

**Preston St Mary**  
**ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

**Held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES:**

1. The Chairman Kerrie McGrory welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Chairman's Report:**

A warm welcome to our Annual Parish Assembly. This evening, we look forward to hearing reports from various organisations and groups in the village. We are very fortunate as a small community to have so much going on, to keep us all busy.

The Parish Council year runs from May to May each year. Every four years there are Parish elections, and this is taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. Myself, along with Cllrs Hanlon, Martin and Luck have submitted our nomination forms. Unfortunately Cllr Tasker was unable to submit the completed forms on time, but we will seek to co-opt him at the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.

This Parish Council year has seen the PC meet every month with the exception of November and December. It has been a busy time for our small parish. Most of the additional meetings have been in relation to planning matters, and we are keen to try to arrange those additional meetings where possible in order to give parishioners the opportunity to come along and share their comments and concerns.

This year has seen the approval of a development of nine new homes in the village, and we are currently awaiting the outcome of an appeal in relation to a further 6 new homes.

Besides planning, the Parish Council has also been busy dealing with issues such as potholes, trees on the village green, stolen post box, part of the verge collapsing at Whelp Street, and are currently awaiting approval of the sites in the village where grit bins can be located in readiness for next Winter.

This current four year term of the Parish Council started with Joy Lloyd Hughes as the Chair. Sadly, Joy passed away, and her knowledge and commitment to

the village remains very much missed on the Parish Council. I took over the role of Chair, and have very much enjoyed the experience.

Going forward into the next Parish Council term we will miss the input, effort and practical approach of both Cllr Bardzinski and Cllr Bisson who have decided not to re-stand in the elections. The Parish Council thank you both for all of the time and effort that you have committed to the role over the years.

We also say goodbye to our District Cllr Clive Arthey, as he will not be standing for the North West Cosford Ward in the District elections which are also held on 2 May 2019. Clive, the Parish Council thank you for all of your support, information and help that you have given to our parish over the years.

You will see that we now have two vacancies for Parish Councillors. The work we do is rewarding for our village and the people who live in it, or visit it. If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor then please contact our Clerk, Nicola Smith on 07817 170906 or by email on [prestonpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:prestonpcclerk@gmail.com), and she will be able to give your more information about the role. There are courses available to support you in your role as a Parish Councillor, and the Clerk can speak to you about that.

Finally, the Parish Council financially support the Preston Parish Paper (PPP), and have budgeted to continue to do so. The hard work of Robyn Lloyd Hughes as the Editor, Jack Tasker as the Reporter and the helpful assistance from Caroline Gove (Creative Director) has made the PPP something that the village can be proud of, and I am sure there are many of us that look forward to each edition arriving. Our thanks go to Robyn, Jack and Caroline for the time and effort that goes into producing such a wonderful parish paper.

2. Minutes of the APA on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 – Cllr Hanlon proposed and Chair Cllr McGrory seconded that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting.
  
3. **District Councillor Clive Arthey's Report:**

#### Local Plan

Last year I told you the new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk would be going through the second round of consultation ahead of adoption some time this year. Unfortunately, this did not happen and the second consultation has been delayed until the summer of this year. The 'revision to

the timetable' now anticipates presentation to Council in June, followed by public consultation. There are then periods for preparation of the 'submission version' and a 'technical consultation' before the Examination in Public. Adoption of the new plan will now not take place until next year.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The first bid round for CIL funding was May 2018. Cockfield, Lindsey and Monks Eleigh were all able to benefit with funds for their Village Halls and Cockfield Parish Council completed the successful bids in round 1 with the purchase of two land parcels for allotments and recreation. Bid round 2 applications approved include electric vehicle charging points in Lavenham's car park, funding for the Lavenham 'Community Hub' (former Tourist Information Centre) where Post Office facilities are also provided, and Preston St Mary Village Hall extension. Unspent bid round 2 funds will be carried forward to the next bid round this May.

#### 2019-20 Council Tax

Band D Council Tax for the coming year is Suffolk County Council £1292.13 (+4%), Suffolk Police £212.76 (+13%), Babergh District Council £163.86 (+3.15%) and Preston St Mary Parish Council £53.69 (+3.5%). Band D total is £1722.44 with 75% of that going to SCC, 12.4% to Suffolk Police, 9.5% to BDC and 3.1% to Preston St Mary PC.

#### BDC 2019-20 Budget

Last year I updated you on Babergh's Capital Investment Strategy. Included in the budget for 2019-20 is another £25 million of borrowing to fund commercial property through CIFCO Capital Ltd. This will bring the total investment to CIFCO to £100 million split equally between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

#### 2019 Elections

District elections for the new wards are on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, with Preston St Mary in the new North West Cosford ward, grouped with Bildeston, Brettenham, Hitcham, Kettlebaston, Thorpe Morieux and Wattisham.

#### Farewell

I will not be standing for election in the new North West Cosford Ward, so this will be the last Parish Meeting I attend as your District Councillor. I have been fortunate to have been returned to serve you continuously for the past sixteen years and thank you for the support, hospitality and respect I have received. I will maintain a close interest in your wonderful little village and wish you all the very best for the future.

