

Notes on Annual Parish Meeting 9th May 2011

Present: Chairman Ken Durant, Clerk & 5 Councillors

In Attendance: County Councillor Richard Kemp, District Councillor James Long and 32 members of the public.

Chairman's Report: The chairman welcomed everybody and stated how pleasing it was to see so many in attendance. During the year one councillor, Robert Rush had resigned after many years on the council and his place was taken by Mr. John Pawsey. During the year there had been 8 planning applications including major renovations and changes to Chadacre. There had been 3 major projects during the year. Affordable Housing project which was completed early April and much welcomed by those fortunate enough to be allocated a house. It was emphasized that the Parish Council had no involvement in the selection of the candidates. The Chairman expressed apologies to local residents for any inconvenience experienced during the construction of the houses. The Children's play area was completed in October and whilst not to the liking of some local residents, it was enthusiastically welcomed by the children within the village. He commented on the spate of burglaries within the village last summer and the subsequent forming of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme thanks to the efforts of Kris Notley, who is looking for help to run the scheme. Despite constant reminders there are still problems with speeding within the village and we are still awaiting the speed limit roundels which were promised last summer. With the Suffolk County Council looking to save £42 million during this financial year, certain services had been cut including a reduction in the frequency of the local bus service, which was originally due to be axed as it was not commercially viable. After consultations a reduced service was agreed. Shimpling is being faced with a number of financial increases, presenting difficulties in arriving at an acceptable budget and resulting in an increase of the local rates, but only by approximately £1 per household per year. Mr Durant felt that Shimpling has an active community, which is the envy of many other villages and then he mentioned the activities of the local Bush Pub who in the last year have contributed in excess of £20,000 pounds to the local Hospice, their major event being the Fire Walk which raised in excess of £15,000. He congratulated Jo and Paul for their efforts.

He concluded by thanking the Clerk to the Council and all the members of the council for their support and for dedicating their time to the issues raised within the community and said the council would continue to support the village in all ways possible, feedback would be welcome from the residents on any issues of concern, or suggestions where improvements could be made.

Financial Report

The Council started the year with a balance of £3431.15 brought forward from 2010/11. The precept for the year was set £4345 showing a 1% on the previous year. A large amount was spent on repairs and external decoration to the village hall and a new mirror replaced the broken one at the junction of Hallifax Place. The coming year will see increases in insurance, grass cutting and other general expenses resulting in an increase of the precept to £4600. Parish Councillors once again waived their right to any allowances for the year.

County Councillor's Report

Mr. Richard Kemp stated that the County Council were looking to make savings of £125 million over the next four years starting with £42.5 million this year. To achieve this a number of services would be cut or subcontracted. Currently a number of the services due for axing are being reviewed again so nothing is certain.

District Councillor's Report

James Long has recently been re-elected as an independent candidate. 940 planning applications had been received, 19% increase. As part of the cut-backs there had been a number of closures of household waste sites, but not in our local area. With the aim of financial savings, discussions are taking place regarding the possible merger of Babergh and Mid Suffolk and every household will receive a letter providing the opportunity to vote if in favour or against. 80% of the potential savings can be made by sharing services and only another 20% is achievable by a merger, therefore one has to consider the costs involved in completing the merger and will a larger District Council provide additional benefits.

Organisation Reports

Hallifax Trust: Bursaries are available for people under 25 who went to Shimpling School or whose parents live in Shimpling. A number of grants have been awarded in Shimpling to the village hall repairs, handbells insurance and church repairs plus a bench for the new play area.

Womens Institute: Membership currently 25 with a very active group, but new members are very welcome to join in the various activities including outings and speaker meetings.

Play Park Committee: Sub committee, responsible to the Parish Council, formed to attend to the day-to-day administration of the Play Park. Bike Stand now installed and later this year trees (type to be determined) will be planted to provide shade around seating area which will be installed shortly.

Neighbourhood Watch: Regular information received from the police and SNT but additional help needed to run this section. Please contact Kris Notely.

Village Hall Management Committee: Another successful year, although reduction in incomes from lettings and higher electricity charges, but an increase in funds from last year shows approx £400 increase. Building redecorated externally thanks to John Sinclair. Loft insulation improved and wall insulation to be completed this year.

Police Report.

10 crimes reported last year compared to 7 the previous year. Theft of oil and metal has been a problem within Suffolk this year. Anybody wishing to receive crime prevention advice, please contact 01473 613500

Items from members of the public.

Mrs. Joan Stephenson brought to the notice of the council that the tree at the junction of Gents Lane is dying.

Mr. Fahie Wilson asked if the accounts and minutes could be published in advance of next year AGM. Accounts are available for inspection following the audit and other information is available from the Parish Clerk on request. Brief notes on the meeting are published in the local paper, on the Parish Website and in the Parish Newsletter. It was recognized that not everybody has a computer.

Mrs. Mary Tuffen raised the question of vehicles parking on the small stretch of pavement within the village. This will be reported in the Parish Newsletter.

Mr. John Shayer stated that he and other residents were not happy with the siting of the Play Area which had been changed following the original consultations. He added that the proposed planting of bushes which would help to mitigate noise was not now going to happen. In reply the Chairman confirmed that responses had previously been made to the objections, but improvements to the site would be made in the future as funds become available.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35pm

Date of next Parish AGM Monday 14th May 2012 at 7.30