

PRESTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of Preston St Mary Parish Council held at 7.30p.m. on Tuesday 29 May 2018 in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs McGrory, Bardzinski, Hanlon, Luck and Tasker, together with the Parish Clerk, Nicola Smith, County Cllr Robert Lindsay, and District Cllr Clive Arthey. Mr C Dyson of Chris Dyson Architects was also present, along with 32 members of the public.

1. Nomination for position of Chair: Cllr Hanlon proposed Cllr McGrory and Cllr Luck seconded. All other Cllrs present agreed.
2. Cllr McGrory accepted the nomination and duly signed the Acceptance of Office form.
3. Nomination for the position of Vice Chair: Cllr Hanlon proposed Cllr Bardzinski and Cllr Luck seconded the nomination. All other Cllrs present agreed.
4. Cllr Bardzinski accepted the nomination and duly signed the Acceptance of Office form.
5. **Apologies**
 - i. Cllr Martin and Cllr Bisson sent their apologies due to holidays.
 - ii. Cllrs consented to accept the apologies.
6. **To receive Members' Declarations of Interest**
 - i. No Cllrs present at the meeting declared an interest. Cllr Martin had declared an interest prior to the meeting in relation to item 18i on the Agenda, but he was subsequently not present at the meeting.
 - ii. No gifts of hospitality received;
 - iii. No requests for dispensation for pecuniary interests.
7. **Minutes of Meeting:** Draft Minutes of 27 March 2018 and 24 April 2018 – Cllr Bardzinski proposed and Cllr Tasker seconded that they were a true and accurate record of the meetings. All Cllrs present agreed. Minutes duly signed and dated.
8. **Matters Arising:**

Trees on the Village Green

Suffolk Tree Services had carried out the works to the 3 x Thuja Plicata on 2 May 2018. The works totaled £180 including VAT. Parish Council insurers had confirmed that volunteers would not be covered under the policy if they carried out works to the remainder of the trees and have recommended that the Parish Council engaged experts to carry out the works. **Cllr Hanlon proposed that STS be instructed to carry out the works to "Tree 1" which is the weeping silver birch so that the crown can be raised, and "Tree 9" which is the Cherry tree that is dead/dying be fell and the stump be ground out as advised by the experts. Chair Cllr McGrory proposed the next round of works to Tree 1 and 9, and Cllr Luck seconded. All Cllrs present agreed.**

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Cllr Hanlon reported that in place of the Cherry Tree, herself and John Dunk would like to donate a Mulberry tree to the parish if the Parish Council would accept the gift. Chair Cllr McGrory proposed that the Parish Council consent to a Mulberry tree donated as a gift by Kate Hanlon and John Dunk be accepted. Cllr Luck seconded. All Cllrs present agreed and thanked Kate and John.

Highways

Potholes – Rise Farm further works are being carried out to the potholes.

Water laying in road at junction of Church Hill and The Street – ongoing and Clerk is looking into the matter.

Blocked culvert near Lavenham – Clerk had taken pictures and liaised with County Cllr Robert Lindsay who marked this as urgent with the highways department. They have undertaken works so hopefully this should be improved.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) application regarding the Village Hall

Village Hall Committee has confirmed that the VH Committee will be submitting an application. **Chair proposed that a letter of support from the PC be sent to the VH Committee so that they can place that with their application. Cllr Luck seconded. All Cllrs present agreed.**

Fencing outside of Busted Mead and Mead House

This matter has been referred to the Planning Enforcement team and is under reference 18/00113/BWK. We are advised that preliminary research is required and a visit to the site in order to assess the matter. No update has yet been given by the Planning Enforcement team.

Memorial Bench

As requested by the PC, the Clerk sent a letter to the parishioner but has not received a response as of yet.

Invitation to Housing Enabling Officer to give an information session to the Parish Council on Community Led Housing and a Local Housing Needs Survey.

This meeting took place on 24th April 2018. PC voted to submit an application, however that was 2 days prior to application DC/18/01823 6 new dwellings at The Six Bells, The Street, Preston St Mary being submitted and Clerk is awaiting further instructions from the Parish Council with regards to any next steps on a Local Needs Housing Survey they may want or not want to take now.

9. Presentation of the proposed planning application regarding the Six Bells scheme by a representative of Chris Dyson Architects on behalf of their client/applicant of the planning application.

