**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Held on Wednesday 31st May 2017 at 7.30 p.m.**

**in Yaxley Community Centre.**

Councillor I Luff took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all those who had submitted their reports. He also thanked everyone who contributed to the work of these organisations.

1. **Apologies.**

* Keith Pawsey, Julian Moore, Jessica Fleming and Bob Feaver.

1. **To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 25th May 2016.**

* Agreed.

1. **Matters Arising from the Minutes.**

* None.

1. **County Councillor’s Report: Cllr Jessica Fleming.**

Firstly - thank you for your support and participation. A year ago, we were looking at the prospect of devolution to a mayor and combined authority. Now local authorities are reinventing themselves in response to changes in funding and devolution. Waveney and Suffolk Coastal have agreed to merge in 2019 to form East Suffolk Council and Mid Suffolk and Babergh are increasingly working together, they will both join the County at Endeavour House later in 2017.

Suffolk Highways (formed of both County Council and Kier staff) will continue the programme of looking after all aspects of road maintenance, local projects, drainage and grass cutting for the next five-year contract term, renewed in October 2016. The transition of Suffolk County staff into Kier should be completed by this July.

The County Council has been working with the Parish Council on local speeding particularly on the Mellis Road, a site meeting has resulted in agreement on Vehicle Activated Sign locations and the signs will be in place in the near future. A feasibility study for completion of a footway link from Yaxley to Mellis was commissioned in March.

Community Transport was contracted out to 7 principal operators last year based broadly on District/ Town boundaries, the Mid Suffolk operator in Stowmarket can be reached on 01449-614271. The Connecting Communities programme aims to bring people to commercial buses and trains and includes community cars and Good Neighbour Schemes which can offer a ‘door-to-door’ service. No one should feel that they are stuck unable to leave home or get to appointments.

Network Rail has consulted on plans for closing or altering public footpaths, bridleways and agricultural crossings on all lines in Suffolk. S19 Rectory Road and S20 Beecroft’s level crossings in Mellis are subject to further study but proposals to close S21 Abbotts footpath and downgrade S18 Cowpasture Lane to bridleway status remain.

Neighbourhood plans are increasingly being developed to influence local growth; 3 are now adopted in Suffolk (Lavenham, East Bergholt and Mendlesham) and 14 others have started including Rickinghall-Botesdale and the Diss Area to include Palgrave, Stuston and Brome and Oakley.

During the past year, SCC has obtained government investment funds for several infrastructure projects including the Wet Docks Crossings in Ipswich and the Lowestoft Third River Crossing. The University of Suffolk has commenced construction of an archives repository, The Hold in Ipswich which is due to open in 2019. This and other improvements in Ipswich will help to raise the profile of our County town in the coming years.

1. **District Councillor’s Report: Cllr David Burn.**

**Introduction** - Another very busy year for Mid Suffolk District Council (the Council). Much behind-the-scenes work has been aimed at improving efficiencies in order to lower costs, without reducing the quality of service to our residents. Making savings, though, is not enough to compensate for the reduction in Government funding and a lot of work has been done on how more income can be generated.

**The Councils’ location and access to the public** - For some time, Babergh and MidSuffolk District Councils have been assessing cost and efficiency concerns about maintaining two separate headquarters. They also want to make it easier for the public to access the various council services. It has become clear that trying to operate the combined workforce from separate buildings is both inefficient and costly. Both councils have therefore resolved to move headquarters to Endeavour House in Ipswich, which is also the home of Suffolk County Council. That will be the hub for each council but there will be outreach locations in the districts that will serve for public access, the main ones being in Stowmarket for Mid Suffolk and Sudbury for Babergh.

**Building a sustainable future** - Our District, like many others, is facing major pressures to build more houses. A growing population, combined with factors such as increased life expectancy and smaller households, is driving demand for more homes. To ensure all residents understand what these pressures are, as well as what challenges and what opportunities they bring, the Council has been opening up the conversation on growth to the public. To help start this conversation, council officers hosted dozens of *Building a Sustainable Future* events throughout the District. All the events were open to all residents to drop in and talk with officers about the pressures we are facing and how we propose to respond to these without endangering the unique character and identity of Mid Suffolk.

**New council houses, the first for many years** - The first new council tenants to move into a council-built property in more than two decades cut the ribbon at a special opening ceremony in April 2016, where they were given the keys to their new home. Work began on site at Oakey Fields, Thurston, in September 2015 and has delivered a three-bedroomed, wheelchair-accessible bungalow for a local family. The new home is part of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils’ joint project to deliver 65 new council homes across both districts, 38 in Mid Suffolk, across six sites (in Bramford, Barking, Great Blakenham, Thurston and Laxfield) and 27 in Babergh, across two sites. New government initiatives made it easier for local authorities to build their own social housing and both councils seized the opportunity. Building out the remaining properties has continued throughout the year.

