



BRANTHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES
10 April 2025

PRESENT: 16 Members of the public
Alastair McCraw (District Councillor)
Parish Councillors Donaldson, Heywood and Osben
Sarah Keys (Parish Clerk)
Fi Coley (Assistant Parish Clerk)

CHAIR: Mr M Bridgeman (MB)

1. APOLOGIES

Simon Harley (County Councillor)

2. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chair of Brantham Parish Council welcomed all those present to the Annual Parish meeting and provided an overview of the purpose and history of the Annual Parish Meeting.

A one-minute silence was observed in memory of Brantham resident Anita Rose.

3. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

All Parish Councils in England are required by law to hold an Annual Parish Meeting between March 1 and June 30 each year and must not start before 6 o'clock in the evening or be held in premises licences for the sale of alcohol. The meeting allows the Parish Council and local Community Organisations to explain what they have been doing over the past year and what plans they might have for the coming year. It is also the forum for electors to have their say on anything which they consider important to the people of the parish.

Anyone may attend but only registered electors may ask questions. An elector may also make suggestions and comment on anything pertinent to the people of Brantham - this will be welcomed and it is the whole purpose of the meeting. Normally the Chairperson of the Parish Council will chair the meeting

Parish Council Report

The work of the Parish Council is essentially split two ways; the day to day business (we call that keeping the lights on) and project work, aimed at making Brantham a better place to live. So first up is "Keeping the lights on":

These tasks are many and varied and we are grateful to have a fantastic Clerk who just takes care of this stuff with minimal hassle!

- A number of street signs have been refreshed
- We've experienced Anti-Social behaviour and other matters where the CCTV we installed previously has proven invaluable
- Grit Bins, Fly tipping and Dog litter bins are a regular feature
- We've fully embraced online banking and moved to gov.uk email addresses



- Finally to enable the Clerk to focus more on the project work we've recruited an Assistant Clerk and welcomed Fiona to the team.

Planning - it's been a largely quiet year with applications mostly focusing on single dwelling extensions although the Taylor Wimpy application to replace 2 & 3 bedroom house with 4 & 5 bedroom houses plus the recent request to build 49 dwellings on the Land South of Brooklands Road have involved greater effort

As well as the day to day work we also carry out more long-term projects and following the consultation with the village in 2023, 2024 saw us develop an ambitious 10-year plan which we call Brantham 2034.

The main pillars of that plan are:

1. Buildings and Land
2. Outdoor Spaces
3. Community
4. Infrastructure

Each pillar has a breakdown of short, medium and long term aims and during our decision making we try to ensure we are furthering our ambition in these areas - to deliver on the things the village told us they wanted.

So firstly, in **Buildings and Land** we have the Village Hall where we approved the formal request from the Village Hall Management Committee to become the Sole Trustee of the Village Hall.

Next up is the Leisure Centre where this year saw us complete the work to re-design and renovate the area in front of the Leisure Centre - with trees in place, no parking signs and regular grass cutting - whilst there's still work to do to eliminate the parking it's certainly a big improvement there.

Our three play areas form part of this pillar too. We commissioned an improved foot path alongside the Merriam Close play area and have managed the tree canopies as well as carrying out regular safety audits.

Affordable housing is the final string to this bow where we have taken the first steps to build affordable housing in the village for people with a strong Brantham connection. Every house in the village last month received a Housing Needs Survey and I would encourage you to ensure your voice is heard by completing that either in the paper form or online.

Outdoor spaces and green areas

The proposed Skate Park has dominated our progress here, led fantastically by Cllr Abi Edevane. She initially set up an event earlier in the Summer which was beaten by the British weather, but the 2nd attempt was a great success and confirmed our desire to press ahead. We have some initial designs for the park, have planning and environmental clearance and are now fundraising amongst local parishes, districts and other sporting financial resources.

We will continue to take every opportunity to plant flowers and Trees

Brantham as a safe space

This is just getting off the ground but we have already held a public meeting with Kate, our PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) which has resulted in our litter pickers creating a diary of anti-social occurrences which will be fed into the Police in order that they can take further action.



