

Cockfield Parish Council Meeting Report

The Parish Council met on Thursday 28th November 2013

Following the resignation of Councillor Kelly, Babergh District Council have confirmed that the vacancy has been advertised for the statutory period of time and, there being no nominations, the Parish Council is free to co-opt a replacement. Councillors were invited to identify any suitable candidates

PCSO Jamie Fudge attended the meeting and was pleased to report only 1 crime in the village between 24th September and 25th November, a public order offence at a sporting event which was settled through community resolution. He noted that the Police are pleased with the decrease in crime in the area, but added that there have been instances in both Acton and Lavenham of fuel lines on 'Transit' type vans being disconnected, fuel drained and the fuel lines reconnected – owners of such vehicles are warned to be alert

The Babergh Safer Neighbourhood team has identified its current priorities as speeding in Chelsworth and parking at Boxford School. The next priority setting meeting will take place at 11 am on 14th January at Assington Village Hall

It was reported that with the involvement of a new individual at Babergh District Council, we are hopeful that our discussions regarding local housing needs may now be able to move forward

The purchase of additional land adjoining Earl's Meadow is showing signs of moving forward with a site visit by Suffolk County Council officials planned in the immediate future

County Councillor Jenny Antill reported that the Council is required to save £156 million over the next 4 years, with £38 million required in 2014/5. These savings will be achieved through a gain of £9 million from the Gt Blakenham 'energy from waste' plant and savings in Social Services, capital spending and outside contracts. An agreement on joint working with Norfolk County Council should result in 'back office' savings

Education standards remains a concern in the county. Although exam results are improving faster than the national average, a recent intensive inspection of 33 schools resulted in Ofsted expressing disappointment that there has been no improvement in the number of schools judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding'. Mrs Antill did note that this may not be altogether surprising as the recommendations of the 'Raising the Bar' report are only just being implemented

The County Council continues to oppose tolling of the improved A14, and has made a contribution of £1 million to the improvement scheme in order to enable it to take part in discussions whilst maintaining its opposition

Two events have been planned concerning consultation on the provision of home care – these will be in Hadleigh (Library) on 18th December and Lavenham (Village Hall) on 19th December, between 10 am and noon. These events are open to anyone with an interest in the subject

The Council remains on track to bring a minimum of 2 mbs broadband across the county, and faster high speed broadband to 85% of the county by the end of 2015. Further government funding is being sort to improve this latter figure to 95%

Mrs Antill concluded by saying that she has been invited by Mrs Harkin, the headmistress, to visit Cockfield School and intends to do so in January

Clive Arthey, our District Councillor, was unable to attend but provided a report

Work is continuing to integrate Babergh and Mid Suffolk services – the emphasis is on delivering services in better and more cost effective ways, which may involve things we do being done more effectively by others or even not at all. The main driver is cost as the councils strive to balance the budget with reducing government grants

The Babergh Core Strategy has been delayed and is expected to be presented for approval by the Council in January. It looks likely the proposal for 40% of housing growth in 'core' and 'hinterland' villages will remain in the plan, the aim being to address the particular housing needs of communities and protect facilities whilst also helping to satisfy the district's housing requirements

Although our recycling performance is amongst the best in the UK, there are still recyclable plastics, glass and textiles in black bin waste. If we could get just 1% of household waste out of the black bin and into the blue we could save Suffolk's Council Tax payers £200,000 a year. Please make a special effort over Christmas to keep recyclables out of your black bin and take all those empty bottles to a bottle bank

The issue of willow trees in Dukes Meadow which have outgrown the area remains unresolved. Mr Arthey is pursuing the issue with the appropriate district council officers. The Parish Council expressed its support for the residents of Dukes Meadow who are campaigning for the replacement of these trees with specimen which are more appropriate

The Greens Committee reported that they are still working on the provision of dog bins

It was reported that children from the School recently spent a morning in Earls Meadow planting English Bluebells. Thanks are due to the Earls Meadow helpers who prepared the site and attended on the day and also to the teachers, helpers and parents who came along. The children enjoyed the experience and will hopefully see the results of their labours in the spring

Efforts continue to improve the footpath between Howe Lane and the Church, and the tree across the Abbey footpath has been reported to the County Council

Mr Williams was thanked for his efforts in repairing the war memorial in time for the Armstice Day service

It was reported that the repair of potholes has commenced with the introduction of a new contactor. Mrs Antill advised that she has a meeting scheduled with the Highways Department in the near future at which she will monitor progress. She was asked by the Parish Council to follow up progress on the plan to improve the safety of pedestrians waiting for Sudbury bound buses at Mill Corner

Speeding in the village remains an issue. Whilst the Parish Council are considering the options to control speeding in terms of highway engineering, it was again noted that the education of drivers is the most effective way of resolving this issue. Speed limits are there to protect all road users – please obey them to make life safer for all of us

It was observed that (dog) walkers in Windsor Green are carrying torches and wearing hi-viz jackets during the hours of darkness, making the area safer for both themselves and motorists

During the recent St Judes day gales, a large part of the village was without electricity for up to 27 hours. The Emergency Planning Officer noted that the biggest issue arising from this event was the inability of anyone to contact UK Power Networks and obtain information as to the predicted duration of the power outage. This has been reported to the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Team who have committed to find ways to improve communication between communities and the Emergency Services/utilities providers during such events

Following the death of Vera Lloyd, Brenda Dyer has agreed to become the Village Recorder

An additional Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday 19th December to discuss the Paris Precept for 2014/5. The Parish Council will meet on the 23rd January 2014 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall - please note this is a change of date from the scheduled meeting of the 30th January 2014.

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

RJP