**Joint Local Plan Review** - Our present Local Plan, the District’s collection of development policies against which all planning applications are judged, is presently undergoing a complete review. In the interests of efficiency for the single workforce, both Mid Suffolk and Babergh will produce a new Joint Local Plan which will replace the existing adopted plans of both Councils. The new Joint Local Plan will include the allocation of sites for residential, employment and other uses in order to meet the development needs of the districts up to 2036. A public consultation exercise will be conducted later this year and the hope is to adopt the plan some time in 2018.

**Electoral review is underway** - Levels of population inequality in some wards are triggers for the Local Government Boundary Commission to review the ward boundaries. Over 20% of wards in the District are 10% larger or smaller than the average, and so the Council decided that it should voluntarily request a review of its boundaries now, to ensure any changes can be incorporated in time for the next district council elections in 2019. The review will consider how many councillors Mid Suffolk District Council needs; it will also consider where the ward boundaries fall throughout our districts. Parish boundaries will be unaffected.

**Devolution deal withdrawn** - Despite four Norfolk councils voting against the Norfolk and Suffolk deal, it still remained on offer for the others and it went to public consultation last summer. However, at the final vote of the remaining councils in November two more Norfolk councils rejected it and it was subsequently withdrawn by the government. All the Suffolk councils are now in discussions with the government to see if a deal for Suffolk can be salvaged. If such an idea were to move forward it would probably involve bringing in councils from north Essex and south Norfolk in order to build an economic area large enough to be considered viable.

**Investing in housing in Eye and Needham Market** - In March this year the Council completed the purchase of two redundant sites from the County Council, which it will now develop to provide much needed new housing. One of the sites, Paddock House and former Day Care Centre in Wellington Road, Eye, includes a 30-bed redundant care home and a detached three-bedroom bungalow in the grounds.  The other is located in Walnut Tree Walk, Stowmarket and includes the former Middle School and Community Education Centre located on Childer Road. These two latest acquisitions, together with the former Middle School site in School Lane, Needham Market, which was bought last year, demonstrate the Council’s determination to invest in its market towns and provide new homes to meet the needs of local people. In addition to this, it is anticipated the construction phase will bring more jobs into both areas and give local businesses a vital boost through increased footfall. Work to appoint development partners for these sites will begin this summer and any proposals that are drawn up will be subject to a public consultation through the usual planning processes.  It is hoped that work on both sites will start next summer.

1. **Yaxley Parish Council Report: Cllr Pawsey.**

* The Parish Council continues to maintain Yaxley Village affairs to a secure and safe standard.
* The new Village Hall toilets have been completed, in conjunction with the Village Hall Committee, achieving a disabled toilet and baby changing facility along with a well appreciated upgrade. Grants received from County and District Councillors, Mid Suffolk Community Project Grant and Awards for All.
* Yaxley Allotments have a solid core of enthusiastic tenants who create a good atmosphere amongst themselves. The bowser is still in operation complementing communal shed water butts.
* Commemorative medals to celebrate the Queen’s 90th Birthday were distributed to children in the village.
* Cherry Tree Close Road adoption by Mid Suffolk appears to have reached a standstill but remains ongoing on the agenda.
* The Play Area is maintained in good order and is used on a regular basis.
* A Yaxley Village Emergency Plan is in the process of being compiled with a good response within the village for volunteers.
* Aims to improve road safety in Yaxley Village includes purchasing a Vehicle Speed Activated Sign, which is awaiting mounting posts, possible parking restrictions and a continuous footpath from Yaxley Village to Mellis School. Request for pot hole repairs are always ongoing.
* A written agreement stating the Village Hall Committees commitment to Yaxley Village Hall and Village Hall Car Park and Playing Field has been drafted. Upon completion of the agreement security arrangements for the Village Hall and Car Park will be considered.
* A defibrillator for general use has been purchased and will be mounted on the Cherry Tree Public House outside wall in the near future. Many thanks to the Land Lord for giving permission.
* I would like to thank Philip Freeman for his outstanding role as Clerk, Julian Moore for his support as Vice Chairman and all Parish Councillors for making a strong Council.

**Yaxley Village Sign Report.**

* The sign and plinth still benefit from its total recent refurbishment. No work required.
* Credit to Sandra Moore for maintaining the island garden area around the sign.