Our Play areas are covered by CCTV and we will use that footage as and when it's needed.

Community and Engagement

Village Events

For the Day 80 celebrations we commissioned a beacon brazier and held an event at which over 100 villagers amassed in the Lower Playing Field to hear speeches and poems designed to remember those who gave their lives back in 1944.

We installed a memorial plaque for Kay Eastwood on a bench in Palfrey Heights.

We installed the first Brantham Christmas Tree at the Village Sign and with such positive feedback we are now aided by a resident who is helping us create little seasonal displays there aimed to raise a smile as you drive past. We plan to plant a tree at the village sign to act as a living structure for future displays

We have a lot of other things under way which should reach fruition during the 2025/26 year..... watch this space!!

Infrastructure

Another area where we will deliver more in coming years, but we did lodge a number of complaints with Suffolk CC and highways regarding the state of the A137 which may or may not have been behind the plan to resurface the road in a couple of weeks

I hope this paints a picture of an active and dedicated group of people who have the best interests of the whole village at heart and I would always point out, if you wish to be part of this, we still have a vacancy for a Councillor - so please have a chat with Sarah or I if you wish to know more.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE PARISH CUP

The Parish Council Chair made the following statement:

"Each year the Parish Cup is awarded annually to those individuals or groups who have made a significant contribution to life in Brantham. Last year's worthy recipients were the Brantham Open Space team - lead by Dennis Hyatt, who kept our bus stops and path ways clear for example and continue to do so.

This year though, we look to the current leader of a team of people who have for 30 years put on one of the most awesome local events - to such an extent that it's become an essential date in the calendar of those from surrounding villages too. I talk of course of the Brantham Fireworks display and this year's Parish Cup is awarded to Darren Smith who stepped up to lead that team some 10 years ago when the display was, if you'll excuse the pun, fizzling out, and brought new energy and importantly rearranged the approach to be much more financially sustainable which ensured that 10 years later it's going from strength to strength. In our Clerk's own words, which are echoed by many others "this evening is a Brantham highlight for me and my family each year and I know how much hard work you and your team of volunteers put in to make it happen so this award really is very well deserved" and for the first year in memory the Parish Council received no complaints about the event - a truly miraculous achievement!!"

The Parish Council extended its thanks to Darren and presented the Parish Cup.

5. PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS



1. Report from the Chair of the Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee oversees all aspects of the Parish Council's budgetary affairs, advised and guided by the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer.

This includes Budget Setting, setting the precept, monitoring income and expenditure and keeping an eye on financial performance versus budget. The precept is the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax collected by Babergh and is mainly used to fund the day to day running costs and activities of the Council.

While the Finance Committee can make decisions (in isolation) on smaller scale budgetary issues, all major financial plans and decisions are considered by the full council. In these instances the Finance Committee acts only as advisors to the full council.

The larger part of the council's income, at the moment, is a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy collected by Babergh District Council from Developers (currently Stour View and Brantham Heights). As the title suggests, this levy is solely for infrastructure projects and is not available to 'assist' with day to day running costs or activities.

Projects benefiting from CIL this year include the provision of new play area signage, the replacement bench at the village sign, the beacon brazier, no parking signs at New Village, the hearing loop at the VH, new grit bins, litter bins and dog bins.

The PC also made a sizable donation to The Stour Valley Trust to help fund the improvements at The Cattawade Picnic Area.

CIL monies have also been allocated to other projects but not yet spent. These will include Play Equipment replacement, VH toilet refurbishment and the proposed Skate Park at the Lower Playing Field.

The council also holds a small donations and grants budget, and a separate budget to help fund the activities of BOS, the small band of volunteers that do such a lot of good work maintaining the footpaths, bridleways and open spaces around the village.

Amounts from the donations and grants budget have benefited the VH, to purchase new tables, Manningtree and District Community Bus, Brantham Cricket Club, Acacia Court Community Garden (to buy an extra-long hose), Daffodil Bulbs for the scout group and Brantham Garage Sale (to help with printing of leaflets and banners).

A further amount has been set aside to fund the proposed village fete which it is hoped will become an annual event.

