



BRANTHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES
18 May 2022

PRESENT: 5 Members of the public
Simon Harley (County Councillor)
Sarah Keys (Parish Clerk)

CHAIR: Mr A McCraw (AM)

1. APOLOGIES

None

2. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chair of Brantham Parish Council welcomed all those present to the first Annual Parish meeting in Brantham since the start of the COVID Pandemic.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE PARISH CUP

Each year the Parish Cup is presented at the Annual Parish Council meeting to someone/group in Brantham whom the Parish Council believe to have made a significant contribution towards improving the conditions of life of the community residing in Brantham and the surrounding neighbourhood. This year the Parish Council have unanimously agreed to present the cup to Ruth Clark from the Brantham Scout and Guide Group for her long commitment to the scouting movement in the local area and for working so hard to create enjoyable opportunities and experiences for so many young people in the village.

The Parish Council extended its thanks and congratulations to Ruth for all her hard work and the Chair presented her with the cup.

4. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT'S

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

An annual Village meeting is a requirement of the Local Government Acts that we have been unable to fulfil in recent years. In 2019, we had just had the last election and in 2021 and 2022, Covid Restrictions made it both impossible and inadvisable.

In some ways, tonight is a going to be a progress report to cover most of the period of this elected Council. There are some themes that have emerged over this time. Early in 2019, it was recognised that we needed to provide more structured support to the Village Hall and tackle long standing structural problems in this 100-year-old building. At the time some reports were commissioned and discussion on actions available started.

The second theme has been in dealing with the changes made by Covid. The PC were amongst the first to spring into action in 2020 by actively sanitising all our play equipment in line with government regulations. That was just the tip of the iceberg. Later, in lockdown and in everyday matters, Covid came to dominate all our thinking. In our community, in the Council, in facilities and in maintenance of services. It's unlikely that outside, WWII, any similar local bodies have ever had to adapt so quickly and far reachingly.

I'd like to pay tribute to everybody involved here at Brantham PC for rising to the need for responsible action to encourage the same everywhere. Just like the community, we did our bit and then we did more.



There will be further reference to specific changes made later, but I have to remind everybody of the flexibility shown in adapting to online meetings. Essential statutory work never stopped and we continued to look for opportunities and improvements wherever possible.

The third theme arises out of our common interests in the community. Building and expanding on existing relationships with other Village bodies and groups. Covid made our interconnectedness more obvious than ever and you will hear of examples where we have been able to foster this. It's an ongoing process, never over, but it offers real hope for the future.

I can't really describe one of our principal jobs as a theme. A Parish Council carries out certain functions. We need to make sure we can do that. Litter needs to be collected, dog bins and litter bins need to be emptied, signage repaired, maintenance, repairs, grass cutting, the day-to-day activities. All those bits are what people notice, and so they should. But they don't just happen. They need organising and we are extremely lucky that we have active residents, councillors and a Clerk who always seem to be paying attention.

In the rest of this meeting, you will hear brief reports from the following:

- Alastair McCraw on behalf of Eric Osben, Chair of the Finance Committee who will report on our overall Financial position, major financial decisions made and grants given to support village activity.
- Sarah Keys on behalf of Jackie Heywood, Chair of Recreation and Services who will do the same to cover some of the more visible work improving play equipment, bus stops and the like.
- Sarah Keys on behalf of Jackie Heywood to provide a short summary of where we stand with the Village Hall Management Committee and the Hall itself now that it is back in full operation.
- Mal Bridgeman, Chair of Planning Committee will summarise the PC's ability to influence Planning Applications and development in general, reporting on some positive actions taken, even though our views are only considered advisory.

REPORT FROM CHAIR OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (PRESENTED BY CLLR MCCRAW ON BEHALF OF CLLR OSBEN)

The Parish Council finances are healthy. The Parish Council provided support for the Leisure Centre during the COVID pandemic with a rent holiday.

