

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Monday, 8th May 2017 at 7.45pm in Eyke Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Fleming, in the chair, Cllr Abu-Hejleh, Cllr Cushing, Cllr Stangoe, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Whitmore, District Councillor Ray Herring, the clerk and four members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Howlett-Thomson, Mr Sutch, Mr Marr, Mrs Watson, Mrs Macfarlane, Mr Fisher, Mrs Lever. County Councillor Andrew Reid, hoped to make the meeting, but as it clashes with three others, sent his apologies in case he could not make it.

Minutes: Those of the meeting of 16th May 2016, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, agreed and signed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

Reports:

1. **Cllr Herring. District Council.** The move to the new premises at Riduna Park, Melton took place, providing a much improved fit for purpose workplace, and also the expectation of lower running costs. Customer Service points are available at Woodbridge Library and in Felixstowe, to enable people to deal with a wide range of enquiries at first point of contact, and to make appointments to see staff from other services, such as planning.

Following positive support, the formal process of merger between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils is now getting under way, and after final ratification by the Secretary of State in September, the two councils will be formally dissolved, with elections to the new authority in May 2019.

Council tax has increased by 3.25%, after a nil increase for some years. Grant income from central government continues to drop, but the district's strong economy means that income from the New Homes Bonus and business rate retention will go a long way to making up the shortfall. The council intends to adopt a more commercial approach to providing services, and to cut costs wherever possible without reducing the services it provides.

The Enabling Communities Budget has been increased to £6,500 for each member to spend on new or current community projects.

Sizewell is quiet at the moment, and with the forthcoming election, it is expected that further time will be lost. More detailed information is required about the project from EDF, and they need to demonstrate that they have listened to feedback.

Suffolk Coastal's Full Council formally agreed to adopt the recently approved planning documents which set out site allocations for new homes in the district over the next ten years. These are now part of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

Civil parking enforcement is being devolved to the council, instead of being carried out by the police. There has been mounting discontent at the lack of enforcement action across the county, over "unpoliced" illegal parking. There is much work to be done to implement this, which will be done through Norse, who run the current off street parking enforcement.

The Coastal Communities Fund Programme is helping to revitalise the coast, and to bring in more visitors. Work has been done to improve car parks in the area, at Melton and Aldeburgh.

The Tour of Britain men's race will come to Suffolk Coastal in September: the stage starts in Newmarket and ends in Aldeburgh, visiting towns and village on the way. It will bring economic and tourism benefits, as well as inspiring people to get involved in sporting activities.

Cllr Cushing questioned the lack of parking spaces allocated to new build properties and the problems of congestion caused by this. Cllr Herring replied that the planning department has to work with the government regulations on this, and an application refused on these grounds would be overturned on appeal.

2. **Neighbourhood Watch.** (*Written report: Mrs Macfarlane & Mrs Watson*) Little has been reported this year. People who have signed up to Police Connect should be receiving messages direct from that. The new website Eyke Nextdoor to which many people have signed up, will be used to post information, and it is hoped that neighbours will keep those people who do not have internet access informed.

3. **Eyke Charities** (*Written report; Mr Sutch*) The Charities gifted £150 in cash to Eyke villagers and £77.54 in the form of books to Eyke School leavers during the 2016 calendar year. Income this year: £308.76; expenditure: £227.54.

Total assets at the end of 2016: £9245.46, a growth of 11.28% on last year. The growth in asset value has been satisfying, and given that deposit investment rates are very poor, it is best to keep the investments as they are. Cash balances are low, but liabilities can be met. There is still a liability of £600 to “village hall money”

4. Eyke School Mrs Scurrell. There are currently 120 children on roll, 7 teaching staff, ably supported by 6 learning support assistants. The school cook and midday supervisors live locally .

The expected number on roll in September will be 114, but it is likely that, as in the past, children will join the school mid-year.

There are close links with the Old School House Nursery, who use school facilities, which eases their transition into school. Most children at the nursery transfer to the school.

The school attends Key Stage worship in the church every Tuesday, with Rev Janice Leaver leading the worship. She also comes into school for Celebration assemblies and to help out at topic themed days. She is also a Foundation Governor. Thanks are due to Mr Whitmore and Mr Fisher for making sure the church is unlocked, warm and welcoming on these days.

Other regulars from the village, who serve as governors are Mrs Sutch, Mrs Nicholls and Mrs Shaw.

