

**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING WAS HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**ON MONDAY THE 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 AT 7.30PM.**

**Present.** Chairman Mr. K. Durant.  
Councillors Mr. K. Deeks, Mrs. B. Jackson, Mr. R. Rush,  
Mrs S. Salmon & Mr. G. Shrimpton.

**Also Present.** Mr C. Pugh, Clerk to the Council.  
Mrs J. Pine, Treasurer, Hallifax Trust and four members of the public.

**Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor R. Kemp and District Councillor J. Long.

**Minutes of the last meeting.** The minutes of the last meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007 were approved and signed.

**Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising.

**Chairman's Report.** The Chairman welcomed all who had come to this once-a-year meeting, and said it had been an interesting year for him having taken over the chair from Robert Rush who unfortunately had to step down due to work commitments. During this term of office he had been surprised at the amount of paperwork involved, in view of the present day computerised communications, all of which had to be read but fortunately not all required action.

The correspondence had included some major issues such as - the consultation regarding replacing the nuclear power stations, a proposed wind farm at Chedburgh, and the proposed new pharmacy at Glemsford, and now the Boundary Committee Review.

During the year ten planning applications were received for new build or extensions to existing properties, including a further application for the land at the rear of The Croft in Gents Lane, this time for four large detached dwellings which involved major issues regarding access and the fact that the land was outside the BUAB for Shimpling. Fortunately this application was rejected.

During the year, the Council signed up to 'Police Direct' a service that provides information on current crimes in the area and occasionally a warning that suspicious characters/fraudsters are working in the area. Babergh has also set up a Safer Neighbourhood Scheme with a team of 47 which includes the Police and Community Support officers, Council staff and volunteers with the objective of curbing anti-social behaviour, and Shimpling now has a PCSO allocated to look after the interests of this village.

The village hall redecoration has now been completed and the old scrub and hedge line has been cleared and a new beech hedge planted. Following a request at last year's meeting the village newsletter has been revamped and is now a much better production with larger more legible type thanks to the efforts of Sarah Smith.

The Parish Council now has its own website which has been organised and run by the Computer Club, mainly through the hard work of Steve Cornelius for which we are thankful. The web site provides a considerable amount of local information, including on the St. George's Church, WI, Parish Council, Village Hall, an events calendar and businesses, plus a very good section on local history. The site is updated on a regular basis.

It was the intention to improve the bottle bank access area but due to the restrictions placed on us as to the construction it became completely prohibitive, the cost alone would have required the equivalent of two years precept. It is hoped that some further improvement might still be possible.

A request was made for the parish Council to provide Dog Waste Bins but it was considered that the initial capital outlay for the bins plus the annual charge for emptying at regular intervals could not be justified.

Earlier this year a team of volunteers banded together to perform a Spring Clean on most of the villages roadside verges and ditches. In excess of 15 bags of rubbish was collected plus such items as car hub caps, a car panel, some old iron and a headless statue. How disappointing it was to see that within a few days more rubbish had been consigned to the hedgerows.

Finally the Chairman expressed his thanks to our County and District Councillors, all members of the Parish Council and the Clerk for their hard work during the year.

**Financial Report.** The Clerk gave details of the income and expenditure during the year and reported a healthy balance of funds although slightly down on last year.

**County Councillor's Report.** [As Richard Kemp was away on holiday the Clerk read out his report]  
County Council Budget.

The County Council met in February to set a council tax of 3.75% for 2008/9. The County had received an improved grant this year with an increase of 7.9% - leading to £12.5 million more than expected. However many savings are still being made across the council including :-

Adult Care - £470k income from Care Charges in 08/08 and in the following two years.

£3.9m saving through 'Customer Journey' in 08/09 and the following two years.

Children & Young People - £80k saving from 'Inclusive School Improvement Service' a reduction in the commissioning of non-statutory school support services: support for dance and drama teaching and extra-curricular sport will no longer be available unless schools choose to pay for these from their budgets.

Environment & Transport - £1.6m saving from 'Structural Maintenance of Road'

Richard Kemp expressed his concern about the risks posed by a cut in the roads maintenance budget of this value, nearly 40% of the overall budget. The continued risk to vulnerable adults and older people these savings will create is an ongoing concern as well. The Administration at the County Council could have used the extra money it received in grant this year much more wisely than it did.