6. ANNUAL REPORT 23/24 TO THE PARISH COUNCILS OF PENINSULA DIVISION FROM SIMON HARLEY (SCC COUNCILLOR)

Councillor Harley provided the following report via email:

Motions

My group passed three successful motions at council over the year:

1. In May 2024, we proposed that the council lobby the government for proper, long-term funding for local councils and support policies to address the long-term funding of adult social care. We tabled this motion as the Local Government Association had recently estimated that councils in England will have a funding gap totalling



£4bn over the next two years. Suffolk County Council is predicting a 'budget gap' of £33.1m for 2026-27 so this is a very real concern for Suffolk and will affect Suffolk's local services.

2. In July 2024, my group tabled a motion that the council would do everything it could to avoid delays with local infrastructure funded by developer contributions. We were aware that a lot of local projects that are due to be paid for by developers are very overdue, in some cases for years – for example, new pedestrian crossings for roads where there is new housing. Sometimes these works are due to be undertaken by the developer and the delay is caused by them, but our motion acknowledged that the design and programming of works by Suffolk County Council was also often delayed.
3. In December 2024, my group successfully proposed a policy for the council of 'Roofs before Rural' regarding solar panels. The motion noted that the new Labour government was proposing to triple the amount of solar power in the UK by 2030 and set out the council's position that rooftop solar was preferable to 'solar farms' which are becoming an increasing sight across the county. The council agreed to write to the government to seek assurances Suffolk's best quality agricultural land would be protected.

My group also proposed the following motions which were voted down by the Conservative administration at council:

1. In October 2024, my group tabled a motion to revise the Highways Maintenance Operating Procedure so that repairs to footways and pavements would be prioritized in areas with heavy footfall, or where a recent fall had been reported. This motion was rejected by the Conservatives.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganization

Since the publication of the government's White Paper in December, Suffolk councils have been scrambling to develop their proposals for reorganizing local government. Under the new system, Norfolk and Suffolk will have a joint mayor (with elections held in May 2026) leading a mayoral authority, with two tier government (county councils and district/borough councils) replaced by unitary councils – single councils that undertake all local services like education, adult care, waste collection, housing and highways. Suffolk County Council's administration have been clear that they would prefer a single unitary council for Suffolk, and they ratified this decision by voting for it in the council chamber on 13 March and at Cabinet on 18 March. Opposition councillors, like my group and the Labour group, are less convinced that one massive council would bring decision-making closer to the communities, which is what devolution is supposed to enable. Councils have to submit interim plans to the government by 21 March, then detailed proposals in September, with a decision from government by the end of the year on what will happen. It is likely that councillors for the new council/s would be elected by Suffolk residents in May 2027, a year after the mayoral elections.

Suffolk's Library Service

At Cabinet in March 2025, the council administration voted to bring Suffolk's libraries back in-house at the end of the current contract for the library on 31 May. Suffolk Libraries, who have held the contract since the service was divested in 2012, were the only bidder for the contract, but negotiations broke down and the council felt it had no alternative but to bring the libraries back under council control. The proposal to do this was passionately opposed not just by Suffolk Libraries, but also Suffolk residents and the many volunteers and Friends groups who work for and raise money for libraries in their communities.

Norwich to Tilbury Pylons

At Cabinet in May 2024, the council voted to object to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury 400kV grid reinforcement and call for a pause until alternative options had been explored. The proposals which were reviewed included 183k of pylons, with four sections of underground cabling through and near the Dedham Vale National Landscape (the new name for an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Waveney valley. The council were keen that more



underground cabling take place in the Waveney valley than proposed, and it was agreed more generally that energy projects in the county needed to be coordinated better to reduce the impact on residents and the local environment, particularly as so many of them are due to be under construction at the same time. Other councils in the area have also objected to the plans. Since then, the National Grid has confirmed it will not be proposing any further underground cabling in the plans, holding several consultations with local residents which have been largely negatively received.