The Parish Council has provided financial contributions to the following local groups:

- Repairs to the Church Lychgate
- Purchase of SIDs
- Methodist Church
- Community Garden
- Bowls Club
- Suffolk Accident Rescue Service
- Citizens Advice
- Brantham Village Hall
- Brantham Jubilee event at Brantham Leisure Centre

A number of new Dog Litter bins have been purchased.

Funding has been provided for the set up of the Brantham Open Spaces Group with the purchase of equipment and the provision of training.



Commemorative Jubilee mugs have been purchased for local children at Brooklands and Constable Country Childcare provision.

New Play equipment has been purchased for the Lower Playing Field.

REPORT FROM CHAIR OF THE BPC RECREATION, SERVICES AND FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE:

In July 2020 the play areas were re-opened after lockdown and the cleaning and sanitising of the play equipment was undertaken by some councillors.

Our S.106 funding request for the provision of new play equipment at the Lower Playing Field was approved by Babergh District Council. We bought a teen shelter, a cone climber and a nest swing and these were installed by Action, Play and Leisure in November 2020. AP&L also carried out some repairs to equipment at Gravel Pit Lane while they were in the village. These repairs were to comply with recommendations following professional inspections of all three play areas. Repairs to the Gravel Pit Lane bus shelter were undertaken by Adrian Cherry in the autumn of 2020.

Early in 2021 we were able to source free litter picking equipment from Babergh District Council for use by the village and it is now being stored in the Village Hall.

In January 2021 three re-constituted plastic picnic table and bench sets were installed, two at Gravel Pit Lane and one at Merriam Close. Following the popularity of these picnic sets it was agreed to purchase three more for the Lower Playing Field.

In February 2021 the vandalised fencing at Gravel Pit Lane play area was repaired. We also agreed to appoint Dave Childs as our new grounds maintenance contractor.

The new fingerpost plaques were received and installed by Cllr. Osben in July 2021. It was agreed that Cllrs. Osben and McCraw would attend a meeting with Network Rail regarding the level crossing.

In November 2021 the litter bin in the lay-by at Cattawade was re-sited to a more suitable position by Adrian Cherry. In December a memorial bench, purchased by a local resident in memory of her late mother, was installed at the Lower Playing Field and a new larger litter bin was purchased for that area.

The Parish Council approved the installation of a wildflower meadow at the end of the Merriam Close play area by a local resident in partnership with Utility Warehouse.

A litter picking project was carried out in the village by some young people involved in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Following Storm Eunice earlier this year an impromptu litter pick took place in parts of the village.

In March new turf was laid in the area prepared to receive the new climbing equipment by Wicksteed and the turf was kept watered during the dry spell by a representative from the Scout and Guide movement. Finally the equipment was installed by Wicksteed in April.

We have also worked with the Fireworks' Committee from the Leisure Centre to ensure that the site of the bonfire from last year's Firework Night Party has been levelled and re-seeded.



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REPORT FROM CHAIR OF THE BPC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Bridgeman informed those present that the BPC Planning Committee meets once a month at Brantham Village Hall. Each meeting considers the Planning applications and decision notices from Babergh District Council. BPC is able to influence and highlight issues to the District Council.

In 2020-21 BPC considered 29 planning applications and commented on 9 of these. In 2021-22 BPC considered 29 planning applications and commented on 9 of them.

The main considerations for the Parish Council over recent years have been:

- The affordable housing at Gravel Pit Lane
- Church Field/Land South of Ipswich Road – the responses received from Brantham Parish Council have been instrumental in the delays of this Planning Application.
- Land South of Slough Road – this was rejected in 2020 by BDC but later approved at appeal by the Planning Inspector. BPC have been able to influence the design of this application. For example as a result of comments received from BPC they are now slightly more 1.5 height houses on the plan and each dwelling will include a charging point for electric vehicles.