Mr Chris Dyson gave a short presentation of the plans that had been submitted to Babergh in relation to planning matter for six new homes on part of the land behind the Six Bells Public House.

Mr Dyson agreed to a Q/A session following his presentation. Various questions were asked by members of the public, Cllrs and the Clerk, and various concerns/objections were raised as follows:-

- Mr Dyson referred to the land as a “brown field site”. Objections that it is not a brown field site, and that the District Council would hold a register of all brown field sites and it is not on there. Mr Dyson apologised and said that his wording was incorrect;
- The dotted “boundary” line that had been drawn along the back of the proposed development. What was that? Mr Dyson confirmed that as Architects they had placed it on the drawings and indeed it did not demonstrate any official boundary line other than one that the development would build up to. Parishioners said that it was misleading and gave the impression that the developer was building up to an existing boundary line and therefore it was OK;
- Access in and out of the development.
- Increase in volume of traffic, very unlikely that people would commute by bicycle as inferred.
- Likely overspill of parking onto The Street which would change how The Street looked in a very rural setting.
- Village has been downgraded from a Hinterland to a Hamlet in the consultation on the new planning documents used by Babergh.
- No regular bus service in the village. There was a “dial -a-ride” service. Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with the providers, and journeys have to be booked in advance and it is usually for doctors appointment etc, and the last time it was used in the village was approximately 2 years ago.
- Residents had concerns that as starter homes they were not affordable for people who worked locally, as the hospitality industry was one of the biggest employers locally within the village and neighbouring villages, but generally paid minimum wage or just above.
- Concerns about the application does not specifically state how many starter homes and how many market value homes. Could end up with just one starter home and five market place homes but the application is being pitched that the land would be used for providing affordable, starter homes.
- Outline planning for 9 new homes had recently been approved, just off The Street and that was enough, a further 6 new homes would start to change the character of the village, particularly in the central area of the village.
- One parishioner concerned that his view from the rear of his property is currently countryside but if both of these new developments went ahead he would be surrounded by housing at the rear of his property.
- The proposed architecture is modern and not in keeping with the village, which has individual designed homes along most of The Street, and they are not as modern as that set out in the planning application. This would change the character of the village.
- The proposed planning does not follow a pattern of a linear village.
- Concerns that if this application was approved that in future it would open the way for further planning, as it was noted that the Applicant had had a

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preapplication meeting with Babergh and had originally wanted to put forward a planning application for 14 new homes.

- Following a discussion, Mr Dyson confirmed that his client would be seeking to rely on the Starter Home Exception Site Policy for this application. Clerk went through the “gov.uk” information for that policy with Mr Dyson. That policy requires there to be a greater number of starter homes than market homes. The application remained silent on the division of starter and market homes and there was clearly concern by parishioners that this was a “shoe in” to getting development on that land, but ultimately they could end up with less starter homes and more market place homes. Mr Dyson stated that it was not his client intention, but Clerk reminded Mr Dyson that his client had already confirmed that he would not be the developer. A Housing Association was not required for the development, and therefore any private developer may be sold the land with planning permission granted to build a mix of starter and market homes and choose only to build one starter home and no specific numbers were set out in the full planning application. The Application also mentions people downsizing to remain in the village, but there were strict criteria surround the Starter Home exception site policy and the age range being single people, couples, young families and these were not people aiming to downsize.

Chair thanked Mr Dyson for the presentation and the Q/A session and for parishioners who had come along to the meeting. Chair confirmed that Cllrs would consider the matter further at item 18i of the Agenda.

10. Public Forum

Parishioner asked if the Parish Council were intending to do any further works to the 3 x Thuja Plicata on the Village Green. Clerk confirmed that the PC had taken advice from experts at Suffolk Tree Services on all the trees on the Village Green. The PC had also taken advice from the Arboriculturist at Babergh with regards to the 3 x Thuja Plicata and the advice received from the expert, and in line with all of that advice they had carried out the works necessary to the trees.

11. To receive a report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

School bus cuts

Cabinet are due to make a decision in June and I hope they will have listened to the many representations from parents, teachers and councillors like myself. Of the 3,700 responses to the consultation, some 85% were strongly opposed to implementing the changes.