State of Suffolk's Roads

In July 2024, a report was brought to Scrutiny Committee which looked into the condition of Suffolk's roads, the amount spent by the council to repair them and how repair works were prioritised. The findings were that amount of funding available for repairing highways was around £17m per year, but £50m per year would be needed for an optimal programme of resurfacing. Works are prioritised by the council's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan, which sets out the parameters for repair work and the order of priority repairs. Unsurprisingly, main roads and roads which have a lot of traffic are prioritised over quieter roads which do not. Having said this, the council is currently undertaking a scheme of resurfacing residential roads which have fallen into disrepair, having announced an additional £10m of funding for this project in May 2023.

Council Budget 2025-26

In February 2025, the council voted to adopt its proposed budget for the 2025-26 financial year. This included approving a maximum rise in council tax this year of 4.99%, including the 2% social care precept for adult care. The budget this year does not include borrowing from the council's reserves, which was a concern last year. Instead, the budget relies on delivering £28.4m of savings across many council services. Cost pressures for the council include care purchasing for adult social care, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and placements for children in care. There is still a lot of concern about the level of debt the council is carrying from the Designated Schools Grant (DSG), a debt which is due to increase this year by £62.175m. Councils are allowed by the government to hold this 'negative reserve' until March 2026. The government is yet to come up with a solution for this issue after that date; many councils are holding enormous levels of this debt which they would not be able to pay off if they had to. In addition, the councils have to borrow money to cover the interest on the debt which affects their finances every year: over 2025-26, the debt will cause a £6.8m cost pressure for the council. The rising DSG debt is mostly for council services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The council is also forecasting that in the next few years, it will have budget 'gaps' that will only grow: £33.1m for 2026-27, and £96.2m in 2028-29. The council has lobbied the government for better funding – my group proposed a successful motion on this in May 2024. The council hopes that Local Government Reorganization (see above) will make enough savings to improve the medium and long term picture for local services.

Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services

In June 2024, the council was subject to an Ofsted inspection of its social care services for children and young people, known as an ILACS inspection (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services). These inspections are undertaken approximately every three years to judge how the council are performing in their function to support children who are vulnerable and in need of protection. Previously, in 2019, the council had been rated as 'Outstanding', but in 2024 it had dropped two grades and was assessed as 'Requires Improvement'. This meant that the council had to prepare an action plan for improvement, which was submitted to Ofsted and the Department for Education. The council has recruited extra staff to and has organized peer reviews with other local authority to learn how to improve practice. It has also established a new Strengthening Services for Children and Families Board chaired by the council's Chief Executive, Nicola Beach. The council particularly needs to improve services for care leavers and ensure that young people leaving care are aware of the support they can access until they turn 25.



Improving Services for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Following the poor Ofsted/CQC inspection report published in January last year, the council has been trying to improve SEND services. In May last year they produced and submitted a SEND Strategy, and in June they produced a Priority Action Plan for improvement, including extra funding of £4.4m to recruit more staff, including Educational Psychologists. In July the council approved an additional £9.1m over three years to increase capacity to clear the council's backlog of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Annual Reviews. This was funded from council reserves. In January 2025, the council's Public Health team presented a SEND Needs Assessment for the county at the Health and Wellbeing Board, which forecast that SEND demand in Suffolk has risen sharply in recent years and was likely to continue to rise. It also found that delays in EHCP assessment, ADHD and autism assessment and support, and access to mental health services for young people were unsatisfactory and in some cases getting worse, like speech and language therapy.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Inspection

In February 2025, the government published a report following its recent inspection of Suffolk's Fire and Rescue Service. Inspections for fire services are relatively new, with the first ones undertaken by the Home Office in 2018. The inspection report was not complimentary; it found that the service was good at preventing fires, protecting the public and that it met requirements for responding to major incidents, but also that it needs improvement in several areas, including improving culture and morale, and behaviour of senior leaders, who it advised should act as role models and show they are committed to the values of the service through their behaviour, improving communication with fire service employees and making sure they felt confident about raising concerns. This report was followed shortly afterwards by allegations in the press by the Fire Brigades Union that Suffolk County Council had made mistakes processing firefighter pay and pensions for years and has not addressed them properly or listened to employee concerns about the errors. The council subsequently announced additional investment of an extra £1.6 million over two years to improve the service.