4. Clerk's Report: full breakdown of income and expenditure will be available at the May 2019 meeting when the end of year accounts will be agreed by the Parish Council. Clerk reported that the Parish Council did remain in a good financial position with some monies in reserve.
5. Reports from representatives of various village clubs and organisations:

#### St Mary's PCC

One might describe 2018 as a "standard year", with congregation numbers more or less as they were the year before and with events also much according to the pattern of the church year.

One thing has stood out: the success of the **Preston Praise** services. These normally take place on the first Sunday of the month, unless there is a greater celebration, such as the next couple of months – e.g **Rogation on 2<sup>nd</sup> June** at Priory Farm, thanks to Denise and Alan Luck. Coffee and croissants or other pastries are served from 11.30, before a service at 12 noon. This is led by a member of the congregation and is restricted to half an hour, so that we can all get home (or to the pub) in good time for lunch. The time for fellowship and the informality of the service help to galvanise a community spirit. Do join us!

Indeed, food and drink seem to feature highly in all of the main festivals: Easter Sunday Sunrise, Rogation, the Patronal Service, Harvest. The only exception is the Christmas Eve Carol Concert, when the church is packed to the rafters despite the lack of refreshments on offer.

As to the fabric of the building, there are several issues that we are monitoring, as one would expect in a building of this age, though none appears to be particularly imminent. The biggest change that you will see is the removal of the pews near to the organ at the back of the nave, which will give us more room for those times of fellowship and will restore the symmetry in that part of the church. Those pews are used just once each year and we can provide chairs for that service and any others that are likely to be heavily subscribed.

So: if anyone wants to buy a pew or two, please let me or Janet Martin (as church wardens) or Robyn Lloyd Hughes (as church treasurer) know. We have diocesan sanction, though we await the formal sign off before being able to progress this scheme.

The PCC is grateful to the Parish Council for the grant towards the upkeep of the churchyard and to the Friends for all their fund raising, without which we

would be sorely troubled financially. We are hosting a concert that the Friends are organising for **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September** – a date for your diaries. Before that, the PCC had organised a talk by a renowned local historian, Clive Paine, to give a talk about the building on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June. Sadly, this has just had to be cancelled due to Clive's ill health.

The building is recognised by visitors as a beautiful building and is open every day. Whatever your religious beliefs are, it is a wonderfully peaceful place to spend a quiet moment of reflection at any time. Do please use it.

Keith Davis.

#### Preston St Mary Art Group

The Art Group meets every Monday morning for two hours during three 10 week terms each year.

We usually meet in the village hall but whenever possible we get outside in the summer months and paint 'al fresco'.

We currently have a membership of ten with a possible new recruit starting next Monday.

We pay £45 per term for membership and this allows us to have three or four tutored lessons each term as well as coffee and biscuits each session. When we have no tutor we 'do our own thing' although members share ideas and often choose to share a still life display. We attract people who enjoy art but who know that they would not get down to doing it if they did not have a regular commitment. Like all clubs we get to know one another well and enjoy socialising together.

We have room for one or two more members so please come along between 10.00-12.00 and meet us or contact Judy Legg 247515 for more information.

Judy Legg

#### Preston St Mary Table Tennis Club

The club continues to be well-supported with regular sessions held every Thursday evening starting at 7.30 (subject to National holidays and polling days).

Attendance levels by members have kept high enough to cover the cost of hiring the village hall and over this past year members have brought along a number of guests.

Its hoped they may decide to return again either as guests of as regular members.

Maintaining tradition, the Club held its Christmas dinner gathering in January, again very kindly arrange by Julian de la Forterie, and the event was attended by the membership along with wives and partners to make for a very enjoyable gathering.

The evening also marked the occasion of conferring Dave Williams with the position of “Life President” of the club in recognition of his past stalwart service, the appointment being unanimously approved by all those present.

The club welcomes all who might like to give table tennis a try, particularly any ladies who feel they can cope with the experience of playing with males possession very limited talent and abilities!

Geoff Poole  
Keeper of the Club Harrods bag

#### Tree Warden Report

I took over from my husband John earlier this year as Tree Warden and shall shortly be going to the Suffolk Tree Warden Network Spring Forum & AGM so shall begin to understand more about the role.

My main reason for wanting to take this role is to see if there are ways in which I can help to preserve the trees we have locally, especially the older ones and also to try to encourage the planting of more trees, particularly those which assist in feeding insects and birds.

This year in Preston St Mary the Parish Council have used Suffolk Tree Services to survey all the trees on the green reporting on their health and condition. They have completed a substantial amount of the work. The work is ongoing as necessary. We have tidied up the weeping tree on the corner of Church Lane and trimmed back the conifers at this end. The Cherry tree which was dying has been felled and the stump ground down. Over the next year we shall keep an eye on one of the ornamental Cherries which appears to be dying and also the Red Horse Chestnut Tree which has canker. The Parish Council

will consider what needs to be done about this tree and possibly ask Suffolk Tree Services to come and survey it in due course.

