall are going to be discussed and considered.
11. **Millennium Green Trust Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A; thanks were given to all who support the Millennium Green; it was noted that a specific nesting box for dormice may be considered in the future and also noted that during Covid restrictions it was nice for the children of the village to be able to have somewhere to put goalposts up for activity.
12. **United Charities Trust Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. It was noted that there are some funds available for anyone in the Village who may be needing support, there have been no applications this year, it was noted that there may be a possibility for these funds to be used for a small village project if suitable.
13. **District Councillor's Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A, John Ward further advised that an infographics sheet is available for anyone who would like to see it.
14. **County Councillor's Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A, Georgia Hall advised that SCC had not been successful in their recent bid in the Governments Bus Back Together Scheme; the lack of a bus service in the village was discussed and it was pointed out that there was a high demographic of elderly people in the village and that a bus service would help avoid isolation. Georgia will feed these comments back
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 if anyone would be interested in joining, she can advise how to do this. The group is currently focusing on the Complaints Policy of the surgery. It was noted that if possible, using e-consult at the surgery was very effective, and it further noted that there have been staff shortages recently causing delays with patient contact.
16. **FFOTMLC (First Friday of the month Lunch Club) Report:** The full report is attached in Appendix A. It was noted that volunteer numbers were down since resumption following the pandemic. The purchase by the Village Hall Committee of four round large tables, chairs with arms, and a dishwasher had been a welcome addition, thank you.
17. **Slow Stitch Group Report:** Report attached in Appendix A; Jeanette Appleton was absent – report was delivered by Anne Priestley.


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18. **Green Gym Group Report:** Report attached in Appendix A; Richard Appleton was absent – report was delivered by Anne Priestley. Jan Cheng thanked the Green Gym for their help in tidying up the hedge in front of the Village Hall.
19. **HSM Womens' Book Club Report:** Report attached in Appendix A- Liz Norton was absent- Report was delivered by Jan Cheng.
20. **Facebook Report:** Report attached in Appendix A
21. **Village Recorder Update: Update** attached in Appendix A, it was noted that Marjorie Haste has been the Village recorder since 2005, the role has been handed over to Sally Thurlow. Thanks were given to Marjorie for her commitment to the role.
22. **Any other business:** Sally Thurlow advised that there will be a Progressive Dinner on 9th July 2022, jointly organised by her and the Social Club- profits will go to Church Funds.
A Parishioner raised that it appears that County Broadband, despite having given the go ahead to Holton St Mary, may not be proceeding because of not achieving the sign-up numbers required in local villages. If this appears to be the case the Parish Council will discuss action that may be taken by parishioners regarding the release from any agreements signed with them.
Sally Thurlow gave an update on the issues with Water supply in Holton St Mary currently being caused by a leaking roof at the Raydon tower, because of this water is being supplied from other sites including Alton Water via pumps. If there is an interruption with electricity supply it affects the pumps being used, and a delay waiting for the pumps to be manually re-started.

Meeting Closed at 9.45pm


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Appendix One – Reports

Report from the Parish Council

Following the easing of the pandemic restrictions and the judgement from the High Court that required Council meetings to be held 'in person', face to face meetings resumed here in the village hall from May 2021. The agendas are published at least 3 clear working days before the meeting posted in the telephone box noticeboard, Bacons Green noticeboard and on the Holton St Mary website.

Councillors

Janice Cheng accepted the role of Chairperson at the Council AGM in 2021. Sally Thurlow is Vice Chair.

We also saw the resignation of two Councillors, Erik Ellis and Richard Appleby during 2021. We thank them for their considerable contribution both to the function of the Council and the village as a whole. After undertaking the due process for the nomination/election/co-option of Councillors, we are very pleased to welcome both Mike Hay and Matt Toon to the Council.

The remaining Councillors are Claire Rowan, Oliver Greene, Mark Anderson.

Liz Sims, our Parish Clerk has resigned with effect from mid May. She has been a very safe pair of hands in the role and has made a huge contribution to the efficient and smooth running of Council business. We are in the process of confirming the appointment of a new Parish Clerk who will take over from Mid-May. The parish clerk can be contacted on hsmparishclerk@gmail.com

Events

Following the isolation felt by all from the pandemic restrictions to our lives and recognising new people had moved into the village, the Parish Council organised a 'Meet you Neighbour' event in the village hall during September. Many people attended to see and get information on the many activities that take place within the village and to meet up for tea/coffee and cake. It was a successful morning and perhaps something we should repeat?

Plans are also underway for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which will start with the lighting of the beacon on Millennium Green. One of our residents who was actually present at the coronation will be doing the honours. Further comprehensive details have been published in the April edition of 'Quartet'.

Planning

The Parish Council is a consultee for all planning applications within the village boundary. As such the Council gives comments on these applications but does not have any authority to grant or refuse permission. This responsibility rests with Babergh District Council. Holton St Mary Parish Council responds to all applications, whether in support or to raise concerns. We discuss all planning applications either at the next Parish Council meeting or an extraordinary planning meeting. It is not the wish of the Council to generally object to plans to improve people's homes. We only object when the proposed plans will have a direct detrimental impact upon the village and its inhabitants or if it contradicts Babergh's Local Plan or National Planning Policy.

At the time of the last annual parish meeting, it was reported that the application for major redevelopment and mineral/waste disposal at Brett Vale Golf Club had been redirected by Babergh Council to Suffolk County Council. We understand that discussions took place and subsequently there has been no application made.

The application for the large rehabilitation facility on agricultural land at Holton Hall Farm remains live. Revised plans have been submitted meaning the footpath will no longer be diverted. The Parish Council sought legal help to formulate its objection to this development which was submitted to Babergh Council. 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. The Parish Council intends to seek to express its objection at that meeting.