The curriculum is topic based and has covered this year Seasides; the Americas; the Anglo Saxons; Super Heroes.

May is SAT's month for years 2 and 6, and while year 6 take their SAT's between 8th and 11th May under rigorous exam conditions, every effort is made to avoid that for year 2, who take theirs over the course of the month.

In November 2016 the school converted from a Local Authority maintained school to an Academy within the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese Multi Academy Trust (MAT), in which there are now 11 schools with a further three due to join. The change has mainly affected the school office. Although the change has been beneficial, there is still the challenge of an ever decreasing budget, and so the financial support provided by FOES is very valuable.

5. Friends Of Eyke School (*Written report by Mrs Lever, chairman. Given by Mrs Scurrell*) Between September 2015 and August 2016 FOES raised £10081.73, and spent £8099.73.

The Christmas Fayre 2015 raised £2501.46, and the one in 2016 ,£2736.00. The Summer Fayre £921.46, and there was an Adnams Grant of £777.09. Various other events have been held to raise funds, including a Matchbox Challenge, and cake sales.

A marquee has been purchase for £499.99, and improvements made to the Foundation and Year 1 outdoor area for £170.06. Various trips and treat have been funded through the year, including a caveman experience in the school which was hugely successful.

FOES is now looking to raise £15,000 for improving the climbing equipment on the field, and replacing the trim trail.

Materials have been purchased for £3071 to build an outdoor classroom. Labour is supplied for free by “Dads that do”.

There will be a fun run and BBQ on 19th May, and the Annual Summer Fayre on 24th June.

6. Village Hall (*Written report by Mr Fisher*) The hall has been used regularly by the Parish Council, the over 50's for their meetings, jumble sales and annual Christmas party, the PCC for Harvest Festival and a Spring Supper. There have been various private parties, karate sessions, yoga classes and tai chi.

The accounts have been examined and show a surplus of £2756.45, including £1000 raised by a group of villagers culminating in a New Year's Eve raffle in the village pub. This money will go towards redecoration.

Plans to change the structure of the running of the hall are ongoing, and hopefully this will be completed in the near future.

Thanks go to the users of the hall who have kept it in a reasonable condition, and especially to Mervyn Whitmore for his work keeping the outside free of weeds and litter.

With the input of the clerk to the Parish Council and members of other organisations involved in the life of the village the annual report has been made to the Suffolk Local History Society.

7. Recreation Ground. Mr Whitmore. The play area opened just over a year ago has proved to be a worthwhile addition. Dogs are not allowed inside.

Rabbits are still a problem, so users should be aware of this.

The litter problem is kept under control by clearing up on a regular basis. There is also evidence of drug use. Fly tipping has been a problem. In March a quantity of concrete and plasterboard was dumped, which the District Council had to clear up.

A key and a child's toy helicopter were found recently. Mrs Scurrall offered to put this in a school newsletter.

Mrs Wong explained that children from the nursery regularly use the playground on Fridays, and she checks for litter before the children go in. Mr Whitmore will check first thing every Friday, to save them a job. The matter of placing a rubbish bin there, and providing a shelter of some kind was raised. This will be raised at the next Parish Council meeting.

8. Eyke Millennium Group. (*Written report: Mrs Watson*) The group has been fairly active over the past year. An afternoon tea was arranged to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday, and many delicious cakes and delicacies provided. Thanks were due to Cllr Herring for providing £200 from the Enabling Communities Budget to fund this. At Christmas, Swanns Nursery kindly donated a tree for the outside of Eyke Church, which we lit up, and also decorated one inside for the Tree festival. Our theme was the celebration of Roald Dahl's 100th birthday. Thanks as ever to Mervyn Whitmore for putting up the outside tree for us. In April, after a lot of planning and training we arranged a film evening in the village hall, where we showed *Akenfield* to an audience of 60. We were lucky to have Garrow Shand, the main star, and his wife in the audience, and they answered questions afterwards. We also had Mrs Grover from Yaxley, who had supplied many of the Suffolk Punches used in the film. Thanks go especially to Janna McKendrick and Steve, who went to the training sessions, and went back and forth with all the equipment, and to Mike and Gerry Fisher, who kindly donated the pre-film wine.

Thinking caps are now on for what we can do next. All suggestions would be gratefully received.