Local Government Review.

The Government announced in December that only 5 of the 9 unitary bids had met all the criteria and that Suffolk and Norfolk would be the subject of a Boundary Review.

The Boundary Committee has now met with representative of the 7 local district/borough/county authorities in Suffolk, an outline timetable drawn up and they are now on stage two talking to authorities and stakeholders who have made submissions.

At its Full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March the Administration at the County Council put a motion through Council which suggested that the County only investigates a Single Unitary solution for Suffolk.

Schools Organisational Review

Suffolk County Council's Administration continued with its re-organisation of schools in Suffolk. In March the second stage of the review set in place which saw middle schools in Lowestoft and Haverhill areas abolished and plans to move to the two-tier system put in place. All middle schools will therefore close with young people remaining in primary schools until the age of 11 before transferring to a secondary school.

Plastic Bags

At the December full Council meeting it was agreed to take a lead in persuading both retailers and consumers that Suffolk should be free of plastic bags most of which end up in landfill where they can take up to 400 years to break down.

### Waste

The proposed site for an incinerator for Suffolk has been chosen. The plant will be located at the SCC's Highways maintenance depot at Great Blakenham in Mid-Suffolk, and is now expected to cost £612m over a 28 year period.

### Locality Budget

Over the past year Richard Kemp is pleased to have been able to help a number of organisations in my division, and that the locality budget will be remaining at the same level this year.

Finally in his covering letter Richard wished to say that he vehemently opposed the ludicrous appointment of a Chief Executive Officer at an inflated salary for two years. [£218,000 pa].

**District Councillor's Report.** Due to the unavoidable absence of James Long the Clerk read out his report which opened with a brief reminder of the District of Babergh and the make up of the District Council which was first formed in 1974.

He went on to highlight the Council's priorities which are :-

Increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to rent or buy.

Maintain a safe, clean and sustainable environment.

Promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities.

Give easy, convenient access to quality public services.

Raise individual and community ambitions and encourage active citizenship.

The 2008/9 Council Tax increase for Babergh of 3.9% is in line with the headline RPI rate. However future years will almost certainly pose tough challenges for Babergh to maintain a balance between service provision and Council Tax increases. The Government has indicated grants of only 2% for the next three years and a requirement to achieve efficiency savings of 3% each year.

During the year James has been particularly involved in many issues, which included :-

The closing of middle schools

Youth strategy relating to children and young people, including Babergh's Play Strategy.

The Post Office Network Change programme.

BT's Public Telephone Phone Booth Removal Programme, and

Stansted Airport's proposed new runway and the impact on the region.

James Long then mentioned the Boundary Committee review in a similar way to Richard Kemp above, before finishing his report by thanking the Chairman, Members and Clerk for their assistance over the last 12 months.

**Hallifax Trust Report.** Jenny Pine reported that the Hallifax Trust was founded in 1863. It provides grants and bursaries for the young people of Shimpling, with the following priorities,

- (a) The primary school serving the parish of Shimpling, in or towards special benefits of any kind not normally provided by the local education authority.
- (b) Bursaries for people under the age of twenty-five who either attended Shimpling School or whose parents live in Shimpling.
- (c) If there are any funds in any year not required for the above, it may be used for charitable purposes for the general benefit of the residents of Shimpling.

Two meetings were held this year in April and October.

The current Trustees are Richard Weller-Poley (Chairman), Jenny Pine (Treasurer), Jan Bergau (Secretary), Nick Smith and David Hume.

Distribution of Bursaries and grants in 2007/8 was: -

Lawshall School – the trustees were happy to continue funding local artist and printmaker Michael Carlo to work with the children and increased the funding to cover 3 days per term.

Some of the work produced was displayed in the Church/Hallifax Chapel during the Art & Music weekend of 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> July.

Nine bursars for studying away from home and four for studying whilst living at home were granted.

Applications for grants should be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> August in time for the September meeting. Notices will appear in the village newsletters and Mrs Pine asked all present to tell anyone they think may be eligible for a grant about the Trust.

### **Village Hall Committee Report.**

Ken Durant, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, reported that it had been another successful year starting with the Shimpling Fun Day in June, on a glorious summer's day, with a good attendance from local people of all ages who were able to enjoy a display by Morris Dancers, music from a local young group and the Shimpling Handbells combined with various sideshows, food and of course the bar. A good family day bringing the people of the village together.