Further information about applications can be seen on 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 small precept to pay for things that include hall hire, grass cutting, dog bin emptying and councillor/clerk training amongst other things. This year the budget was also used to have the telephone box professionally repainted. We are currently trying to find sign-writers to quote a price to refresh the village sign too.

There is another funding stream - community infrastructure levy (CIL) - which arises from new builds within the area. This money is allocated by Babergh Council. Sal Thurlow is representing the Council in discussions with the Millenium Green Trustees to explore the feasibility of installing electricity to the Green as a more ecological friendly alternative to petrol generators for events and petrol mowers to cut the grass. As always, these things are never straightforward and there are obstacles to overcome such as the siting of the facility without disturbing the public footpath, who should hold the account for the electricity, how hirers can be charged etc.

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

Highways

Mark Anderson will report separately on highways issues. I would like to thank him especially for the relationship building he has done with the heavy goods vehicle companies based in Notley business park. This has resulted in the HGV's generally keeping to the speed limit through our village.

Janice Cheng
Chair, HSM Parish Council

Parish Council – Financial Report for Year 2020-21 (Parish Clerk- Liz Sims)

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 2020/21 are summarised as follows:

Income	2019/20	2020/21
Precept	£6830.31	£8175.00
VAT Reclaimed	£0	£ 123.06
Interest	£16.19	£ 4.90
CIL	£7376.96	£ 0
Insurance claim (post & rails Church Sq)		£ 821.41
Bank Compensation (received for poor customer service)		£ 40.00
Locality Grant		£ 829.20
	£14223.46	£9993.57
Expenditure		
Payroll	£3,639.96	£3700.00
Admin	£26.71	£ 48.59
Hall Hire/Zoom Expenses	£112.00	£ 105.61
Grass Cutting	£1070.00	£ 600.00
Defibrillator	£73.00	£ 0

Insurance	£405.00	£ 420.00
Audit	£174.00	£ 175.00
Subscriptions	£176.02	£ 190.00
Website	£60.00	£ 60.00
Poppy Wreath	£25.00	£ 25.00
Dog Bin	£90.20	£ 50.00
Elections	£126.46	£ 0
Flowers	£34.00	£ 60.00
Training	£159.60	£ 118.80
Infrastructure		£ 32.95
Noticeboard (funded by locality grant)		£ 829.20
Post and Rails Church Sq (Part funded by Ins claim)		£ 821.41
Expenditure covered by CIL Funds (balance remaining after Ins claim for fence and posts Church Sq/ Gate posts)		£1717.39
	£6171.95	£8,953.95

The total expenditure was lower than income in 2020/21, this is mainly due to repairs to Church Sq fence and posts were budgeted for but expenses were instead covered by CIL funds and Insurance claim, and tree cutting allowed for in the grass cutting budget did not occur during 2020/21; also, additional income received of VAT reclaim and bank compensation.

Assets **£2935 (increase due to new noticeboard March 21)**

Balances at 31.3.21

Current Account £ 3481.58
Reserve Account £10460.24

Financial Year 2021/2022

The Budget was set at £8016 to cover expected costs, including the cost of replacement of the noticeboard at Church Square (a locality grant was subsequently awarded to cover the cost of buying the noticeboard), general maintenance and building reserve funds towards a new computer, defib batteries and other maintenance as required.

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. hsmparishclerk@gmail.com

Budget for 2022/23

The Budget has been set at £6816. This includes costs towards general maintenance, training, subscriptions, insurance, defib batteries/pads, and other maintenance as required.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Parish Council also has a remaining amount of £5459.57 from the Community Infrastructure Levy, £1,717.39 was spent in 2020/21 year of accounts towards repairs to Church Sq fences/posts and gate

posts, and £200.00 was spent in November 2021 to cut down and remove a Holly Tree in hedge line between Church Square and Church Yard. (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).

Speeding and Road Issues Report 2021-22

We have no new survey data for speeding or vehicle movements to report for the last 12 months, to recall, the last survey showed that the percentage of prosecutable speeds was at 48.9% and we have over 36,000 vehicle movements a week. Because of this high percentage, we get regular safety camera visits with continued support from Suffolk Police.

There is an update to report regarding a new a speeding camera system and the introduction of ANPR cameras, HSM has been selected to take part in a trial using the new cameras and we have had them installed for one week so far. Once the SCC trial has ended and the scheme can start in full, it is anticipated that we will get the cameras on a regular basis and in rotation with other villages in Suffolk.

Local businesses that have HGV's and regular use of large vehicles (LJ Transport, Phillips Brothers) 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 have put forward Stubbins Lane for this scheme and it has been accepted, we are just waiting to hear on the final confirmation and when the new road signs will be installed.

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, the Parish Council is aware of the problems with the road surface with water running off the road into resident's driveways when we get heavy rain and also the many number of uneven spots where the drain covers are sunken and lower than the road surface, causing loud noise disturbance when HGVs and other large vehicles drive over the area, this has been reported to SCC Highways and an inspection was carried out last year. The outcome was that it was agreed that work needed to be carried out and everything has been logged and specific sites needing repair being recorded but due to limited funds and levels of priority, it is uncertain as to when the work will be carried out and we are waiting for further updates.

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 : 2021/2

Following a very difficult year in 2020, 2021 started with a second lock-down and it wasn't until Easter that services were able to get going again. After that, we were able to follow a regular pattern of one communion service a month in Holton St Mary, usually on the third Sunday of the month. On the other Sundays, services were held in the other three churches, Stratford St Mary, Higham and Raydon. More recently (in 2022), we have started to hold an Evensong in Holton, usually on the first Sunday of the month. Churchgoers are obviously delighted that they can attend church again. The wearing of masks is no longer obligatory, but this is often advised, especially in times where Covid infections are higher.