Warm Homes in Suffolk

This year saw the end of the Warm Homes Grant fund, in which £5m of government money intended to improve insulation and make houses more energy-efficient was returned to the government unspent by the council. The reason given for this was that the criteria for the scheme, which was set by the government, was too stringent and meant that many Suffolk families who needed help were unable to access the funding. There are still schemes available to help with making homes more energy-efficient though – The Suffolk Loft Insulation Offer is funded by the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group (which includes Suffolk County Council) and this scheme will only close once the allocated funding has all been spent. Suffolk County Council is also running a new scheme to offer residents interest-free loans to upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes, that includes insulation but also solar panels, glazing and heat pumps. Loans are from £2k to £15K to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest, but in order to be eligible, properties must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band below C. Increasing insulation and making homes more energy-efficient will not only save people money on their heating bills, it is also helping the environment as less fuel will be consumed to keep homes warm. Please signpost people to these schemes using the links below:

- For the Suffolk Loft Insulation Offers, residents should visit <https://highloft.co.uk/pages/suffolk-council-200-loft-insulation-contribution> and fill in the form to receive a discount code
- For the interest free loan scheme, homeowners can check to see if their property has an existing Energy Certificate with an EPC band and record of their property size at gov.uk/find-energy-certificate. They can apply for the vouchers by visiting suffolkenergyassessment.co.uk. This scheme started in November and vouchers are being distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.



Update on Flooding

Following the Storm Babet flooding in October 2023, the council announced it was investing an extra £1m in investigating the causes of flooding and taking action to prevent further floods. As the lead local flood authority, the council undertakes investigations into flooding in the county regularly, but the level of flooding in autumn 2023 meant that far more investigations would need to be made than in other years. A year later, in November 2024, the council announced it would be allocating a further £1.5m from its reserves to deal with recommendations made in the 10 investigation reports published so far. A further 38 investigation reports have been commissioned by the council relating to Storm Babet flooding. The council also announced it would be writing to the government to request £20m to protect Suffolk from flooding, given that extreme weather will become more likely due to the effects of climate change. In October 2024, Cabinet agreed a £2m contribution from the council towards protecting the A12 from flooding at Benacre, south of Lowestoft. Erosion of the coast meant that road would likely be flooded at that location at nearly every high tide within a couple of years. The total cost of the works, which includes two new pumping stations, clay embankments and a new saltmarsh, will be many millions, with the Environment Agency committing over £30m and Sizewell C agreeing to fund the rest. Since then, it has been revealed that the cost may be higher than expected, and the council has agreed to allocate and put aside an additional £2.7m contribution in case it is needed later in the construction period.

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

Simon Harley Suffolk County Councillor for Peninsula

7. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT 2024-25

LOOKING BACK AT THE COUNCIL YEAR.

This is the time of year where Brantham PC holds its Annual Parish Meeting, a summary of what has happened in the village. It includes a District Council report and that's the basis for this report. Last May, I noted that my Locality Budget had provided funds for the Brantham Fun Run, The Bugle, Village Hall Chairs, and a Coffee Machine for Meet Up Wednesdays.

Community Infrastructure Levy, using developer money continued to provide funds for projects here and elsewhere. Coincidentally, I'm currently engaged in the annual review of the CIL Framework, to make it more responsive and flexible.

We had a General Election and a PCC (Police) Election, both run by Babergh. The first will result in major changes to government in East Anglia, Suffolk and Babergh. You've heard some and will hear more over the coming months and years. Simply, I'm likely to be the last Babergh councillor for Brantham. Whatever you may think of that, I'm proud that in partnership with Mid Suffolk, we won the 2024 Council(s) of the Year. This year, the same public sector body awarded us the Hall of Fame Award for our innovation and organisation. None of the real detail in local government here is decided yet, but we're working like billy-oh to preserve services and democracy.

The day job continues throughout, without distraction. My own Cabinet work has been dominated by three things. 1) Performance and Customer Service, where phone response times have vastly improved to under a minute. (The Annual Performance Report is approaching fast.) 2) The revamped and easier to use Website. I never knew there was so much in it! And 3) Resilience, our Risk Management which needs to be constantly tended to as part of our culture. We cannot fail to prepare here.