1. **Yaxley Parish Council Report and Accounts 2015/2016.**

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| **Receipts** |  | 2015/2016 |  | |  | | **Payments** | |  | | 2015/2016 | |
|  | Precept | £5,250.00 |  | |  | |  | | VAT | | £255.49 | |
|  | MSDC Grant | £133.50 |  | |  | |  | | Clerk's Pay | | £2,115.26 | |
|  | Burials | £75.00 |  | |  | |  | | HMRC - PAYE | | £527.00 | |
|  | Rental Allotments | £380.00 |  | |  | |  | | Clerk's Expenses | | £97.00 | |
|  | Rights of Way/Rentals | £730.00 |  | |  | |  | | Postage, stationery etc | | £120.74 | |
|  | Interest | £2.82 |  | |  | |  | | Cemetery Upkeep | | £520.00 | |
|  | Recycling Credits | £641.71 |  | |  | |  | | Subscriptions | | £312.00 | |
|  | VAT Refund | £0.00 |  | |  | |  | | Insurance | | £462.10 | |
|  | Other Income | £1,749.62 |  | |  | |  | | Audit Fee | | £148.00 | |
|  | Total | £8,962.65 |  | |  | |  | | Allotments | | £70.46 | |
|  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | Election | | £87.50 | |
|  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | Section 137 | | £125.00 | |
|  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | Donations | | £927.32 | |
| **Balance:** |  |  |  | |  | |  | | Playground | | £452.15 | |
|  | 2016 |  |  | |  | |  | | Capital Works | | £526.13 | |
|  | £8,962.65 | Receipts |  | |  | |  | | Village Sign Refurbishment | | £284.17 | |
|  | -£7,601.82 | Payments |  | |  | |  | | Community Centre | | £251.00 | |
|  | £1,360.83 | Balance on Year | |  | |  | | Other Expenditure | | £320.50 | |
|  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | Total | | £7,601.82 | |
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| **Bank Reconciliation:** | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Balance at 31 March 2015 | | £13,310.73 |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Less unpresented cheques | | -£200.00 |  | |  | |  | | **Funds in hand:** | | 31/03/2016 | |
| Income 2015/2016 | | £8,962.65 |  | |  | |  | | Cheque Account | | £8,904.57 | |
| Expenditure 2015/2016 | | -£7,601.82 |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Unpresented cheques | | £0.00 |  | |  | |  | | **Assets:** | |  | |
|  |  | £14,471.56 |  | |  | |  | | Deposit Account | | £5,566.99 | |
|  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | Total = | | £14,471.56 | |

1. **Yaxley Town Estates Fund Report and Accounts: Cllr Moore.**

The Yaxley Town Estate Charities were set up in 1926 for the poor, sick and school leavers. They are no longer registered charities and are combined into Yaxley Town Estate Fund. The fund is administered by six trusties three from the parish council and three co-opted from the parishioners. The trustees every December administer the fund. The main aim of this fund is to give to pensioners living on their own, the sick and the bereaved, who have lived in the village for over five years. The fund is held in a savings account. The interest on this is used to buy gifts for the chosen recipients each year. The trustees held a meeting on December 14th, 2016 and decided to give flowers to eight parishioners that were in ill health.

**Summary of Finance:**

**Income -** Interest: £0.72

**Payments:**  £80.00

1. **Yaxley Community Centre Committee Report and Accounts: Mrs Tess Thomas and Mrs Celia Armstrong.**
2. Financial Report as at 8th May 2017:

Current Account: £1,686.97

Business Account: £5,710.48

Cash: £102.16

1. Expenditure:
2. Following the Annual Fire Inspection of the Community Centre an upgrade of the Fire Alarm System in the building was identified as a high priority and was carried out by Abacus Fire and Security Ltd at a cost of £1,723.80. As this work was a matter of compliance grants were not available through many of the usual funding avenues however the committee received an award from Cllr Fleming's Locality budget and would like to express their thanks to Cllr Fleming for her support.
3. The annual fire inspection of the village hall has been booked for Monday 5th June 2017 at a cost of approximately £250.
4. The car park was resurfaced at a cost of £2,464. The committee would like to thank the Foyle Foundation and Cllr Burn for their help with funding.
5. The covering for the outside area at the rear of the hall was replaced at a cost of £778.15.
6. The rear fire door was replaced and the internal doors were repaired at a cost of £1403.
7. A contribution of £1,231 was made to the PC towards the refurbishment of the toilets.
8. Payment of £450 to Rackhams for the repair of the existing external wall.
9. Payment of £478.08 to Rackhams for the supply of carpet and redecoration to the entrance hall.
10. Annual Public Liability insurance was paid at a cost of £512 of which £348.14 was the cost of insuring the building.
11. Proposed Future Expenditure:
12. The Committee received a quotation of £650 to extend the surface of the car park to the exterior wall at the front and side of the new extension to the building. This was discussed at the last committee meeting and the cost was deemed to be too high. The committee have decided to carry out a "tidy up" of the area on Monday 22 May and anyone who wishes to help will be most welcome.
13. Following an Energy Audit carried out by the Community Advisor to Suffolk County Council the committee have discussed any actions to be taken. It was decided that carrying out any of the recommendations would require extensive funding and would possibly generate even more work once investigations began therefore the committee voted by majority to maintain the building on an "adhoc" basis. The committee were concerned that any extensive building work could affect regularly generated income for the hall with the possibility that hirers would not return should they find an alternative venue.
14. A quote of £250 had been received from Rackhams to repair the roof and guttering at the entrance to the hall which requires attention.
15. The committee are in the process of reviewing the Parish Council's proposed agreement regarding areas of responsibility and will respond to the Chairperson, as the representative of the Parish Council, in due course.
16. Bookings remain healthy and are our main source of income along with the following list of fundraising events planned for 2017:

10 June - Quiz

3 September - Summer Fete

28 October - Halloween Party

3 December - Christmas Fayre

8 December - Christmas Bingo

Celia Armstrong - Chair

Tess Thomas - Chair

Lauren Solley - Treasurer

1. **Community Police Officer’s Report.**

No report.

1. **Reports from other local groups and organisations.**
   1. Yaxley PCC – Mrs Julie Hammond

2016 saw the PCC celebrating some wonderful highpoints as well as a few very low points. A definite high was the wonderful floral celebration of the Queens 90th Birthday, with a floral tribute to celebrate every year of the Queen’s life with a few extra to spare. The Church looked truly magnificent, with the flower festival weekend being rounded off with a street style tea party along the front path of the Church.

Other fund raising activities have included the harvest supper, strawberry cream teas and the soup lunches along with a stall at the Christmas Fayre. Profit from these events together with some generous donations has seen Yaxley manage to pay their Parish Share for the third year running. A monthly coffee morning is proving popular being hosted the third Wednesday of every month, allowing people to meet in an informal atmosphere.

The low points have been the poor support of our Church Crisis meeting held in May, but by far the biggest blow was the theft of lead from the church roof in October, despite the roof being treated with smart water earlier in the year. Together with the repairs already detailed from the 2014 quinquennial report, this has placed a heavy burden of expenditure on St. Mary’s. Not disheartened the PCC has ploughed ahead looking at grant funding possibilities; together with letter to all households invite parishioners to become Friends of St. Mary’s Church to be launched shortly. Welcome support has come from The Cherry Tree Public House who has hosted numerous fund raising events.

Julia and Eleanor assisted by the Lay Elders have worked hard enabling St Mary’s, Yaxley to hold Morning Worship on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, with Communion on the 3rd Sunday. Congregation numbers remain static at 10 to 12 for weekly worship, although number swelled at Easter, the Harvest Festival and the ever-popular Christmas Eve Carol Service, when St Mary’s again look resplendent lit by candlelight. Julia and her team continue to hold regular services for Yaxley House residents and half termly visits to Mellis Primary School. The Diocesan vision for growth “Growing in God” aims to encouraging individuals and communities across the Diocese to become more in engaged in God’s loving involvement in the world. This has been the basis for Yaxley to read from the script and tell Bible stories each month in the local school, making the Church easier to access for young families and promoting the historical interest in St. Mary’s.

Maintenance on some of the small tasks set out in the quinquennial report have been carried out by stalwart volunteers and lists compiled with the input from architect Stuart Offord for the larger and more specialised repairs. Yaxley’s War Memorial has been recognised by Historic England with specialist status for historic interest. The PCC held meetings in January, April, July, October and November, as well as participating in two joint benefice PCC meetings hosted by Thorndon in September and Yaxley in January 2017.

Looking to the future we hope that support of the Parish will allow the necessary repairs to be carried out for St. Mary’s to play her part for generations to come.

1. **The registration of the allotment land.**

Update from Beth Wilson of Steele’s Solicitors:

The land is currently registered under a Possessory Title, because there were no deeds, with the Land Registry. The registration took place in 2007 and there is a wait of 12 years before there can be Title Absolute.

1. **Any other business**

* None.