We are fortunate to be led by two priests, the Rev'd Manette Crossman and Rev'd Nicola Tindall, the latter in the process of completing her curacy under Rev'd Manette. Having two priests allows there to be more

services held in the Benefice and a greater variety of services too. For instance, in Higham, an informal service is held once a month (the Higham Hang-Out) focusing on young people which is led by lay people, where attendance has been excellent. Please keep an eye on the website and the Quartet for more details. Everyone is always welcome.

People walking past the church will have noticed a new stone cross erected above the porch as well as repairs to the stonework above the sanctuary door, to the porch and to the east end of the church. The fabric of the church is generally sound.

The church finances are in good order. The PCC needs to raise around £12,000 per annum to support the activity of the church and it does this thanks to regular giving from generous donors, collections at services and some fundraising events.

May I take this opportunity of thanking the Parish Council for the support it has continued to show us in 2021 and in particular for keeping the churchyard tidy with regular mowing (thanks to Keith Jeffries). 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 church clean-up days, decorating the church with beautiful floral displays, polishing the brass, 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

Social Club Report 2021-22

Firstly I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped last year (those on the bar rota, committee members and people who helped out at any function) because without you the social club would not be possible.

After 18 months of various restrictions there was only a loss of £498.42 for 2020 because the Village Hall Management Committee did not charge for the period closed, we have been able to turn round a £1160 profit for 2021 due to the Village Hall Management Committee not charging any rent for the year (So thank you VHMC). This was supported by our most successful Bonfire night ever with a tremendous turnout from the village. I would also like to thank the Millennium Green committee for clearing up the residue left by the bonfire and fireworks.

We also ran a Quiz night and a New Year's dance which were well supported on both occasions.

The Committee has had a new enthusiasm injected with four new members Debbie Wilson, Louise Dolan, Vaughan van Niekerk and James Lancaster joining. If anybody else would like to join us they would be welcomed.

Our next big event will be the Queens Platinum Jubilee dance on June 4th 2022. This has had various names for the last 3 years but finally it will happen. I would like to thank Erik Ellis for his perseverance in getting the event to happen.

This Dance is for the whole village and is heavily subsidised by the social club, there will be dancing to 'Sweeting Swing Band' and food.

Tickets £20 for members and £25 for guests, can be obtained from Debbie Wilson, Lee Barton, Erik Ellis and myself (contact numbers can be found in the Quartet). It would be great to see as many villagers there as possible. It is the support of the members and villagers that keeps the social club still running.

Bob Holmes
Chair
Social Club

Village Hall Management Committee Report April 2022

With Covid 19 restrictions still in place it was a quiet year for the Hall.

Our long-time secretary resigned and we were pleased to welcome Peter Longmate to the team as his replacement, we also welcomed Chris Sims to the fold.

It was ultimately agreed to install a small compact dishwasher into the kitchen and that was completed. To assist the less abled, 15 armchairs were ordered along with larger round tables to keep diners further apart but still able to chat comfortably. All these have now been delivered for which the hall received grants to offset the costs. Meanwhile all the 90 older chair seats were removed and 'Vax' cleaned by Marjorie Haste and refitted.

All in all, a good team effort and I would like to thank the hall management team for all that they have done to keep our village hall safe and available for use whenever it has been possible.

Chris Haste

A 'Meet the Village' event was organized by the Parish Council and held in the hall, at which point, as a result of the feedback from this meeting a questionnaire was commissioned with Jan Cheng as lead on this. The VHMC are going to hold a meeting to review the data collected in the survey.

In addition, consideration will also be given to a report by Jennette Appleton. She carried out a disability survey of the hall.

The VHMC have taken the view that this is an Ideal opportunity to look strategically ahead, and re-assess the current and potential needs of the Hall and its use.

I would like to add at this point that Chris has decided to step down from the position of Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee since submitting some of this report, and I would like to thank him for his 16yrs serving on the committee, and also thank Marjorie, for her assistance.

Thank you for all hard work and time and effort.

Peter Longmate

HOLTON ST MARY MILLENNIUM GREEN TRUST

Annual report for the year to 31st December 2021

Trustees: Pamela Quare (Chair), Bob Holmes (Treasurer, Social Club Rep), Marjorie Haste (Secretary), Claire Rowan (PC Rep), Gretel Maddison, Keith Jeffries, Bill Priestley, Tanya Kuntz.

Financially the Green made a loss of £610 in 2021 largely due to professional cutting of the hedge behind Rose Acre. We ended the year with £9,699 in the bank.

The year was a very busy one for the Trustees with much activity behind the scenes in order to maintain the Green to a high and safe standard. Regular maintenance included cutting the large grass area as required, managing the wild flower area to encourage a variety of wild flowers, trimming back hedges, filling rabbit holes and tidying the feature clock in the middle of the Green. In addition, preservative was applied to the picnic tables and benches and the two large gates. A regular risk assessment is carried out of all the Green and findings are recorded and action undertaken where necessary. The lawn mower had an annual service and some rotted fence posts were replaced.

Chris Haste replaced the rotted parts of the picnic tables to prolong their life. Chris has also undertaken the maintenance and monitoring of the bird boxes and in 2021 he reported that of the 12 boxes, 8 had nests and one with leaves that may have been used by dormice which is wonderful news. Richard Appleton provided a smart new 'beware' sign by the children's stepping logs which are prone to getting slippery in wet weather. Roger Shipley designed and carved a motif on the stump of a felled oak near the willow tunnel. He cleverly squared this off and depicted different leaves on each side representing trees that are on the Green and topped it off with a carved acorn.

