

# Fornham St Martin cum St Genevieve Parish Council

Victoria Bright, Clerk, 3 Scott Avenue, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7LT

Tel: 07712 232920 Email: fsmsgpc@gmail.com

## Annual Parish Meeting of Fornham St Martin cum St Genevieve Held in the Village Hall, at 7pm on THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017

### Minutes

Present Parish Council: Cllr. M. Collier, Cllr. P. Butler, Cllr. P. Forster & Cllr. L. Flaherty.  
Clerk, Vicky Bright.

Also Present: Rebecca Hopfensperger – SEBC/SCC, Revd. Haworth & David Yates – St Martin's Church, Julia Wakelam – Mayor St Edmundsbury, Maureen Hockett – VHC, Peter Forster – Elderberry Friendship & Social Club, Beryl Dykes – Ladies Club.

18 Members of Public were in attendance.

1. **Cllr. Mike Collier presides as Chair of the meeting.**
2. **To approve the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016**

#### **Resolved 17/05/1**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 were adopted as a true statement and signed by the Chairman (MC).

### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

3. **To receive a report from the Parish Council Chairman (Cllr. Mike Collier):**

This year has been to some degree dominated yet again by the WSOH. As Chairman I have again attended numerous meetings with the Chairmen of Great Barton and Fornham All Saints Parish Councils at Community Liaison Groups and the Community Forum. The village also held a "drop in" meeting which helped clarify many of the issues for residents surrounding the WSOH. As of writing the planning consultation has ended, and I would like to thank all residents who have seen fit to contribute objection letters to the Boroughs planning department. Your Parish Councils response is available on our website and will also be in the next Bugle.

During the early part of the year the playing field suffered a severe attack of Chafer bugs and with the Rooks digging the grass to feed on them a large part of the playing field was ruined. Whilst investigating our options as to what to do about the situation the Parish Council was made aware that there was an issue with the ownership and trusteeship of this village asset. The paperwork connecting the hand over from the now defunct Playing Field Committee was not correctly completed. Thanks to our clerk Vicky Bright's experience in such matters, she has been able to progress the complicated process through solicitors and the problem is almost resolved. In passing the Parish Council does not intend to consider a wild flower meadow at this time.

Your Parish Council is still focused on the speeding issues within the village and our new VAS (vehicle activated signage) system is in constant use. Last November someone saw fit to attach a firework to the device and set light to it which severely damaged the VAS and cost the Parish Council £1700.00 to repair. Going forward we hope to be working with two other local Parish Councils to collectively analyse much of the information that this machine collects. This information could be very valuable when challenging the Borough in future on environmental/traffic issues. The Parish Council would very much like to hear from any

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residents within the village that are skillful with data processing to see if they could assist in any way with analysing the data.

Following the surprise departure in the middle of the year of the Clerk, our new Clerk Vicky Bright joined us. Vicky has quickly settled into her role and has worked hard to get up to speed on all the issues the Parish Council is currently dealing with. I personally would like to thank her for all her support and hard work together with her infectious enthusiasm and considerable experience that she brings to the role. I would also like to welcome Lizzie Flaherty our new councillor to the team. Lizzie joined us towards the end of last year and we look forward to working with her.

On behalf of the residents I want to record the Parish Councils thanks for David Hoggetts hard work and commitment in keeping our village tidy and free of litter. David has been active in the role for over 17 years and we all appreciate the work that he has done for us. He now wishes to retire and as of writing we are in the process of recruiting his replacement. David has kindly agreed to continue litter picking until the end of May to give us time to do this.

This year has been an extremely busy year for myself and Parish Council colleagues. I thank them for their efforts and valuable contributions to Parish Council business. I would also like to thank Rebecca Hopfensperger for all her professional advice and support together with the generous financial assistance that she provides for village projects. Sue and Pat Brooklyn continue to edit The Bugle and our thanks should go to them for all their efforts and hard work. None of us would be reading The Bugle if it wasn't for the team who give up their free time to deliver a copy to all households so a big thank you to them as well. Our clubs and societies continue to prosper in the village and a big thank you must go to all who contribute to making them successful.

#### 4. To receive a report from County and District Councillor, Rebecca Hopfensperger:

##### **Suffolk County Council**

**Budget** – Suffolk County Council have frozen general council tax for the seventh year in a row, this budget savings was made of £31.5m with £4.5m being taken from reserves to cover the budget gap. SCC continued with the adult social care precept of 3% which is ring-fenced money for adult social care raising £8.5m which is invested in full to front line services in addition the government awarded us an adult care grant of £3.3m resulting in £12m investment in adult social care.