Potholes

I have raised the issues of potholes on the road to Lavenham and in fact have been out to photograph them and passed them on to cabinet member of highways Jane Storey. Some of them were filled in in January using a temporary repair material which lasted but a couple of months and now need refilling. I have raised at senior officer level whether this is cost effective. The argument is that by filling bigger ones in quick time it saves money in claims.

Changes in leadership

Since my last report, the Conservative group has voted to replace their leader Colin Noble with Matthew Hicks, who becomes new leader of the council. He has already made significant changes to the cabinet, including replacing Jane Storey, the former deputy leader and highways portfolio holder, with Mary Evans, his deputy leader.

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He has said he wants to usher in a new era of collaboration with the opposition which I welcome, and he is certainly a more inclusive sort of character than his predecessor. Mary Evans has earned a reputation for intelligence and independence of thought as chair of scrutiny. She says she is making road maintenance her priority.

Cabinet committees scrapped – arise Policy Development Panels

Cllr Hicks has announced that the four advisory cabinet committees, which met in secret and were only introduced eight months ago, will be scrapped. They will be replaced by what he calls “Policy Development Panels” which will only be held on specific topics as and when required and to which I presume councillors with an interest will be invited to take part. At this stage it looks as though these will also be in secret, which is not ideal.

12. To receive a report from District Cllr Clive Arthey

Joint Working and Partnerships

I have used the same heading as last year, but the way things have moved on perhaps it should be Babergh/Mid Suffolk merger. You will remember how Suffolk councils are working together as pairs. The pairings at Waveney and Suffolk Coastal in the east, and St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath in the west both applied for full merger to create East and West Suffolk Councils. That involves dissolving the two existing councils and creating a new one for the combined administrative area. You may remember a proposal for Babergh and Mid Suffolk to merge was the subject of a referendum in 2011, which was supported by a majority of Mid Suffolk residents, but rejected by Babergh. Things have moved on a bit since then, with both councils now operating a 'Cabinet' system where strategic decisions are no longer made by politically balanced committees or the full Council. It seemed we no longer required a referendum, and Cabinet members could make the decision to dissolve the Council and create a new one. There was concern amongst councillors about how we had arrived at a situation where the Leader and six like minded councillors could ignore the referendum result and commit the Council to dissolve itself. A telephone survey was carried out to inform Cabinet's decision, but councillors have now secured an undertaking that a new referendum must take place before full merger. This also gives the opportunity for further consideration of a 'unitary option' for local government in Suffolk.

Move to Endeavour House, Ipswich

After a slight delay, Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils completed their move to Suffolk County Council headquarters building, Endeavour House in Ipswich, at the end of last year. I remain concerned about the future use of the Hadleigh buildings and the impact on Hadleigh businesses who benefitted from such a large employer so close to the town centre. Proposals have now been drawn up for conversion and redevelopment to provide housing.

District Electoral Review

Babergh had asked for a reduction from 43 councillors down to 31. After consultation on the initial proposals last year, the Boundary Commission has now recommended 32 councillors, with Preston St Mary in the proposed North West Cosford ward grouped with Bildeston, Brettenham, Hitcham, Kettlebaston and Thorpe Morieux.

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The new wards will be in place for the 2019 district elections.

Council Tax

You will have received your Council Tax Bills for 2018-19 and will doubtless have noticed the largest increase in recent years. Suffolk County Council’s element has increased by 5% to £1242.54 for a band D dwelling, Suffolk Police up 6.8% to £188.82, Babergh up 3.25% to £158.86 and Preston St Mary Parish Council up 10.5% to £51.89.

Local Plan

First consultation on the new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk took place last year. The proposals for Preston St Mary confirmed the settlement boundary as before, but identified a potential development area on the land opposite the Village Hall. A planning application followed and this area now has outline approval for nine houses. Preston St Mary is included in the ‘Hamlets and Countryside’ category, but is identified as supporting the ‘Core’ village of Lavenham. The suggested growth options in the draft plan for Hamlets and Countryside are 5%, but this is a total across the district and does not have to be accommodated proportionally. There will be further consultation this year before an Examination in Public, and adoption of the plan in 2019.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL was introduced last year and is a levy on new development. We have now adopted a CIL Framework document to set out the way the scheme will operate. CIL contributions will be distributed as follows: 5% to administer the scheme, 15% to parish (25% for parishes with Neighbourhood Plans), remainder to be split 80% / 20% between Local Infrastructure and Strategic Infrastructure. This should provide a significant local ‘pot’ from which Parish Councils (and other local providers) can apply for funding. Proposals may well be able to combine any remaining S106 monies (£2975.39 for Preston St Mary), parish CIL and district CIL.