In mid-summer the Parish Council informed the Trustees that there was a sum of money available from the Community Infrastructure Levy that could be used to provide electricity to the Green. Some initial ground work was undertaken to ascertain the best area on the Green to site an electricity kiosk and trench from the substation to kiosk. As part of the Trust's Deed conditions, the Trustees were required to consult the wider community to canvas views regarding installing of electricity with either a 'for' or 'against'. We received a very strong and positive response in favour of 'for'. We are continuing to liaise with the PC on this matter.

In November, with the easing of Covid restrictions, the very popular bonfire and fireworks display, organised by the Social Club, returned to the Green and was enjoyed by many people.

On a cold December morning with the assistance of the Green Gym we planted about 300 saplings to form a new mixed hedge along the church side (northern boundary) of the Green and infill gaps along the other boundaries.

Finally, our thanks go to the many people who support the Trust by taking part in the monthly Century Club Draw. This is our only fund-raising and source of income. We really appreciate all the help that Chris Haste gives throughout the year and the Green Gym team for their willingness to lend a hand. The eight Trustees are a committed and enthusiastic team who give much thought and consideration in the management of the Millennium Green so that it remains a special and valued place for all members of our community.

The Trustees

Holton St Mary United Charities Trust

The previous year saw a change of trustees, with the addition of the incumbent, the Reverend Manette Crossman, together with Peter Cheng and Sally Thurlow replacing Mary Powell and Nadine Mallum.

The accounts for the year ending April 2021 were filed with the Charity Commission and show the amount of interest was under £10 and the amount that is available for charitable works is £727.90.

The trustees have not met since the change in trustees. Any applications to access a grant from the fund should be made to Paul Torrington, the Treasurer.

The Trustees

Brett Vale Annual Parish Meetings 2022 Babergh District Councillor's Report

As the Covid situation has eased, and restrictions started to get lifted last Summer, we have been able to concentrate more on our programme of delivery and have achieved a lot in the past year at Babergh. We do now seem to be on a firm and permanent trajectory to getting back to normal following the past two years of the Covid pandemic. We must, however, put the problems we have endured into some perspective: the poor people of Ukraine are suffering a far worse tragedy and we must do all we can to help them.

The Babergh Infographics brochure that I have provided gives an excellent summary of all we have done, but I would like to highlight a few things in more detail.

Economy

Our towns are getting busier and business does seem to be picking up for many. Vacancy rates – 10% in Sudbury and 11.6% in Hadleigh – are lower than the national average, which is clearly due to the greater prevalence of small independents rather than chain stores.

The Virtual High Street has really helped many businesses survive lockdown and I was delighted to attend the iESE conference and awards ceremony last September where Babergh won three awards: a gold for the Virtual High Street, silver Planning Enforcement Service Improvement and bronze in the Council of the

Year category. The Digital Skills Programme, initially launched for businesses on the Virtual High Street, is now open to all businesses in the districts.

We have also launched our Innovate Local programme to support business innovation on our high streets. This comprises Innovation Labs that provide small businesses with access to a work space, mentoring programme as well as advice and training, and market stalls for start-ups that include a free pitch for a set period, along with advice, training and support. The Hadleigh market stall is well-established now and I visited the Innovation Lab in Sudbury recently as it prepares for its opening.

Communities

One of the high points of the past year was the opening of the new pool at Hadleigh Leisure Centre. It is an excellent facility and a testament to all the partners who made it possible to enable a project like this for a small town.

Our £180k investment in CCTV in Hadleigh and Sudbury is fully operational. We have 21 cameras in Sudbury and 8 in Hadleigh. There is also one mobile camera and we will monitor its use to determine if more are going to be needed.

Housing

In the past year we have added 98 new homes to our housing stock, bringing the total for the past seven years to 232. All have been built to an EPC rating of B.

Our retrofitting programme to improve insulation, install new heating systems and address damp and mould is proceeding well and significant progress can now be seen on the Springlands estate in Sudbury. In addition, we are installing external wall insulation and replacement windows elsewhere in the district. We are completing a desktop study into the energy performance of our housing stock, and aligning our ambitions to improve the worst performing homes to an EPC rating of C or above. Indications are that works required will affect approximately 2,700 homes.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk were recently awarded £324,000 from the government's new Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme. This will allow us to build specialised emergency accommodation units for those who have been excluded and marginalised due to complex needs and will add to the existing 80 temporary units and 11 rough sleeper units our districts already have.

This latest round of funding will also allow us to build on work made possible due to the previously successful Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding bid, which was used to create a dedicated outreach and mental health support service for rough sleepers.

Environment

We have made a huge amount of progress towards our net zero by 2030 target and I just want to highlight the key achievements so far:

- The single biggest contribution has been the replacement of diesel with HVO in our vehicle fleet. Our vehicles were accounting for 25.9% of the total CO₂ emissions of the two councils.
- A total of 730 solar panels have been installed on our two leisure centres and at the Wenham depot. The Babergh leisure centres were accounting for 18.9% of the two councils' CO₂ emissions.
- A new filtration system, saving both energy and water, has been installed at the Kingfisher leisure centre in Sudbury.
- Solar car ports are being installed in the Station Road car park in Sudbury.
- Across the two districts, we have installed solar panels on 2,000 council houses in the past year and 250 more now have air-source heat pumps.
- We have undertaken a tree canopy survey and a biodiversity mapping exercise.
- Last year 281 trees were planted and 4,690 hedgerow plants distributed to towns and parishes. This is only the start of a long-term programme to increase our tree canopy.

Although we have been successful in getting grants for a lot of this, it has all nonetheless been achieved within our budget and not spending on things that won't provide a measurable impact – just as we promised when we developed our Carbon Reduction Management and Biodiversity Action Plans.

Planning

The only real setback concerns the suspension of the Joint Local Plan examination process while we address changes required by the inspectors. Although this is not unusual, it is disappointing as it means more delay.