5. ANNUAL REPORT 21/22 TO THE PARISH COUNCILS OF PENINSULA DIVISION FROM SIMON HARLEY (SCC COUNCILLOR)

In May 2021 GLI Group becomes Official Opposition

Since last year's County Council Elections, the Suffolk Green Liberal Democrat & Independent Group have been tasked with trying to hold the Conservative administration to account. The Conservatives having a strong majority with 55 seats out of 75, but we have been able to bring forward questions & motions throughout the year and challenge them to do the best for Suffolk.

Annual Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined

Suffolk County Council voted in their budget for 2022-23. Our Group were concerned that the budget relied too heavily on transformation savings, and that the Conservative's did not take the maximum social care precept to fund adult care allowed by Government.

Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology that can lower bills.

No Carbon Budget for Scrutiny

Conservatives brought forward the first Carbon Budget for Suffolk, but it wasn't part of the main budget so wasn't put through the Scrutiny process in the same way. The Carbon Budget is aimed to help us understand the level of emissions the Council are responsible for and helps to achieve the Council's ambition of being carbon-neutral by 2030. It is important the Carbon Budget is scrutinised, as there are many issues with data collection and performance measures that weren't addressed. Our Group raised concerns about this and has been assured that this will form part of the general budget process for next year.

Levelling Up: A Devolution Deal for Suffolk?

The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for



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their communities for the first time. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However, we are concerned about a potential Mayoral position created in Suffolk and the effect this may have on marginalising districts in Suffolk.

Report into SEND Provision: Review & Recommendations

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision. The report found severe failings in the delivery of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans for children, serious issues in communicating with parent/guardians, as well as an inefficient work environment within the service.

The scrutiny committee have met since the report to listen to lead officers within the service and parents, debate necessary changes, and submit recommendations for improvement. This included extended training, newly appointed managerial posts, and new accountability structures to help deal with the issues outlined in the previous report.

Bus Back Better: Initiative from the Department for Transport (DfT)

The Bus Back Better scheme was launched this year, aimed at updating, expanding, and improving our bus services in Great Britain. The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council approved a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submitted to Government, while Suffolk County Council still wait for DfT to confirm the final funding. However we have recently been told that the budget for this scheme has been significantly cut by the government. All proposals of the BSIP that were passed by Cabinet can be viewed here: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

Biodiversity Recommendations to Enhance

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirmed plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Our Group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council's ambitions moving forward to enhance biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

Sizewell C: Where are we now?

Our Group has asked searching questions regarding this project, arguing the environmental and socio-economic impacts on local communities are far too great. The Government announced their strategy to retain investors, by shifting the costs of Sizewell C onto consumers, in the form of a taxpayer subsidy known as a 'Regulated Asset Base' funding strategy.

Our Group rejected this strategy, and strongly recommended that the Government reconsiders before it puts the burden of cost onto our local communities, and instead looks into investing in cleaner, cheaper, safer and quicker forms of renewable energy available to Suffolk. Suffolk County Council have announced their general support for Sizewell C but have taken up 'important concerns' to the Secretary of State.

New Investment in Drainage and Footway Infrastructure

The Cabinet approved £10m to replace broken pipes and new installations, as well as an additional £10m to increase the maintenance of selected footways in Suffolk.

Lorry Route Map Review in Suffolk: Interactive Map to be Published

Suffolk County Council undertook a review of recommended lorry routes across the county; the first major review of the network since 2011. Suffolk County Council invited parish and town councils for their views, and to provide up to three



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routes where they believe HGV traffic has the highest impact on their communities. The review will be completed in Spring 2022 where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For further information, please contact lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk,

Local Electricity Bill: Suffolk GLI Motion Passed by Council

A motion submitted by our Group ask Suffolk County Council to support the Local Electricity Bill, which is a proposed Bill waiting to be debated in Parliament for its Second Reading, was passed unanimously by the Council. The Bill seeks to localise energy supply, making local electricity cheaper, more reliable, and community based. Details of the motion and Local Electricity Bill can be found here: <https://powerforpeople.org.uk/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-councillors>

Councillor's Locality Budget:

County Councillors have a Locality Budget through which they can make recommendations to Suffolk County Council to put funds towards local projects.