Waste and Recycling

Plastics recycling hit the national press with stories of collected recyclables being rejected. China had announced that from January 2018 it would no longer accept mixed plastics or fibre (paper and cardboard) with contamination levels greater than 1.5%, and Waitrose announced it would be phasing out black plastic trays because they were not being recycled. The Suffolk Waste Partnership can reassure residents that we are amongst the best in the country with both mechanical and manual sorting to remove contamination before these sorted materials are sold on to re-processors in the UK and abroad, including China. Our collection and sorting arrangements can successfully recycle all of the plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays from the blue bins, including black items. We are confident it is sorted to the highest standards, but removing contamination costs us money so please make sure you put the right things in your blue bin, and they are clean, dry and loose.

Electric Vehicles

Babergh has installed its first charging point for electric vehicles at the Kingfisher car park in Sudbury.

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13. Correspondence

- i. Correspondence from parishioner regarding Rookwood Lane. Clerk had gone and taken photographs following receipt of the letter. Cllrs considered the matter and concluded that HGVs will go down Rookwood Lane as they make deliveries, but they did not consider it to be a “rat run” for traffic. Looking at the photographs it may be that some hedge husbandry by the parishioner would mean that larger high sided vehicles did not drive further over the opposite side of the road, but given the time of year that the letter was received it was not uncommon for many roads in the County to be similar to that which the parishioner had concerns over. Parishioners concerns were noted but the Parish Council felt that there was little that they could do.

14. Clerk’s Report

- i. Schedule of items approved and awaiting authorisation:

Receipts since 27/03/18

Precept (1 of 2 payments) **2617.50**

Schedule of Items Approved at Meeting on 27/03/18

100572	N Smith (reimburse expenses)	£6.99	LGA 1972
100573	SALC (website training)	£30.00	LGA 1972
100574	Top Marque (PPP printing)	£88.20	LGA 1972 s142
100575	N Smith (salary)*	£522.36	LGA 1972
100576	HMRC (tax and NI)	£130.80	Inc&Corp Taxes
100577	Suffolkbiz – webhosting	£100.00	LGA 1972

		£878.35	

Schedule of items awaiting approval

100578	Suffolk Tree Services	£180.00	Open Spaces Act
100579	N Smith (reimburse expenses)	£6.77	LGA 1972
100580	N Smith (Clerk’s salary)	£306.28	LGA 1972
100581	HMRC	£76.40	Inc&Corp Taxes
100582	Top Marques (PPP printing)	£100.80	LGA 1972
100583	Eon (phonebox electricity supply)	£28.99	LGA 1972
100584	SALC (subscription)	£123.29	LGA 1972

		£822.53	

- Includes the balance of the Transparency Code grant obtained in 2016/2017 for staff costs to set up and maintain the website.

- ii. Report on the Council’s financial position

As at 29 May 2018:

Community Account:	3832.53
<i>Plus receipts</i>	2617.50
<i>Less chq 100577 webhosting</i>	100.00

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<i>Less schedule of items awaiting approval</i>	822.53

	5527.50

iii. Update on Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/2018

Clerk reported that she was in the process of completing the AGAR for 2017/2018. Deadline for submission is 2 July 2018. Clerk advised that Mrs Mary Page had confirmed that she was happy to carry out an independent internal audit (no fee charged). Cllr McGrory proposed and Cllr Bardzinski seconded. Motion carried.

15. GDPR update and policies to be considered and, if appropriate approved.

Cllrs had been provided with draft policies ahead of the meeting. Cllr Bardzinski proposed the draft policies be adopted, and Cllr Hanlon seconded. All Cllrs present agree. Motion carried.

16. Review of Standing Orders

Chair explained that due to the volume of work that the Clerk had undertaken for this meeting the review of the Standing Orders was not yet complete and would be on the Agenda for the next meeting.