We have agreed with the inspectors' proposals to proceed with a two-part plan. Development control policies, including important social, economic and environmental objectives, will be put in place first, while remaining work on spatial strategy matters and site allocations are addressed in part two.

Late last year we published our latest five-year housing land supply position statement which shows that we can again meet the statutory housing requirement, with a housing land supply of 6.86 years – a slight improvement on 6.75 years in the previous year. This means that our current planning policy, the Core Strategy, is still valid when determining planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires councils to identify and update a supply of specific deliverable sites which are capable of providing a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement.

Babergh 2022/23 Budget

At the February council meeting, Babergh's budget for 2022/23 was approved and included an increase in council tax of 2%, or £3.48 a year for a Band D property. The annual council tax for a Band D property will now be £177.34. There will also be an increase of 4.1% in council house rents, which is equivalent to an average increase of £3.72 a week for social rents and £5.23 a week for affordable rents.

Devolution and the Suffolk County deal

Late last year the government finally published its Levelling Up White Paper which contains the framework for the county devolution deals that are on offer. Following the expression of interest submitted by the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' Group last year, we were successful in becoming one of the nine counties to be offered a County deal. We will now start an intensive period of negotiation on the powers and flexibilities that will form the deal we eventually secure. These powers are likely to cover the economy, environment, transport and skills development.

Summary

In addition to the IESE gold award I have mentioned, we also won silver for process improvement and use of new technology by the planning enforcement team, and bronze in the council of the year category. It is great to know that we are being recognised by others in the country and that we must be doing something right for our residents. But there is room for improvement: gold for council of the year would be nice one day.

John Ward
Babergh District Councillor
Brett Vale
john.ward@babergh.gov.uk

Samford Division Report

In March 2021, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner and Suffolk Constabulary, launched the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras are being used to help detect and deter speeding offences that have been highlighted in Suffolk villages, and educate drivers on the importance of road safety.

An ANPR camera will be installed at a site where it has been identified by a parish council, with support from their county councillor, there is a problem with speeding and / or rat running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

An ANPR camera will identify a speeding vehicle by capturing an image of the number plate of the vehicle. Data will then be shared with the Police and the County Council. The County Council will write to the owner of the vehicle on behalf of both parties explaining that their vehicle has been registered as speeding. Repeat offences at a particular location could prompt the deployment of speed enforcement vans and subsequent fines to those who breach the speed limit.

Ten ANPR cameras will be purchased and each one will remain in situ for up to one week per site. There is the option of extending this period if needed.

The project received funding from the Suffolk 2020 Fund, which is a programme of work all about investing in community projects and improving Suffolk for all residents now and in years to come. The funding secures the ANPR project for a two-year pilot where its impact to reduce speeding will be monitored before it receives a further financial commitment.

April 2021

99% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day

In April 2021, 99.15% of children were offered a place at one of their parents' three preferred schools and 95% were offered a place at their first preference school.

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Suffolk County Council received 7207 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2021.

May 2021

Schools across Suffolk recognised for their efforts in encouraging active travel

In May 2021, pupils from Great Barton Primary Academy and Stowupland High School were recognised for their efforts in encouraging active and sustainable travel.

The Pupils received Bronze Modeshift STARS accreditations for their efforts. Exning Primary School who first received a Bronze accreditation in 2019, became the first primary school in Suffolk to receive a Silver Modeshift STARS accreditation for their ongoing commitment and hard work.

- Great Barton Primary Academy – encouraging road safety, by working with local councils to relocate and promote the puffin crossing near the school. This includes designing new street signs and a Park & Stride campaign
- Stowupland High School – encouraging active and sustainable travel and road safety. A group of sixth form students set up a walking bus to help new Year 7 students build confidence walking to a new school

- Exning Primary School – received their silver accreditation for their ongoing hard work promoting sustainable travel, road safety and improving air quality outside the school gates by running an anti-idling campaign.

The Modeshift STARS Accreditation scheme encourages schools across England to implement their own travel plans to increase levels of sustainable and active travel in order to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. More information on Modeshift STARS can be found at –

www.suffolk.gov.uk/adviceontravel as well as top tips and advice on travelling to school.

The accreditations further support the county council's Let's make a change for the future campaign which is encouraging residents to consider more active and sustainable travel options during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid overcrowding the county's transport network, and longer term to experience the benefits of improved health and wellbeing, less congestion and cleaner air.

June 2021

Independent review of aspects of Suffolk's SEND services to be carried out

It was announced in June 2021 that A multi-agency team from Lincolnshire will carry out an independent review into SEND provision.

The SEND (special educational needs and disability) review will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within Suffolk County Council. It will not look at specific cases or the provision given to specific children.

The review will start next week and will be completed within six weeks. The report, with any recommendations, will be published on Suffolk County Council's website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinised, in public, by the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The review team from Lincolnshire will consist of two senior officers from Lincolnshire County Council, performance analysts and the chair of the county's parent carer network.

SEND services in Suffolk are delivered in partnership by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk's NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and education settings.

The review looked at:

- The effective flow of cases
- Communication with young people and families
- Processes for dealing with incoming enquiries from young people and families in a timely manner
- A focus on the family-facing elements of the service
- The allocation of provision and, where appropriate, placement in a timely way for children

Suffolk County Council is eager to work collaboratively and productively with the Campaign for Change group, and parents and carers not involved or represented by the group, to make improvements in SEND services.

July 2021

Suffolk County Council begins procurement process for next Highways Service contract focusing on developing local skills and talent

In Early July 2021 Suffolk County Council began the process of finding its next long term Highways Services partner.

The council was looking for a partner to deliver key operational projects after the current contract ends on 30 September 2023.

As part of preparations up to this point, the council has 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 based on the range of outcomes the council wants to achieve from any new contract process.