Talking of the regular stuff, the legally required waste collection arrangements for Food waste, better recycling, new vehicles, and bin cycles should be unaffected by new council arrangements as in Suffolk we were already working together. I expect you'll see something in 2026 and onward.

This last year has seen me in more meetings than ever before, from Cabinet, Council, Committees and working groups on specific topics. If it wasn't for online meetings, I doubt I'd get through it all.

I started with my Locality Budget and have just completed my grants for 24/25. BAFC Girls football got £350 for team kit, The Fun Run got £400 towards the essential timing system for the event, The Village Hall received £500 for kitchen improvements (Really nice), the Table Tennis club needed curtains to screen from the sun (£250) and I was able to get £500 for the Brantham Scout hut roof repairs. £2000 well used and well spread.

I must finish by mentioning the tragic murder of Anita Rose last year. We've all imagined such horrors in our lives and can only feel for her friends and family. The village was obviously worried throughout that time, but Brantham remained strong, caring of each other and helpful. We all hope for resolution soon.

I'm here for quite a while yet so, contact me with anything important (by phone and email primarily). I'll always work to respond quickly. Or, if you see the bike as I make my usual rounds, wave, or look for me nearby. I'm happy to talk (!) and help.

Gov.uk. / Babergh.gov.uk. / 0300 123 4000 / Suffolk.gov.uk/ tendringdc.gov.uk

Brantham Video: YouTube: Search for Alastair McCraw Brantham.

Alastair McCraw. 07812 564188 (or 07548 154296) alastair.mccraw@babergh.gov.uk

Facebook: Alastair McCraw, Independent Councillor

8. VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

None presented

9. REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

BRANTHAM BENEFICE

Reverend Chris Willis gave the following report:

He has been living at the Rectory for just over a year has responsibility for 4 Parishes (Brantham, Bentley, East Bergholt & Tattingstone). He acknowledged the commitment of many volunteers within the Parishes who give up their time which is really appreciated.

He confirmed that his day-to-day business is conducting Weddings and Funerals, but that they also have a relatively new youth group called Fun Faith Friends. As well as this Rev Willis goes into the local primary and high schools once a month to do an assembly.

The Church welcomes everyone and anybody in need.

On a Thursday evening at the Rectory there is an opportunity to come along and learn more about the Community. There is the opportunity to play games and hopefully now the weather is getting better get outside.



Rev Willis spoke about the death of Anita Rose and what a shock this was for him, his wife and daughter Isabelle and the community as a whole. He spoke highly of the Brantham community and how they pulled together and supported each other during a difficult time.

Rev Willis confirmed that he communicates in the local magazine.

SCOUT & GUIDES GROUP

Julie Price, Chair of Brantham Scout and Guide Group gave the following report:

The group currently has around 100 young people in the group., two thirds of these are from Brantham. The others attend from surrounding villages like East Bergholt.

The local Guiding group re-formed last year and are now thriving, as were the other groups. Julie extended her thanks to Brantham Parish Council for cutting the grass at the Scout hut and thanked the Parish Council for their funding to make this safe. Financial support had also been received from East Bergholt PC and Cllr McCraw.

The group had been concerned by the sudden sale of the pumping station next door to the current Scout Hut.

It was explained that the Scout group are working with Darren Smith about the plan under the Section 106 for the Factory Lane, land to build a new Scout premises which would then allow them to run more than one group at a time. The Scout groups would be used mainly at night and then it would allow for the building to be rented out during the day.

Julie stated that the Scout and Guide group is a not for profit organisation which has managed to raise £47,000 towards the cost of a new building so far.

BRANTHAM LEISURE CENTRE

Darren Smith explained that he joined the BMCIC team around 19 years ago. He confirmed that the football club is run from the Leisure Centre. Darren noted that BMCIC is a Community Interest Company and therefore does not make a profit. None of the directors are paid for the work they do. He stated that the running of the club is difficult as the utilities are going up and customers income is going down.