9. Eyke Old School House Community Nursery. Mrs Wong. Mrs Wong introduced herself as the manager of the nursery, which is part of a large group called Alpha Nurseries. It became part of the Alpha Group 18 months ago. Improvements have been made to the building with new windows, and a more secure fence. The nursery has a pre school room for up to 14 children and an upstairs baby room for up to seven children under two. There are currently 21 children using the nursery, and 10 attending the breakfast club.

The hours are 7.30am to 6pm, on demand through the year.

The theme this term is anything mystical, which includes visits to the forest and the recreation ground, as well as activities in the nursery.

10. Inside Eyke: village magazine. (*Written report: Mr Marr.*) Inside Eyke has had another good year, with three issues produced, all of which were well received. We're very grateful to the people who support our efforts, and particularly to those who deliver the magazine around the village – Nicola Briggingshaw, Sandy Sutch and Mike Fisher.

We on the editorial committee have been discussing the future of Inside Eyke, and have come to the conclusion that the model of three or four issues a year, paid for solely by advertising, is longer sustainable. Work commitments mean that we just don't have time to produce so many issues, and with the recent sharp increase in printing costs, the finances don't add up. We therefore propose to move to producing just two issues a year, in Summer and Winter, which we hope in time will become larger and with more colour. We are determined to keep the magazine free, so we are actively looking for additional sources of finance. With this in mind, we would be grateful if the Parish Council would consider offering some financial support at some point in the future. We are in the process of reviewing and auditing our accounts, and will make a formal request in due course. We will also consider approaching local businesses for sponsorship.

I know from the Facebook updates I receive each month that we continue to be read not only in Eyke but well beyond. We expect to be able to continue offering this small service to the community for years to come, and hope that you will support us in our efforts where possible.

11. Tree Warden: Mrs Clements. Throughout last summer and autumn Jan Stangoe and I regularly worked to keep the copse in good order by clearing grass and weeds around most of the saplings, fitting mulch mats, replacing sticks and protective sleeves and generally caring for the young trees as best we could. We also spent much time clipping and removing brambles wherever they were threatening the young saplings- an ongoing job.

Through the Suffolk Coast and Heath's Pollinator Patches scheme Ron, Jan, Dave and I planted 100 daffodil bulbs, 50 crocus bulbs and an assortment of seeds close to the chestnut fence in the recreation ground. The daffodils all flowered as well as the crocus though these were seriously nibbled by rabbits.

In November 50 further saplings were planted in the copse to replace those previously planted saplings that had died. They were provided free by The Woodland Trust. Again, Jan, Dave and Ron deserve my thanks for helping with this task. Sadly, the deer have enjoyed nibbling the tops, amazingly, especially the holly.

In February, again as part of the Pollinator patches scheme, Jan and I planted 50 snowdrops and 50 aconites along the edge of the recreation ground, close to the forest. They flowered and looked really pretty.

Hopefully, over the years these will multiply to give a beautiful spring show.

Also in February, Jan and I planted six new saplings close to the chestnut fence, which appear to be doing well. These were supplied free by Suffolk Coasts and Heaths. The Pollinator Patch fruit trees are blossoming well and look very healthy. Most of the saplings in the copse are thriving and growing nicely. There are a lot of hawthorn trees flourishing and, thankfully, some hardwood, rowan and poplar. It is slow work but I hope that in a further couple of years they can be left to their own devices.

As far as I am aware there are no schemes available during 2017, which leaves my faithful helper Jan Stangoe and me to carry on caring for the small trees during the rest of the year. Perhaps we could do a rain dance as a lack of water is a problem, but one we can do little about.

12. Suffolk County Council. In Cllr Reid's absence, his report, which had been distributed was taken as read.

13. Annual Report: Dr Therese Coffey MP The clerk will forward this on request, and put it on the website.

14. Parish Council: Cllr John Fleming, chairman. Cllr Fleming reported that it had been a fairly quiet year, in the wake of the bustle of the year when the playground was installed. He was very pleased to announce that the Parish Council is back up to its full complement of 7 councillors, with the co-option in March of Cllrs Lesley Thomas, and Emma Howlett-Thomson.

Finance: The Parish Council accounts are available for inspection, and all relevant information will shortly be posted on the website.

To receive items for information: None

There being no more business, Cllr Fleming thanked everyone for coming, and closed the meeting at 9.00pm.