

Shimpling Parish Meeting
Minutes of Annual Assembly of the Parish
Monday 13th May 2019, 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: Liz Brunwin (Chair), Katie Haselhurst, Dan Sharpstone, Ken Rush ,
Gerry Shrimpton, Colin Johnston, Mike Atkins

County Councillor: Richard Kemp (RK) **District Councillors:** Michael Holt and Stephen Plumb

Clerk: Stuart Palmer (SP)

Public: Five members of the public attended

1. **Minutes of last annual meeting:**

These were confirmed on 14th May 2018.

2. **To receive reports for representatives of the parish:**

a. Chair's Report:

The Chair introduced herself and thanked everyone for attending and for all their contributions helping the village. She gave the following report: Last year the Parish Council met every other month. As well as these meetings we also met on 4 extra occasions to discuss planning applications. Councillors and the clerk also attended training courses and more training is planned for this financial year.

I am pleased to report that we have finally installed the speed indicator detector or SID which is currently located by The Bush. Several villagers have reported that it has made a difference to speeds through the village. Our thanks to Richard Kemp who agreed to fund the SID from his minor highways budget.

Another long term project which has finally come to fruition is the dog waste bin. We have received only positive comments since its installation so I think we can assume that it will be a permanent fixture.

Lastly the footpaths and bridges have now been rewired and repaired by Suffolk Highways.

New projects that have been completed this year are:-

Signage for the play park

Refurbishment of the circular bench and a replacement rowan tree on the triangle of land by Gents Lane. This bench was given to the village by Shimpling School and the original tree was donated by the WI in 1990. I think you will agree that it was worth while bringing this back into use and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Laurence Rooke, Ted Pine and Tony Heighs for all their help with this project.

Laurence Rooke again came to our rescue later in the year rebuilding the noticeboards in the village at cost price. Unbelievably to buy them can run into several thousands of pounds. Thanks again Laurence.

The annual village tidy in March was well supported and the helpers managed to collect quite a few bags of rubbish. Thank you to all who turned out on such a cold, miserable morning and thank you to anyone who regularly picks up litter on an ad hoc basis.

The Village Hall Committee has continued to run events to bring our community together and keep the village hall in excellent condition. They arranged for the redecoration of the outside of the village hall last October which the Parish Council paid for out of CIL funding. Our thanks go to the Village Hall Committee for all their hard work over the past year.

We continue to have a close relationship with our Rector, Matthew Lawson and St George's Church and welcome the events they hold in the Village Hall, at The Bush and around the village which help to maintain our village community.

I am sure that you will have noticed the daffodils planted around the village by the WI and how lovely they looked this Spring. This along with the areas looked after by Chris Cooke from Lark Valley Landscapes enhances our village. Our thanks go to Chris and his employees for their hard work. On the subject of keeping the village greenery under control, can I please also thank John Pawsey for his offer to arrange the

mowing of the grass verges along The Street this coming November in readiness for the daffodils flowering next spring.

Sarah Smith along with her band of villagers produce and deliver our Village Magazine each year. When I moved to the village five years ago, the village magazine was the first thing that I turned to find out information and to get a feel for the village. The Parish Council fund the magazine and although we send out information via Twitter, Facebook and the Parish Council website, we believe strongly that it is our most important method of communicating with everyone in our village as well as promoting our community.

The play park is inspected on an annual basis but our insurers have requested that regular checks are made between inspections. David Campan has kindly volunteered to do this and also keeps the play park clear of litter. Thank you David.

Throughout the year, various jobs come to our attention and the Parish Council very much appreciate all the offers of help that we receive to look after the village. A big thank you to all those who have helped throughout the year who are too numerous to mention by name. Your help makes Shimpling the special village that it is.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our County Councillor, Richard Kemp and District Councillor James Long for all their support over the last year. James decided to stand down before the elections so he won't be a regular feature at our meetings any more but we thank him for his years of service to us and to the community. Following those elections, we welcome Councillors Michael Holt and Stephen Plumb to our meeting tonight and look forward to working with both of them in the future.

In the past few weeks we have sadly lost one of our former Parish Council chairmen– Jean Cawrse who was chair from 1995 to 2007. Jean contributed greatly to the village over the years and I'm sure she will be sorely missed.

Last year we welcomed Stuart Palmer as our new clerk. Stuart, you have been incredible over the past year taking on the new data protection regulations and more recently the local elections. We thank you for all your hard work, help, guidance and of course patience! I hope that you enjoy working with us as much as we do with you.