The council is looking to develop a contract that utilises a blended 'hybrid' approach, enabling the council to enter into one contract that covers the majority of Highways Service functions and two contracts with specialist providers for streetlighting and traffic signals (ITS). The council will be looking for 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.

The whole contract development process will take just over two years to complete. Once the appropriate tender documents have been prepared outlining the council's requirements, initial advertisements will go out in December 2021. Discussions will begin with any interested prospective contractors in early 2022. Following such a rigorous tendering process, the council hopes to be able to award its chosen contract in early 2023 with the new service provider beginning in October 2023.

The procurement process needs to begin now to provide enough time to go to the market to seek relevant specialist companies which may be interested in tendering for the contract which is worth in the region of £800m - £1 billion over a projected 20 year period.

August 2021

Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns

It was announced in August 2021 that Suffolk residents can come together to invest in renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Suffolk County Council brings **Solar Together Suffolk** to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk's local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. Across the UK, iChoosr has delivered almost 5,000 installations to date and over 80,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

September 2021

Suffolk's first 'healing woods' locations announced

In September 2021, four locations were announced by Suffolk County Council as 'healing woods and spaces'.

They will offer people better access to nature and provide a positive legacy to the pandemic.

The healing woods and spaces will be located in:

- Bury St Edmunds
- Combs and Little Finborough
- Eye
- Hopton

The council's healing woods project connects with the motion unanimously passed by the county's councillors earlier this year, to commit to developing mental health support in Suffolk, in response to the impacts of the pandemic.

Research, such as that recently published by the University of Essex with The Green Light Trust, demonstrated that access to woodlands and green space can significantly improve people's wellbeing.

The four sites will develop unused spaces and existing green areas, to make them more accessible and offer dedicated places for peaceful reflection and a positive focus.

New Suffolk Recycling Centres online booking system improvements to deliver greater customer experience

It was announced in September 2021 that Suffolk County Council has developed a new, more user-friendly booking system which enables residents to book slots for recycling.

For bookings from 27 September, people can view all available time slots in real time, to see which booking slots are free at any given moment. The system allows you to book up to seven days in advance. If circumstances change, you can easily cancel your slot up to one hour beforehand or equally, you can click to amend your booking if required.

The system is also able to advise customers on which sites accept specific materials, such as plasterboard to ensure the correct type of booking is made to save customers' time, and it can also be used to share real time messages with customers, for example if any site needs to close due to adverse weather or emergency situations. The new booking system is connected to automated numberplate recognition to allow for a trial of automatic entry gates.

Customer survey results show overwhelming support for the use of a booking system and the Council has gathered feedback from customers and site staff on how the booking system can be further improved, which have shaped the design of this new system. Through the use of bookings the council can avoid the frustration of long queues at peak times and increase the overall throughput and efficiency of the service for residents.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills at Suffolk County Council

Published in September 2021:

I want to dedicate this column today to the situation with Suffolk's special educational needs and disabilities (known as SEND) provision.

I was newly elected in May to this Cabinet position and SEND became my first priority.

You will have seen coverage in today's paper about an Independent Report into our services. This report follows a review carried out by a team from Lincolnshire, including Lincolnshire County Council and a parent carer network, and was commissioned by ourselves after a significant increase in correspondents from concerned parents and carers earlier this year.

This wasn't a review of everything we do, but focussed on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of our SEND services. I would like to share with you the outcomes and actions we

are taking following publication of the review yesterday. The review has found that we must change what we are doing in a number of areas.

I would like to say sorry for the difficulties that some families have experienced as a result of how we have been doing things. We recognise that we have let down some children and young people as certain aspects of our services have simply not been good enough.

Our priority now is to implement wide-scale improvements, and to do this with pace, impact and efficiency. We have already started to make improvements to the way we do things and whilst, wide-scale improvement will take time, we are determined to make things better. There have been many positive changes to the way we deliver SEND services in the past 18 months and we are proud of these, but clearly there is some way to go.

The review made nine recommendations and we have used these to draft an action plan, which can be read online. One of the recommendations made in the review was to work with a third-party organisation to deliver improvements. The council has since secured Impower as a strategic partner, who will bring capacity and extensive experience of working on SEND systems across the country. This partnership work began yesterday. Other recommendations include staff training, reviewing the process for allocating specialist placements and working with education leaders and parents and carers to understand the demand for specialist provision and use of data and local intelligence to inform sufficient planning.

We have already made significant longer-term improvements within SEND, which we continue to build upon. We have agreed a £45.1m capital programme to create an additional 870 specialist education places over a 5-year period to 2024. Two hundred and ten places opened last year with a further 310 opening this academic year and includes new specialist schools in Bungay, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. We have also improved the time in which it takes us to issue Education Health and Care Plans from 18% in 2016 to 95% in 2021. £1million has also been invested into speech and language therapies by Ipswich & East Suffolk and West Suffolk CCGs.

At the moment, more than 6,000 children in Suffolk currently have a health and care plan to identify what support they need to help with their special educational needs. The number has nearly doubled from 3,000 in 2014. A further 12,000 pupils have special educational needs and do not require a health and care plan. Currently, there are 2,000 places at either special schools or specialist units for those with more complex needs. We continue to increase the number of places.

Your children's education and welfare is fundamental – I fully recognise this as a parent myself. We want to work together to give your children and young people the very best chance in life.

We accept without reservation the findings of the review and are grateful to the Lincolnshire team for their attention to detail, professionalism and advice. We have learnt very valuable lessons from this review, and we will act on these recommendations in the best and quickest way.

You can [read the report and action plan here](#).

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the report or action plan please contact us via email at SendReview@suffolk.gov.uk

October 2021

MPs from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex and County Councillors, unite to protect the countryside and communities from the worst impacts of new pylons and cables

In October 2021, the Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) was set up to review and respond to the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR).