In the last year I have recommended funding for a number of projects across the Peninsula including: Lantra training for power tools, play equipment, speed indicator devices, bench seats, village hall projectors, Repair Café equipment, defibrillator training and a Community Shop venture. Other projects in the pipeline include helping local students with a mental health project.

If you are involved in similar local projects this coming year, and would like to be considered for a grant, please let me know.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr McCraw reported that he is now a member of Cabinet and therefore part of the decision-making process. As a result he has been able to promote many Brantham issues at Babergh District Council.

Cllr McCraw highlighted the following local highlights:

- The affordable housing at Gravel Pit Lane is now completed and occupied
- The Brantham Open Space will be managed by Babergh District Council in the future. Handover will take place once St Francis Group have discharged all of the outstanding conditions in this area
- Brantham Place is now under construction and Cllr McCraw continues to work with the developers to ensure that this development is handled well.

7. VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

We have had a fairly busy year with many changes taking place. We appointed Lou and Martin Madley as our new cleaning contractors who also carry out minor maintenance work. We have also taken on a regular window cleaner.

Stacey Duffett has been appointed as our Village Hall Manager, overseeing the day-to-day running of the hall, taking bookings, issuing invoices and generally making the hall a more welcoming and attractive venue. Stacey is very enthusiastic and has become an extremely efficient and valued member of the team.

The hall currently has a good number of regular bookings and is in use virtually every day.

Following the pandemic we have received approximately £18,000 in grants from Babergh District Council which has enabled us to pay for the removal of the asbestos on the walls of the boiler room. We received four quotes for this work and agreed to employ Advanced Asbestos Contractors to carry out this work for £2,750.00. The rest of the money has been put away for support in the future.



At the beginning of 2020 it was agreed by Brantham Parish Council that they would give £250 a month to the Village Hall to help with the finances in view of the ongoing maintenance problems. Cllr McCraw asked a Babergh Building Control officer to view the various reports that we received before the pandemic on the condition of the hall, to establish what would be required of the committee to do with that information. It was suggested that we should commission a viability / feasibility study to review our options for the future of the hall. Sarah has been able to employ the services of an architect through Suffolk ProHelp, which is a countywide network of businesses which provide professional and strategic support, free of charge, to voluntary organisations. This survey has been carried out and we are currently awaiting the architect's report.

The committee organised our first fundraising Quiz Night in more than two years, and this was held last Saturday, 14th May. It was extremely successful with about 100 contestants, and we made a profit of just under £700.

8. REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

REPORT FROM BRANTHAM SCOUT AND GUIDES

Julie Price reported that the COVID pandemic had massively impacted the Scout and Guide community, but the Brantham leaders were very versatile. As a result the group held on to 95% of its members.

There are currently approximately 90 young people in Brantham involved in Scout and Guiding with 7 Young Explorers. The group received a business disruption loan during the pandemic which helped during COVID.

JPrice extended thanks to the Parish Council for the grass cutting undertaken at the Scout and Guide Hut. The lawn is now looking really good.

The existing hut is now in a very bad state of repair and a new building is needed. JPrice extended her thanks to the Parish Council for the existing tenancy agreement for the current Hut and for the agreed extension to the land if necessary. The group has also been offered some land along Factory Lane as part of the S106 agreement for the development at the Brantham Regeneration area and the group is currently reviewing this option to ensure that they can arrive at the best option for the group. However, progress in this area remains slow.

The group is currently working with Brantham Leisure Centre on those areas where there might be congruence in terms of needs and this partnership may develop in the future.

Any future facility will be available for the local community to use during the daytime.

REPORT FROM BRANTHAM LEISURE CENTRE

BLC Mission Statement **'To provide a Venue for all age groups to be active in their community'**.

BLC is a Community Interest Company. Not for Profit. Independently audited and prepared accounts.

The Directors are Custodians of this of the organisation so that it develops and improves to be there for future generations.



Business gradually returned to normality following COVID in Q1 2022 after an unprecedented extended period. The stop start nature stressed tested finances as Staff returned from Furlough however Customers returned slowly on a small scale.