17. Councillor’s Reports

Cllr Hanlon reported that a parishioner had kindly cut some of the grass on the Village Green. The Parish Council’s was grateful to all of those parishioners who helped to cut the grass. Cllrs had noted that the church end of the Village Green had become more overgrown. The Village Green is owned by the Parish Council and it had been fortunate that it had not needed to raise the Precept on the Council Tax bill as people in the village had always cut the grass area outside of their home. At the present time that area had not been cut and was overgrowing and the PC needed to consider how best to manage that with as little or no financial cost to the village as possible. Cllr Hanlon was gathering information about managed specific natural area on the Green and it was agreed to place the matter on the Agenda for the next meeting for a full discussion.

Cllr Hanlon reported her thanks to Strutt & Parker and indeed all the other land owners who had footpaths going across them, as the footpaths were mostly being managed very well this year.

Chair Cllr McGrory confirmed that a manhole cover outside of her property had been sheared off by a vehicle exposing a hole, but she had contacted County Council Highways department who had come out quickly and replaced the manhole cover.

18. Planning

- i. Planning application DC/18/01823 – erection of 6 new dwellings. The Six Bells, The Street, Preston St Mary.

Cllrs commented as follows:-

- It was noted that there was strong objection by parishioners to this planning application both by the submissions sent to Babergh, and here at the meeting;
- Traffic flow in the village will be increased from the nine new homes approved under outline planning permission, could the village sustain further increase in traffic in the centre of the village which would flow from a further six new homes. Parking is increasingly likely on The Street which changes the village;
- Serious concerns about the entrance into and out of the development onto The Street, particularly for service vehicles such as when the bins are collected or emergency vehicles such as ambulances require access;
- The design of the homes is tall with steep roofs, and that is not in keeping with the houses in the village, particularly given the proximity of listed buildings including The Six Bells Public House to the development;
- The design of the homes is the same for all six, albeit they may be orientated differently on a repeating pattern and again this is not in keeping with the homes in the village which are predominantly individual styles;
- Does not follow a linear pattern of The Street and not in keeping;
- The “development line” that was put in by the architect raises the question of where do you stop with your development line, as there is land that could be put forward for further development?
- Who maintains the hedges and shrubs etc coming in and out of the development as they will become overgrown at various times of the year and cause further problems with the sight line?
- Queries over the visibility line as raised by parishioners was also a concern of Cllrs;
- Acknowledgement that villages do change slightly over periods of time (outline planning had been approved for 9 new homes), but taking into account parishioners strong views about possible over development within the centre of the village the Parish Council could not ignore the general objections to this development and Cllrs felt that the concerns they had echoed the concerns raised by villagers;
- The application overstates the amenities in the village – no regular bus service and cars would be used to get to neighbouring core village of Lavenham for amenities;
- Concerns that the application does not set out the number of starter homes and the number of market homes and that this would lead a developer to build a greater number of market homes than starter;
- Concerns that the affordability of starter homes is not for local people in local jobs as they could not afford the homes;
- There had been no consultation with the village prior to submitting a full planning application, which is not the route that the developers for the 9 new homes took prior to submitting an outline planning application.

Signed.....

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- Clerk had provided guidance for Cllrs to consider, including reference to the Nolan Principles.
- Chair explained to the meeting the Parish Council had not been advised by Cllr Martin that he had had a pre-application meeting in 2017 with the planning department for 14 new homes on the site. It was not until reading through the application that they became aware of this. Since that pre-application meeting and prior to receiving this application, Cllr Martin had taken part in discussions at meetings in particular regarding the consultation on the new Joint Local Plan and the comments sent to Babergh regarding housing in the parish. Within those comments Cllr Martin seconded a proposal for consideration to new homes in the village indicating that expansion was needed. At that time the Parish Council were not aware that Cllr Martin had in fact been advised by Babergh to downscale the proposal for 14 new homes, and that this application was subsequently for 6 new homes.
- The Parish Council wished to be open and transparent with its parishioners and highlight that the only time that they became aware that Cllr Martin was submitting an application for new homes in the village was when the outline planning application for 9 new homes was received.
- The Council will highlight any concern with regards to the Nolan Principles in its response the planning department, but it may not be a matter that they take into consideration.

Cllr Mc Grory proposed and Cllr Bardzinski seconded that planning application DC/18/01823 be objected to for the reasons set out at the meeting. All Cllrs present agreed.

Date of next meeting – date to be confirmed in June to agree the AGAR and the Standing Orders

Meeting closed: 9.11pm

Signed.....

Dated.....