A new group of MPs from across the region, under the chairmanship of Sir Bernard Jenkin, and including County Councillors from the region, has been set up to ensure that the emerging proposals of the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR), and proposals to change the Nationally Significant infrastructure Planning regime, are effectively scrutinised.

The Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) supports the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050, and the aspiration to deliver 40GW of Offshore Wind, by 2030. However, this will result in a succession of electricity generation and connection projects in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, over the coming decades, which will have significant impacts on the environment and communities of the region.

The group believes that these ambitions and targets cannot be met, on an "at any cost" basis. Therefore, the further development of the onshore transmission system, and the connection of offshore wind farms, and interconnectors, will require a new deal for communities and the environment. It remains a key priority that we speed up the Government's timetable to transition to the offshore transmission system, in order to protect our communities from the damaging effects of multiple cable corridors.

As well as scrutinising and responding to new policies and initiatives, the group will be a contact point for Ministers and senior officials, as well as for the National Grid, Crown Estate, and Ofgem, to engage with Regional Leaders. The group will also be inviting key stakeholders and community groups to meet with them, to better understand the impacts, and opportunities, of Net Zero transmission and generation infrastructure in the region.

OffSET's mission statement:

"OffSET exists to promote strategic leadership of the development of a coordinated offshore electricity grid, to address the need for increased grid capacity which off-shore wind, coastal new nuclear, and international interconnectors will demand, while standing up for the countryside of East Anglia so that the welcome transition to net zero electricity generation does not do unnecessary damage to our communities or the environment."

November 2021

Suffolk's Greenest County Awards Winners Announced

In November 2021, Suffolk celebrated the people and organisations making the biggest environmental difference in the county.

As COP26 came to a close, Suffolk celebrated the people and organisations making the biggest environmental difference in the county. An innovative food recycling company, a nature reserve and the county's Tree Warden Network are among those collecting awards at The Hold in Ipswich today (Friday 12 November 2021).

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

"Once again, our Greenest County Award winners demonstrate that Suffolk has some of the most innovative, passionate and forward thinking people and organisations in the UK. We hope these stories inspire everyone to think hard about how they can help, as they not only address the climate emergency here in Suffolk, but set a standard for all organisations and industry, leading the way to a greener country and more sustainable world."

Full details of the winners can be found here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/suffolks-greenest-county-awards-winners-announced>

December 2021

Suffolk County Council approves extra £20m investment in highway drainage and footpaths

In December 2021, Cabinet members committed an extra £20 million over the next three years into further improving Suffolk's highway drainage systems and footpaths.

In recognition of the increasing maintenance demand on these areas, councillors approved the use of £10 million to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes that deal with problems that affect larger numbers of people, and a further £10 million to improve footpath quality and access.

Suffolk Highways will use the drainage investment alongside funding from the Department for Transport to increase the number of highway flooding sites which are resolved, providing a highway network that is more resilient and accessible during heavy rain and severe weather events.

The footpath investment will be focused on urban areas and busy footpaths in rural areas - providing a safer and more accessible network that supports people accessing local bus services, health care services and local shopping precincts.

January 2022

Council prepares budgets for its finances and the environment Suffolk County Council waives fees for Platinum Jubilee events

To mark the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Suffolk County Council will be waiving street party road closure fees.

On Sunday 6 February 2022, Her Majesty the Queen celebrated her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service. To celebrate this milestone, events will be taking place across the Country, particularly over the four-day Bank Holiday weekend, between 2 and 5 June 2022. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours.

For all events on Sunday 5 June 2022, which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures.

The following website has been set up for those who are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>.

If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022, these may still be processed. However, Suffolk County Council cannot cover the costs of traffic management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of traffic management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands.

For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>

If you have any queries, please contact Suffolk County Councils Customer Services team on 0345 606 6171 or email customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk

Find more information on how to get involved in celebrating Her Majesty's historic reign, at platinumjubilee.gov.uk.

February 2022

Council's commitment to further enhancing Suffolk's natural environment

It was announced in February 2022 that Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment.

Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land and assets, by 2030.

This means it will be progressing its work around managing highway trees, planting more hedgerow, nature-based flood management solutions, roadside nature reserves, and much more.

The council already planted 100,000 trees last year, and is on course to plant another 100,000 this year. It has also put in around 20 kilometres of mixed species hedgerow.

The plans will also help work towards the council's ambitions of being a Net Zero organisation by 2030, with Suffolk's nature being an integral part of the carbon cycle.

The policy's ambitions stretch across the whole organisation, from looking at the impact of street lighting, to how it procures goods and services.

One example of the positive changes that the council will make, is to stop using Glyphosate in all highway maintenance operations. This will happen as soon as it is able to deploy a suitable alternative, and at the latest by 2023 for routine weed treatment programmes. The council will work with other local authorities, both locally and through the Local Government Association, in reaching this goal as soon as possible.

The proposals were agreed at Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022, following the work undertaken by the Policy Development Panel which was set up in July 2021.

March 2022

Suffolk County Council's leaving care service receives high praise from Ofsted

In March 2022, Suffolk County Council's leaving care service received high praise from Ofsted.

Ofsted inspectors assessed the local authority's arrangement for care leavers as part of a focused visit to the service. The visit follows on from the Outstanding rating received by SCC's Children's Services department in 2019. The services for children in care and care leavers was the only area at the time to be rated 'Good' and therefore was an area of priority for the council.

At the recent visit inspectors concluded that care leavers are successfully helped to transition to independence and reach their full potential. The service was seen to have a culture that is "determined, ambitious and creative" with practitioners who build trusting relationships with care leavers. Practitioners were seen accessing a wide range of specialist expertise to provide services to care leavers that are individualised and responsive.

Inspectors also said that "Many care leavers achieve well, exceeding their own expectations. All are valued and their achievements are celebrated. Persistent efforts are made to reach out to those who are difficult to engage."