With the intention of attracting larger audiences, the committee decided to reduce the number of guest speakers during this year, but to select top quality speakers. Whilst we were entertained by excellent and interesting speakers covering subjects from Poachers & Smugglers, Music Hall Entertainment, BT Voice Over and Goldsmithing, the attendances did not improve unfortunately and the overall situation will be reviewed for the forthcoming year.

There are numerous activities taking place in the village hall, with the old faithful monthly whist drives both evening and afternoons, speaker meetings, computer club, hand bells, coffee mornings, and weekly meetings of the young farmers club. However the recent purchase of a new table tennis table has not proved very popular as the response when the hall was opened for play was very disappointing.

Thanks to the Parish Council the main hall and toilets have been redecorated during the year but we still have a condensation problem. It is hoped this can be reduced by installing some low wattage tubular heaters on the north wall before next winter

There has been a considerable increase in the bookings during the year including a number of children's birthday parties and christenings, as a result a baby changing unit has now been installed. It has been decided to reinstate the AGM for the Management Committee this year. This will take place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 7.30pm. At the meeting the current committee will step down, but hopefully put their names forward for re-election along with anybody else who is interested in helping with the running of the hall for the benefit of the village.

The financial standing for the village hall is in good order and whilst its present mix of activities is profitable overall the hiring rates for the hall will remain at the same level for the immediate future but the situation will be monitored as a result of the increasing cost of heating and lighting.

A special word of thanks to all the members of the committee for all their hard work over the year.

**Police Report.** In the absence of a Police representative there was no Crime report.

### **Other Matters.**

(i) NATS Proposed Changes to Airspace

The Chairman gave brief details of the proposed changes to the airspace by the National Air Traffic Services and how it affects Shimpling.

At present there is one holding area for flights into Stansted which is centred over Sudbury. It is now proposed to have two holding areas, the nearest one being south west of Stowmarket. This is slightly closer but due to the height of stacking and landing approach it is unlikely that residents will notice the change.

(ii) Boundary Committee Review

The Clerk gave further details of what was happening under the Boundary Committee's review of the structure of government in Suffolk in that they are seeking alternative Unitary Council proposals to that previously put forward by Ipswich. They have now received two concepts for consideration; one being that of Babergh District Council who feel that the best solution would be to have two Unitary Councils one for East Suffolk and one for West Suffolk with a new boundary drawn up between them.

The other proposal is a joint submission from Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council for there to be only one unitary Authority for Suffolk to replace the existing county council and the seven borough and district councils. This new authority would be known as 'One Suffolk' According to the stage by stage programme given in the County Councillors report the Boundary Committee should now be considering these two submissions and formulating their draft proposals before announcement and commencing a period of public consultation in early July.

(iii) Affordable Homes.

The Chairman announced that the Parish Council would later be considering whether it should carry out a survey to determine if there is a need for more affordable homes to be built in the village. It follows attendance at the 'Local Homes for Local People Day' put on by Babergh when representatives from Parish Councils were shown some recent and ongoing small developments in three or four villages, and heard how the need for affordable housing was being determined by survey and the housing register for a locality.

It has been established that there is possibly a suitable site for a small development in Shimpling if the village has a need.

(iv) BT Public Phone Box Removal Plan.

The Clerk outlined the latest move by BT to remove the only telephone phone box in Shimpling due to lack of use. It is one of 43 such boxes through out Babergh that have been earmarked for removal by BT. Again the Council will be discussing it later but the meeting felt that every effort must be made to try to keep the phone box even if only for emergency use.

**Any other Business.** The following matters were then raised by members of the public.

(i) Neighbourhood Watch – Would there be any benefit in having a Neighbourhood Watch scheme?

(ii) Weekly Black Bin Collection – A request was made for the Council to approach Babergh D.C. in an effort to get the weekly collection of the black bin waste restored at least in the summer months.

(iii) The Council's attention was drawn to the potentially dangerous state of some of the trees on either side of the road leading from The Street to the main road. In some areas dead branches are reaching well out over the road which could be an accident waiting to happen.

**Date of the next Meeting** The next Annual Parish Meeting will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 to commence at 7.30pm.

As there were no further matters for discussion the meeting closed at about 8.45pm