

Cockfield Parish Council Meeting Report

The Parish Council met on Thursday 24th November 2011

The Chairman opened the meeting by announcing that Bez Baker has offered her resignation from the Council on personal grounds - the resignation being regretfully accepted. This will result in a vacancy on the Council and the necessary notice has been posted. Anyone interested in serving on the Council should contact the Clerk, who will provide details

The Parish Council has agreed a parish precept of £13,500 for the year from April 2012 to March 2013. Given the current economic circumstances this action was taken after serious consideration, but we are confident that this precept represents exceptional value for the village. This year we are purchasing a further stretch of the old railway line and an additional meadow to compliment Earl's Meadow. Although the majority of the cost of this came from external grants and funding, it nevertheless ate into the Council's financial reserves - it however represented an opportunity, which we thought was too good to miss, for the village to acquire additional assets and which we hope will be there for the benefit of all of us and future generations. Next year the village will be inviting all residents to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a meal and entertainment on Great Green - again, this will require a contribution from the reserves which we will have to replenish

PCSO Alex Vinter reported that since our September meeting there have been two instances of motorists being charged with driving with excess alcohol in the village, and one instance of criminal damage to a vehicle in a car park on Bury Road

A major concern to a number of villagers is the speed at which vehicles drive through the village, particularly in the Felsham Road, Great Green and Chapel Road areas. Two members of the public attended with concerns regarding speeding, one of whom recounted a near miss involving a speeding vehicle which could have resulted in serious injury to herself and her child whilst walking alongside Great Green. The Parish Council had previously requested the Police to increase enforcement actions in the areas concerned, and on 12th November, following an earlier speed watch survey (5 vehicles clocked at between 36 and 45 mph), one fixed penalty notice was issued to a driver travelling at 40 mph and 3 cautions were issued (unhappily 2 of these cautions were issued to residents of Cockfield). Everyone is reminded that the speed limits in the village are there for the safety of everyone and it is in all our interests to observe them. The Police will continue with their enforcement actions

Our County Councillor, Jeremy Pembroke, advised that the County Highways Department could survey the areas concerned to investigate any possible practical speed reduction actions. He also suggested that the Parish Council consider setting up a community speed watch

Mr Pembroke continued by reporting that Suffolk County Council has to budget to save £50 million over the next 2 years. There will be no increase in the county's part of our council tax and the intention is to achieve the savings without reducing services, noting that Suffolk is already amongst the most cost effective councils in the country

Suffolk libraries will be run by a stand alone charitable company, with responsibility for strategy remaining with the Council. Mobile libraries will be maintained, but will visit monthly instead of fortnightly

The County Highways contract has been re-let (in conjunction with Norfolk CC), which will save £20 million over 10 years

Our District Councillor, Clive Arthey, was unable to attend the meeting, but advised us that there will be no increase in the Babergh DC part of our council tax

Mr Arthey had also advised us that Suffolk is achieving 54% recycling, which is the 5th best in the country - the best being 55%

The Parish Council has considered the proposed Babergh Core Strategy and agrees that it will support the strategy as presented

Members of the Paris Council attended a Consultation Evening at Cockfield School on 14th November where the County Council presented proposals for changes to the future of education in the area. After due consideration it was felt that further clarification of funding and logistical issues is required before Parish Council support can be given

The Council is monitoring the performance of the Suffolk Link bus service and has made contact with Hadleigh Community Transport to understand the operating constraints. We will be contacting users in the near future to consider their experiences

The First Responder project is moving forward with a number of volunteers already signed up and others waiting to do so

The Council noted that the War Memorial was in an excellent condition for the memorial service on 11th November. Thanks are due to Mrs Rose and Rodney Williams for their efforts with the gardens and also to Mark Thacker for cleaning the memorial. The service, attended by pupils and staff from Cockfield School and a number of residents was very moving and reflected our thanks to those who gave there lives for us in service of the country

The Parish Council may be contacted through the Clerk, Alan Morgan on 01284 828072

RJP