Two packs of 50 saplings with stakes and guards were given to the village by The Woodland Trust and were planted by three villagers on their properties.

John removed the stump on the green which was in the shape of a seat but very rotten and he has now removed the last pieces of wood, evened up the ground and seeded the area. He has also added top soil and seeded over the area where the cherry tree stood.

A Mulberry tree was planted to replace the Cherry and this is about to leaf.

Cllr Kate Hanlon

#### Preston St Mary Village Hall

The last year has been a good one for the Village Hall, with five different groups using it weekly, others using it monthly and several social events organised by the Committee. Other developments are taking shape – albeit slowly.

The weekly clubs are: Art Group; Keep Fit; Table Tennis; Dancing Tuition; and Carpet Bowls. Monthly hiring comes from the Ladies Group. More details from me if anyone wants them. A music group also practises regularly and we have had corporate training days here too. The 100 Club is a useful source of funds and a grant from the Parish Council is very helpful, covering some of the overheads – many thanks to the PC for that.

On a slightly less positive note – the PC have been trying to get an agreement from Babergh to utilise some section 106 monies to reimburse one of the club members for some carpet bowl equipment that was purchased. Despite providing a great deal of information, as requested, and what often seems like conflicting responses from Babergh, for now that request has been denied.

On the development side, we have enjoyed support from all aspects of the local community: the residents, through a questionnaire last year in which 90% of respondents confirmed their wish for upgraded toilets and kitchen facilities; letters of support from the Parish Council, our District Councillor and our County Councillor. These have all been helpful in our efforts to fund the cost of the refurbishment. CIL monies of £130K from Babergh have been pledged – though that process took 9 months – and the VAT office didn't help by insisting that VAT needs to be levied on just about all of the building costs, resulting in

us having to garner a further £30,000. We now seek the remainder from a range of grant-giving bodies.

We have generously been offered, by Graham Pryke, a car park as part of the development across the road and we look forward to progressing that concept with him.

Things don't just happen on their own – they need to be organised. The Committee has worked hard throughout the year and has been supported by a number of other folks from the village, without whom we could not continue to provide what we believe to be a focal point for the social fabric of village life. Our sincere thanks go to each and every one of the supporters.

Keith Davis

### Friends of Preston St Mary Church

During the year ending 23 April 2019, the Committee of the Friends of the Church has provided the following fund raising activities with which to support its objective of preserving the fabric of the Church.

#### **Events**

The first fundraising events of 2018 were held in March/April when the Deben Valley Detectorists came to Janet and Richard Martin's field to see what they might find. The total amount made was £750.

Our annual Christkindlymarkt, held in November at Preston Manor, thanks to the generosity of Mr and Mrs Tim Coxon, was our biggest fund raiser of the year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those residents that worked extremely hard to make it such a fun and worthwhile event, raising approximately £3,350 for our funds. In our 21<sup>st</sup> year people returned from all over the county and beyond to buy our Christmas wares.

#### **Contributions**

The Friends have contributed 50% of the costs (£2,264) towards removing the pews at the back north side to enable the floor to be taken up and a new floor put down. This has opened up a larger area for serving drinks and food during services and concerts etc.

There was also the cost of the maintenance and call out service for the church alarm which totals £760.64

The total agreed is therefore £3024.64

### **Events this year**

This year we will be looking to put on a concert in the Church in September (thanks to Lyn Davis and Malcolm Boulter) and a smaller version of the Christkindlmarkt at Preston Manor in November.

As the Committee is much smaller now, we are leaning towards putting on smaller and more manageable events. We're in much need of recruiting new committee members and would welcome anyone who would like to join as a committee member or take on the roles of Chairman and Secretary.

### **Membership**

We currently have 30 paid up members of the Society and are slowly receiving subscriptions for this year which so far amount to £300.

Membership is £10 per person per year and we welcome anyone who would like to join the society or even better would like to be a committee member.

The Friends also thought that there should be an option of becoming a Friend for Life at £100, as Lavenham Friends do, and there are now forms in the Church accordingly.

We have enjoyed working together to help the PCC to try to keep our beautiful Church in good order but we need everyone to do their bit because the building belongs to everyone in the village.

Laura Ashford  
Committee Member  
Friends of Preston St Mary Church

### **Preston Parish Paper**

It is now two years since the PPP was taken on by a new Editorial Board consisting of Robyn Lloyd Hughes (Chief Sub-Editor), Jack Tasker (Roving Reporter) and Caroline Gove (Editor Emeritus).

During those two years the paper has grown in size, regularly running to 40 A4 pages. This is the result of many people and organisations in the village submitting news, information and items of interest to share with other readers. We are immensely grateful to all who have contributed – our feedback suggests the Paper is greatly appreciated and enjoyed. We are also grateful to our advertisers, whose (modest) payments help to defray the cost of printing.

With the Parish Council's approval (and financial support) we intend to continue to offer a publication which informs and entertains. Practical considerations mean that 40 pages is our maximum size, but your input and support is always welcome, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Robyn Lloyd Hughes.