Georgia Hall – County Councillor

Holton St Mary Annual Parish Meeting

Report from the PPG April 2022

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.

During 2021, meetings were held via Zoom. This proved unsatisfactory for all concerned and it was agreed to suspend these meetings in December 2021 until March this year or earlier if pandemic restrictions allowed face to face meetings to resume. Face to Face meetings resumed in April 2022.

The long standing Chairperson, Kathy Constable also resigned from the group at the end of 2021 after many years as Chair. The tasks she undertook as Chair have been shared amongst the current members.

The practice itself continues to evolve in line with the changing face of general practice. This means that gradually, a multidisciplinary team is being employed within the practice meaning patients should get the help they need from the most appropriate clinician for their needs. For example, repeat medication may now be reviewed by a pharmacist with extra training. This evolution, which is driven by the Dept. of Health, means we will see further changes to the type of clinician we will see in future.

The practice has also been approved to provide GP plus services and the service began on 04.04.22 so is in early stages. Appointments are available beyond normal surgery hours during the evening up till 9pm and on Saturday daytimes. It extends to patients not registered with the practice as well as to registered patients, in the same way CCMP patients can be referred to other GP plus services within Suffolk. These appointments are booked through the practice.

Dr Victoria is now established as a GP trainer. Dr Imobo is about to start a three month placement. He has already qualified as a GP and just needs to have a three month placement to finish. This means an extra pair of hands is available to see patients.

The staff have experienced extremely high levels of sickness in the last few weeks. It will take a couple of weeks to get back to normal.

J Cheng

First Friday of the Month Club Report

Lunches resumed as soon as the pandemic allowed, with an outdoor event hosted by Frances and Paul Torrington on their meadow, taking advantage of a large Teepee that was in place for another event. It was enjoyed by all, judging by the positive feedback, despite the rain showers.

Our numbers are a little down since the resumption and we have lost four of our previous regular or occasional volunteers. Fortunately we have some people prepared to do an additional lunch and at least one new volunteer (Debbie Wilson, who will be delivering the May Lunch on 6th May). All in the Village are welcome - just contact Sally or Frances so we ensure we are catering for you (details in Quartet)

The December lunch saw a number of additional attendees, and once again our buy-some-make-some buffet delivered to each table was well received.

The purchase of four larger round tables by the Village Hall and a number of chairs with arms has been welcomed by our customers, and we thank them. It allows more people to sit together and chat without having to twist and the chairs are helpful to anyone needing a bit of leverage to get up or sit down. The game changer has been the purchase and installation of a small commercial dishwasher, which ensures all the tableware is cleaned at a much higher temperature than can be achieved by hand (even with gloves!)

and removes any risk of viral residue. We would like to thank the Village Hall trustees who used their start-up funding to make this improvement.

Sally Thurlow

Slow Stitch report April 2022

The Slow Stitch group is a drop-in group that meets on the third Thursday of every month between 2-4pm in the Village Hall, Holton St Mary. We have welcomed new stitchers in the past twelve months and when we could not meet inside, we met on the Millennium Green.

Whether you knit, sew, crochet, embroider or quilt, everyone is welcome to come along. We are happy to help beginners and each year undertake a community project. This year we have plans for celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Jeanette Appleton

Green Gym Group

The work of the Group's enthusiastic core team of nine continued where 2020 ended. The Group's agenda was similar to the previous year. This included the perennial planting of almost 300 daffodil bulbs on the verges and particularly outside Roseacre, Holton Hall and Bacon's Green, as well as around the village signs. The Group was given a donation of 200 bulbs from Mrs Mary Powell and Mr Erik Ellis; their kindness has been rewarded with a very colourful spring for the whole village. Work was also carried out to clear the footways, including outside (and inside) the Village Hall, in the Church Grounds to clear many years of accumulated pine needles and weeds from around the base of the *Wellingtonia*, and in the Millennium Green with the planting of dozens of young hedging plants. In January 2022, additional planting was undertaken to enhance the willow tunnel and, with much-needed TLC, to hopefully secure long-lasting growth. Only one month was lost because of appalling weather and for most of our sessions we were blest with sun, although not always warm! New members are always welcome to help maintain a beautiful village. Finally, the Group are very grateful to all those who have thanked us for our efforts and work.

Richard Appleton

Holton Women's Book Club Report April 2022



It is now three years since Holton Women's Book Club was set up and the group continues to meet each month. This year we have again explored a wide range of compelling stories across different eras, different countries and by both male and female authors. We have enjoyed well-loved English classics such as the Mayor of Casterbridge, (which several of us hadn't looked at since our O level days !) and dabbled in nostalgia with the childhood favourite 'Wind in the Willows'. No genre of literature is outside the remit of the book club and members feel that the opportunity to read and discuss books that we might not normally choose for ourselves, has been a strength of the group and has led to interesting, lively discussions.

In September 2021 we had a stall at the Meet The Village event. Here we met many new and established residents of the village and shared information about the book club. Through informal chats people told us of their favourite books and memories it evoked and we also found some budding authors in the community.

As we have been gradually easing out of the pandemic it has been really good to meet up face to face rather than through Zoom. Taking turns to host in each other's homes and gardens and sharing light refreshments together, the club continues to be an opportunity for socialising and friendship as well as sharing books and stories with like-minded people.

Liz Norton

Holton St Mary Facebook Group

Our closed group continues to favour community posts, in preference to being a free advertising location, as with a number of other community pages. We do not say no, we say no more than once a month, so the emphasis is on local things for local people.

There are currently 188 members, including a few residents from the surrounding area, a number of past residents, and people who work here or nearby. It is regularly used to make people aware of community events and things like meetings, travel issues or planned works.

Sally Thurlow