He confirmed that there had been some recent changes and that Tony Hall who was like a piece of the fabric and a huge part of the Leisure Centre has retired and will be really missed. He confirmed a new Manager, Lauren White has now joined the team as Centre Manager and Louise Madley has been appointed as one of the centre's Directors. There are lots of activities that take place at the club which benefit the Community.

He confirmed that he has a great working relationship with Julie from Scouts and that work is continuing in relation to the Factory Lane site. He confirmed that the plan is to have a new building that the Scouts can use and extra changing rooms for the football club, but this is not in place of the Leisure Centre.

GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Vic Saunders gave the following report:

"Good evening thanks for this opportunity to give you an update as to our service that we currently provide to members of our local community. In case you are not familiar with what we provide we are a team of volunteers who support our residents within the local community both young and old and of any ethnic background. Our scheme is not to be confused with a neighbourhood watch scheme as sometimes those who don't know anything about us can think.



Our purpose is to give a little help to our neighbours, that includes to pick up prescriptions from the chemist taking them to GP or Hospital appointments, do a bit of shopping if they can't get out and about also befriending if they are housebound which helps with their mental wellbeing. Just looking at our monthly data we provide help and assistance on average 50 occasions per month.

We are completely self-funding as we only request donations from our service users when carrying out trips or tasks and our regular monthly coffee mornings provide some receipts whereby, we use for those less fortunate members of our community such as help funding care line set up cost's regular trips to Hospital if they are being treated for more serious ailments. The fund has also donated money to Food Banks and much needed clothing essentials for persons who have been temporarily rehoused for safety reasons. In addition to this to keep some of our regulars in a good mental wellness state we help fund regular minibus trips for lunch in various locations this keeps the community in touch with their friends and sometimes relatives.

We pride ourselves with a good dedicated volunteer team who have risen to many challenges over our ten year period which included for the difficult times over covid which meant we needed to keep in regular touch with the more vulnerable members of our community and kept those who could access food via the internet we delivered shopping and essentials throughout that period.

To keep our volunteers team to an acceptable level we are forever looking for new persons to join us so all we ask is to give what available time they may have and we will do the appropriate checks i.e. DBS, insurance and ID's so as the community know they are safe with us.

If you are thinking of becoming a volunteer and joining our team then your commitment will only be what you can give and how much time you could give its not a full time job. If you cant drive but can use a telephone or bake a cake then you can still sign up to the group as we need helpers at the regular coffee mornings, once a month, or to man the help desk when request calls come in for our service. Your rewards are varied and satisfying as you become part of a village community that helps our residents in many ways to live a better quality of life in their own homes.

If you would like more information on being a volunteer or would like to use our service then ring us on 07541 359 036 we are here to help."

BRANTHAM AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY

Mark Hinson Vice Chairman of BATS provided an update and explained that they had a busy year.

The group started with the Panto in February 2024 and this won best Panto for Snow White. They also did a Summer performance, Lark Rise which again was a great success.

Then in February 2025 they did the Addams Family and this went really well and currently are working on Brief Encounters which will be shown in early July

Mark confirmed that they have 49 active members. There are also 20 Junior and Teen members who are currently working on the Musical School of Rock which is hoped to be released in June 25.

MANNINGTREE 1ST RESPONDERS

Simon Fisher, Organiser of Manningtree First Responders provided an update of the group's activity this year. He explained that there are 4 local volunteers with over 43 years of experience, that cover Brantham, Manningtree, Mistley, Lawford, Bradfield, Ardleigh & Dedham.



Every volunteer is trained by the ambulance service before becoming a 1st responder. Training is ongoing and this happens every 2 weeks and on a Sunday morning to provide skill upgrades.

Work is also carried out with the Fire Service and Head start provides training to members of the public.

It was confirmed that equipment is provided by the Ambulance service but the clothing for staff is funded from donations from the public.

The volunteers have carried out over 1000 emergency calls which has amounted to over 2200 hours of work.

The First Responders also confirmed they are always looking for new members and welcome anyone that is interested.

10. QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

The following questions were received from members of the public:

- When will the new Scout & Guide hut be built? Julie Price of Brantham Scout & Guide Group stated that work is underway but a final date is not yet known.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

Meeting Finished at 7.30pm

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