Lastly but not least, I would like to thank all my fellow councillors – Dan, Ken, Gerry, Mike, Colin and Katie. As a relatively new councillor taking on the Chairmanship, you have given me your support, advice and guidance and shown great commitment over the past year. Thank you.

b. Finance Report

1. This is my first full year as Parish Clerk, closing the last financial year accounts and opening new accounts for 2019/20

Total Income for last financial year was £17,142.14 including the precept, £5,799.74 Community Infrastructure Levy (ringfenced funds) and interest. The Parish Council made payments to a total of £14,097.23. Funds of £8,592.90 were carried forward this year as follows:

Treasurers Account: £797.42
Business Account: £7795.48
Total Reserves: £8592.90

Of course, that includes £3256.29 of ring fenced CIL money leaving the PC actual operational reserves of £5336.61, slightly lower than the £5547.99 at the start of the year. This is a considerably better position than was budgeted for. The budget would have taken a further £1200 from reserves however the recycling costs recovered and use of CIL money to refurbish the hall budgeted at £1000 has managed to protect the reserves almost completely.

There was no borrowing last year. No tenancies entered into. The lease on the Village Hall runs to 2024. There was £5799.74 CIL money made to the council.

Budget for this year: A Budget was approved in November 2018 of £9519.00. The precept was set to raise an income of £9519.00. Total income for year estimated at £9519.00 meaning there should be no need to further draw from reserves.

3. Internal Controls. All finance practices follow the Financial Regulations adopted by the council and published on our website. They are managed by the Responsible Financial Officer and supervised by the councillors of the council

4. Audit: The Audit for last year will commence on 10th June, Once again, Suffolk Association of Local Councils is to be appointed. PFK Littlejohn LLP have been appointed to carry out the external audit of small local councils.

5. Planning: The Clerk has been busy working on planning applications submitted in the village on behalf of the Parish Council.

c. District Councillor Michael Holt and Stephen Plumb

Both councillors were recently re-elected to the Chadacre Ward and introduced themselves to parishioners and offered to help if anyone needed help with District Council issues.

d. County Councillor Richard Kemp

Cllr Kemp gave his 25th annual update to the village which is summarised below. A full version of his report is on the PC website.

Budget Cuts

We have a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget. Suffolk County Council's 2019-20 budget was agreed on Thursday 14 February. This will see an increase in council tax of 3.99%, and savings across the council's directorates totalling £10.1m. We set detailed financial targets for all of our services and we monitor spend against those targets throughout the year.

A particularly concerning cut was the decision to remove all grant funding from Citizens Advice. This will be phased over two years, with a 50% reduction in the 2019-20 budget (£0.184m). Fortunately, the CCGs stepped in and agreed to provide Citizens Advice with £184,000 in funding this year, to make up for the 50% funding cut from Suffolk County Council. Although this means Citizens Advice will not lose funding in 2019-20, it does not address the longer-term problem of funding in the future. The CCGs have been clear that this funding is only available for the 2019-20 financial year.

The budget also proposes staffing reductions across all directorates, totalling almost £3m. We do not currently have details of how these cuts will be distributed and which staff will be affected, but I am very concerned that this will result in less efficient services and an increase in stress amongst the remaining staff. We are also re-designing the way that we deliver services through a series of transformation programmes. These programmes are not just about the delivery of savings. They are intended to focus action on how the Council's services can be delivered differently in order to provide better outcomes for individuals and the community at lower cost.

Whilst I respect and understand the process and need for Budget restrictions, I have been very taken aback with the proposed cuts to CAB and I continue to support the challenge to these proposals at Suffolk County Council

New Council Leader and Chief Executive

In May, the Conservative group leadership changed and Cllr Matthew Hicks became the new Leader of Suffolk County Council. Cllr Hicks brought with him a number of new Cabinet members and established cross party "Policy Development Panels" (time-limited groups tasked with looking at a particular issue or policy). There have been a number of these PDPs to date, and it has been a good opportunity for backbench and opposition councillors to be involved in policy decisions.

Towards the beginning of the municipal year Suffolk County Council also appointed a new Chief Executive. Nicola Beach joined the council from Essex County Council, where she was Executive Director of Infrastructure and Environment.

Highways

After a long search, Mark Ash was appointed as the new Director of Growth, Highways and Infrastructure in January. He joined Suffolk County Council in February, having previously been the Director of Waste and Environment at Essex County Council.

In addition, Cllr Mary Evans took over as Cabinet member for Highways in May 2018. Response times for pothole repairs do seem to have improved, and a new policy for repairing potholes has been implemented that should improve efficiency.