The COVID Period was a period of great difficulty for all our members. We have achieved the following through that 22 month period:

- Created a safe venue by screening, drinks served to table.
- Repeated updates of Distancing Policies and Risk Assessments to address changing Legislation.
- We sought to support financially stressed sections by discounted member fees. This to compensate for their reduced playing/access time to facilities. This to ensure their viability and subsequent return following COVID.
- The Community however were galvanised under BLC Umbrella. The Initiative to provide free School Meals to support the Marcus Rashford Initiative being one fantastic example of Community Action.

Over past 12 months we have delivered the following new features:

- Created enlarged Management Offices
- Enlarged Members External Drinks Garden
- Introduced an External Table Tennis Table
- New Pitch Side Fencing
- New Coffee Station
- New Pizza Oven
- New Bar Furniture
- New First Floor Furniture
- Redecoration of First Floor Suite

We have plans to complete the following additional features:

- We have a design, costs, and grant application in for a Lift to the First Floor.
- We have a design and part grant funds secured for external cladding to improve the look and perspective of the development.
- We have a design and quotation for resurfacing the car parks.

We have a full diary of Events:

- The Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – Thursday 2nd June - Plans are in full swing and bunting arriving daily! The programme of events covers the afternoon including music and performance. With the help of BATS, setting the scene, we will stage a big MAD HATTERS TEA PARTY.
- Upcoming Brantham Fun Run 29th July 2022.
- Stour Valley Marathon
- Bergholt Bomb Along
- Brantham Bonfire
- Spiritual Monthly Club

We host:



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- Full Kitchen Breakfast
- TOTS @ BLC - a structured playgroup for early years.
- KIDS @ BLC. - social activities aimed at primary school aged children
- TEENS @ BLC - recently opening a PIZZERIA employing local teenagers and offering experience in business set up.
- Pilates
- Steff Fit
- Pool Teams
- Cricket
- FA Chartered Football Club – Youth/Junior/ Senior / Ladies / Girls – 22 Teams – 400 Players
- Director of Ladies & Women's Football appointed to grow game.
- Bowls Club with 60 plus Members
- Slimmer's World
- Book Club
- Running Club with 60 Members

What's planned:

- YOUTH CLUB @ BLC - over the next few weeks we will be announcing the new youth club to Brantham. We have managed to get a grant for two table tennis tables. We have kindly been donated a football table, pool table, darts table by St Michaels Church too.
- OVER 60's LUNCH CLUB - over the next month we will be scheduling dates in the diary for this to encourage socialisation in the village. There will also be fitness classes.

Summary:

Over 700 people per week actively utilise the facilities.

It has been a very difficult period for the Centre. We are extremely grateful to Local Government through COVID particularly business interruption loans.

We have a burgeoning Diary of Events largely down to the combined Efforts of Louise Madley and Tony Hall.

The beating heart of BLC remains strong despite everything.

The immediate challenge is to support families and those on low incomes through this period of high inflation by providing good quality meals at low prices and the minimum possible expenditure. By providing a venue where they can relax and still have access to premium TV services if the budgetary restraints no longer allow.

Trying to provide pitches for 22 Football Teams and 400 Players is a huge ongoing challenge. The new extended playing surface facilities area urgently sought.

We seek to work with and alongside local government to provide the highest quality venue for the people of Brantham.

9. QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS



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Parish Council

Julie Price queried the availability of CIL funding for major projects and received advice from Cllr McCraw.

Cllr McCraw closed the meeting by thanking the following people:

- Tina Bird and Phil Wainwright – the village Litter Pickers who do a fantastic job of maintaining the excellent appearance of the village.
- Dave Childs – the BPC Grounds Maintenance Contractor
- Adrian Cherry for maintenance of the village SIDs and other work around the village
- All of the groups and volunteers in the village who work hard to make the village a pleasant place to live
- The Parish Clerk

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

Meeting Finished at 8.15pm

Signed.....Date.....