As your County Councillor I have a small Highways Budget which can be used to support the parishes of Melford Ward. I have been very happy to fund a number SIDS/VAS pieces of equipment from this fund which hopefully will have an impact on the speed of vehicles in the various villages I cover and also improve the safety and quality of life for the residents

Locality Budget

As in previous years the locality budget has been used to support many groups and organisations as they offer a diverse range of activities, facilities and services within the communities of Melford Ward.

I am always happy to consider and discuss requests for funding towards costs of events, facilities, equipment or projects, please contact me if you would like further information.

Changes to School Transport Policy:

Since September 2017, I and my group have been fighting against changes to the council's School Transport Policy that would see numerous children losing free school transport. Despite two successful call-in attempts by my group and a lengthy delay to the policy change, it was finally agreed by Cabinet in July 2018.

The changes to the policy will be implemented in September 2019, and will see free school transport restricted to children who attend their nearest school only. Currently, children are also able to receive free school transport to their catchment schools, but this will no longer be an option under the new policy.

Although it is deeply disappointing that this change was made, I am glad that, through our consistent opposition to the policy, we were able to reduce the severity of the final policy change. The final policy that was agreed in July 2018 was much less damaging than the original proposal in September 2017. In particular, we were able to ensure that children who are currently attending a school will continue to receive free school transport until the end of their time at that school – thus reducing the upheaval and ensuring no child is forced to move schools in the middle of their education.

Suffolk County Council Campaigns:

Throughout the year Suffolk County Council has promoted and supported several campaigns in order to promote wellbeing, community caring and awareness and responsibility for the environment. These campaigns include:

Spring Clean Suffolk Campaign:

The Suffolk Waste Partnership was keen to support local community efforts to clean up towns, villages and our countryside, to help make Suffolk the Greenest County by getting involved in a litter pick during 2018.

Several groups across Suffolk took part to give their neighbourhoods a spruce-up, and, it is hoped that with more groups and individuals taking part this year, a real difference can be made. A litter pick not only improves the look of an area, it's a great way to get out and about, meet like-minded members of your local community, improve habitats and remove potential hazards for wildlife, and makes our county somewhere visitors will want to return to.

White Ribbon Domestic Abuse campaign:

Frequent absence, missed deadlines and unexplained bruises could all be signs of employees suffering domestic abuse, according to a toolkit recommended for Suffolk businesses. Employers were also reminded of their role in tackling the issue – thought to cost £1.9billion a year in decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages and sick pay. The toolkit was endorsed as part of the national White Ribbon campaign to end violence against women - launched locally at county council headquarters.

25 November was White Ribbon Day, an international day for the eradication of abuse against women.

White Ribbon is an international as well as national campaign aimed to stop domestic abuse against women – it calls for men to condemn such violence and for supporters to show their commitment by wearing a white ribbon. The campaign runs every year from 25 November to 10 December.

Women might be the primary victims of this type of assault but the Campaign encourages men to take a share of the responsibility in putting an end to abuse, however In Suffolk we support any victim no matter their gender.

Suffolk County Council Localities and Partnership Specialist Team works with the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership and with Suffolk Constabulary in support of White Ribbon Day. Work done in Suffolk to support male and women victims includes:

Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership has pledged to tackle violence against women and men by raising awareness of this issue with staff and partner organisations, and taking action to encourage victims to seek help. We have a long tradition of supporting local domestic abuse forums in each District and Borough and supporting specialist domestic abuse agencies in their work with victims.

Five ways to wellbeing campaign:

A five-a-day style health campaign was launched in Suffolk urging people to take action to look after their mental wellbeing.

Along with eating a good amount of fruit and vegetables, people in the county are being asked to consider what more they could do to stay healthy in mind as well as body.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) has started an initiative called Five Ways to Wellbeing.

The evidence-based framework sets out five steps people can take to improve their all-round health:

- Connect with others;
- Be active;
- Keep learning;
- Take notice;

The launch event was held at Endeavour House in Ipswich where SCC's director of Public Health and Protection, SCC's cabinet member for Health and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service area commander were joined by further council staff and partners including OneLife Suffolk.

Eat out, Eat well:

The Eat Out Eat Well Scheme recognises the work of food businesses (cafes, restaurants and staff canteens) who are making it easier for customers to make healthier choices when eating out. The scheme also lets customers search for Eat Out Eat Well recognised businesses.

Eating food out of the home is now a regular feature of busy lifestyles. More than a quarter of adults eat out once or more during the week. Making healthier food choices easier helps people maintain a healthy weight and reduces their risk of several long-term health conditions.

Businesses are assessed by environmental health teams against a set of standards linked to the types of ingredients they buy, how they prepare their food and how it's promoted to customers. There's an emphasis on using less fat, sugar and salt, making healthier menu changes and staff training.

Business's food hygiene rating and compliance with food legislation is also taken into account.

Depending on their score a business can be recognised by a gold, silver or bronze award .

Successful businesses are encouraged celebrate their success and display the award to customers.

Suffolk Roadsafe campaign:

The Suffolk Roadsafe partnership aims to reduce casualties in Suffolk and increase road safety awareness through education, enforcement and engineering.

The Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership brings together organisations involved with road safety in the county. Its aim is to reduce casualties on the road network. We provide advice and run awareness campaigns to help all road users stay safe.

This includes information for:

- pedestrians
- cyclists

- motorcyclists
- drivers

The Suffolk Roadsafe website has advice and information about our current campaigns. You can also use it to find:

- Bikeability cyclist training
- driver training
- GrandDriver scheme

The Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership runs a range of road safety courses. You can pay for a road safety training course online.

Thank You

Finally and most importantly I would like to take this opportunity to extend a wholehearted and sincere thank you to all of those marvellous volunteers who offer continued and sustained support, volunteers in the form of groups or individuals of all ages and abilities who contribute to our communities with their dedication and commitment in such a wide variety of ways.

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

– Elizabeth Andrew

e. Police Report

There was no police presence or report submitted despite requests by the clerk.

f. Village Hall – Marion Peck

The Village Hall Committee have met on 8 occasions during the year, to ensure good maintenance of the hall and surrounding area, manage bookings and arrange social events for the village.

Over the course of the last year, the electrics have been tested, two new fans installed and other minor electrical work carried out. The Parish Council paid for the outside of the hall to be re-painted. A new path now runs alongside the left hand side of the hall and the hole at the back of the building has now been filled. New bins have been bought, to ensure more efficient recycling and there is now paved standing for the outside bins to enable greater manoeuvrability. Members of the Committee have cleared weeds, raked over gravel in the car park and generally tidied the area.

Lettings at the hall are fairly consistent, with WI and Pilates Classes being the most frequent. The number of private functions remains at about the same level as other years. This year a Mother and Toddler Group began with weekly sessions and it is hoped that this will continue to run successfully. However, the Committee would like to see greater use of the hall, bringing more of our community together.

The Committee is happy to allow charities occasional, free use of the hall for fundraising purposes. We hope that a few more will avail themselves of this opportunity.

In November we arranged a celebration for the anniversary of the end of WW1. Themed as a 'street party' and decorated with bunting, the hall looked suitably apt and forty people came along to enjoyed a fish and chip supper, followed by apple pie and custard. Sallie Waldron led the singalong and a good time was had by all. We decided against a Village Meal at Christmas, with everyone being so busy and instead held the event at the Bush early in the new year. This was well supported and Team Bush did us proud, ensuring everyone had a very enjoyable afternoon.

In February, we held a belated Chinese New Year occasion, with a Chinese Buffet (although just a few opted for fish & chips). Once again, the event was well supported and everyone fully appreciated and enjoyed a great selection of food. As we had cancelled Vernon's quiz in October, we were pleased to be able to re-schedule for April. This is always a popular evening and so it proved to be once again.

The VHC welcomes new ideas for events. Old favourites will continue for as long as they are well supported. There are suggestions for mid-week talks, but cost of speakers remains a problem if support is limited.

Although we aim to make our events profitable, the most important thing is to bringing as many people as possible together, to enjoy themselves as part of our village community.

After agreeing that the village should have a defibrillator, the committee decided the best course of action was to set up a separate group for this and S.A.V.E was formed from some members of the VHC and others from within the community. Collections started at Shimpling Celebrates, with further fundraising and events to raise the necessary funds.

My thanks to all the members of the VHC for their ongoing support and others from within the community, who help to arrange and assist at events, particularly John Reynolds and Stuart Campan for their help at Shimpling Celebrates. For all the shopping, cooking, setting up and clearing afterwards; all the behind the scenes tasks that help to make a successful event, because they don't just happen.

Thanks to Stan Milsom, our treasurer for taking care of our finances, dealing with hall bookings, project managing the work that has been carried out and ensuring the rubbish and recycling are dealt with .In addition to maintenance of the village hall, members of the committee take on the day to day jobs of to ensure the hall is a welcoming and pleasant space for hall users, while carrying out regular risk assessments, in line with the Health & Safety policy.

The VHC would also like to thank those, not on the committee, who regularly give their time and assistance, particularly John Sinclair and Mark Beaver; Glenda Peck, a regular helper, has now joined the committee. However, we need to recruit other new members to bring fresh ideas to our programme. Meetings are held approximately every 6 -8 weeks.

g. WI – Stephanie Eady

It was reported that the WI had some entertaining and interesting speakers. The WI members attempted to make rag wreaths for Christmas. The Garden Meeting was held at Sue Tatum's this year. The garden looked beautiful on a very hot day. The August outing was to Fullers Mill garden at West Stow. Members have also gone on three theatre trips. The Pantomime was a hit and the WI return this year for Aladdin. The WI intend to celebrate their 10th birthday in November with a social evening, inviting members from over the years. We hope to continue on this year as successfully as last year.

h. Halifax Trust – Jenny Pine

The Halifax Trust was founded in 1863 and provides grants and bursaries prioritised as follows:

- The primary school serving the parish of Shimpling for special benefits of any kind not normally provided by the LEA.
- Bursaries for people under 25 who either attended Shimpling school or whose parents live in Shimpling
- If there are 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 during 2018/19 and bursaries and grants distributed to:

- Lawshall Primary School for music project
- Bursaries were up on last year. Eleven bursars studying away from home plus two late applications and seven living/studying from home were approved for payment.
- Halifax Trust helped one for 6th form travelling costs and equipment and books for one apprentice.

Chadacre Fete – a contribution towards staffing teas and BBQ was made to PCC.

Finance – All investments are regulated by Charity Commission and managed by CCLA with good performance. Annual income is in the region of £12,000. Applications for grants should be received by 30th September with notices appearing locally.

i. PCC of St Georges Church – (Report by Charlotte Blyth read out by Chair)

During 2018 at St. George's, Shimpling we maintained the pattern of fortnightly services (alternating with services at Alpheton.) The services are at 9am – Alpheton on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, and Shimpling on the 2nd and 4th. All details are available on our website or in the Shimpling News.

On 31st December 2018 the church's electoral roll comprised 45 members, 44 of whom live in the ecclesiastical parish i.e. Alpheton and Shimpling.

The average attendance remained roughly the same as in previous years. At 'normal' services, excluding festivals, it was 15, and rose to about 120 at the Carol Service.

Though we don't regularly have children at the services there is always provision for children at the 10:30 service in Melford each week, and the main festival services are always 'family-friendly'.

In April 2018 we sadly held the funeral of dear Jo Pugh at St George's.

During the year there were no baptisms or weddings at the church.

We experimented with a few different ways of 'doing church' last year, aware that a 9am traditional service doesn't suit everyone.

These included a more informal 10:30 'Bacon Butty' service at Shimpling Village Hall, where there was the opportunity to ask questions, and discuss matters of faith.

We also had a Family Harvest Festival with games at Alpheton Village Hall, Carol Singing around Shimpling, and readings and carols at Shimpling Christmas Market.

As ever our events during 2018 were in their nature both fundraisers and community events.

They notably included the Spring and Christmas Markets at Shimpling VH, a Summer Concert at St George's, the annual Harvest Supper, and of course the splendid four-yearly Chadacre Estate Fete, which was a hugely encouraging demonstration of the goodwill that the parishioners have towards our churches.

After several years of very effective fundraising for our two churches the 100 Club was wound-up until such a time as there is a renewed enthusiasm for it.

This report related to the 2018 calendar year, but it would be remiss not to take the opportunity to thank Graham Bonson for all of his efforts as both treasurer and churchwarden in Alpheton and Shimpling, after a period totalling 11 years in each of those roles.

At our APCM in April 2019 Graham stood down as churchwarden (having already passed the treasurer hat on to Sue Fahie-Wilson a while ago) and we would just like to thank him for being so generous with his time and talents over the years and wish him a happy retirement from his church responsibilities.

As a result of this change any enquiries on church matters can be made through the warden Charlotte Blyth, the secretary Liz Brunwin, any of the elders: Malcolm Brunwin, Richard (and Charlotte) Blyth, or directly to Matthew the Rector. All these details are available in the village newsletter.

Anyone is welcome to attend any of our services, or the 'home group' which meets at 5 Gents Lane on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month.

Cllr Brunwin closed the Annual Parish Assembly by thanking everyone for their contributions to the village and to the assembly this evening.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 8.15pm.