**West Suffolk Operational Hub** - This remains a big issue for the village, whilst we put up a good fight the full council at St Edmundsbury voted for the planning application to be put forward for Hollow Road, minus myself and a few other who spoke and voted against the proposal. The planning application consultation stage has concluded. We still disagree that Hollow Road is the correct site for the hub, but as that decision has been made, I believe that the general feeling is that the plan for the operations itself have been improved, however there are still very serious concerns about the road infrastructure and traffic issues caused by the hub, the plan is still woefully inadequate in addressing increase numbers of traffic, speed issues and safety concerns to name but a few.

**Mobile VAS** - I was pleased to be able to support the purchase of a mobile vehicle activated sign for the village, which I hope is helping towards traffic management in the village.

**Locality Budget** – Through my locality budget I was pleased to be able to support the village hall in fixing the roof, the church in restoring the organ and the elderberry club in their Christmas lunch.

**Highway Matters** – Suffice to say that highway issues take up a lot of my time ranging from pothole repairs to flooding/drainage issues, and trimming of the verges and trees around the village to name but a few. I was pleased to be able to facilitate a meeting with

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the highways dept., the parish council, myself and other interested parties to look at how we can work better with the dept. and look at how we can influence changes which are brought about by the various developments surrounding the parish. We have committed to holding these meetings regularly to discuss and resolve major issues and I am hoping that this will prove to be of benefit to the parish. It was also suggested the parish council takes part in a pilot to take on some of the highway powers that the council has and this is in its early planning stages.

**Broadband** - Currently, we are at around 90% fibre coverage in Suffolk. BT are currently re-modelling the rollout plan for the second contract, which will run to 2019. This is a result of a Suffolk County Council move to introduce the "clawed back" funding into the contract, pushing coverage higher, beyond the 97% by 2019 target.

**Education – GCSE's**- Suffolk's GCSE has risen above the national average. Suffolk is now ranked in the top half of all authorities for progress at GCSE level, at **55<sup>th</sup> out of 151**. It is important to recognise that the way a school's progress is measured has changed this year nationally. Progress 8 is the Government's new way of measuring GCSE results. It measures how well pupils of all abilities have progressed by comparing them with students who achieved similar levels in Key Stage 2 across the country. Across Suffolk, 60.1% of students achieved the national measure of attaining a grade C or above in English and maths. This is **3% higher than last year** and marks a **6% increase since 2014**. Suffolk students have also closed the gap to the national average state funded schools from 6% in 2014 to just 3% this year. Suffolk continues to be above the national figure of 59.3% for all schools. This is a real sign that Suffolk is making good progress.

**Ofsted** – There has been a more than 20% rise in Suffolk Schools being judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. This rate is currently improving more than twice as fast as those across the country, 90% of Suffolk schools are now rated 'good' or 'outstanding', this means that 9/10 children in Suffolk now have access to the highest standards of education.

**Early Years** – In Suffolk 70.2% of children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) this year. This is slightly above the rest of England.

## St Edmundsbury

**Budget** - St Edmundsbury has a sound financial plan. It continues to keep Council Tax as low as possible 1.96% this year, whilst still maintaining services and I would say enhance services as well. We continue to make Capital funds work for you by investing in what you the residents need. The latest is a joint venture with Forest Heath and Suffolk County Council called Barley Homes. This is making maximum use of mostly County land to build much needed affordable homes in West Suffolk. £12 million pounds has been put into the plan from both St Eds and Forest Heath to deliver the first 96 homes. We have always said that we will not be providing homes without jobs. We have created Enterprise Zones at Suffolk Park Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Research Park, Haverhill.

**Planning** – Suffice to say the parish has had its fair share of large applications including Dream Lodge and WSOH it has been a pleasure to speak at development control committee and delegation panel meetings representing the parish's views and wherever possible I will continue to do so. I am part of the Town Centre Masterplan working group, a consultation on the masterplan closed on 21<sup>st</sup> April. There were more than 1,000 responses with several ideas and suggestions, this will become a formal Supplementary Planning Document to give guidance on local plans.

**Abbecroft Leisure** – St Edmundsbury have just agreed a new deal with Abbecroft Leisure which will provide even more leisure facilities for residents at a lower cost than the Council could provide them for. The new deal also involves providing extra building with Abbecroft picking up the equipment costs and working to a zero subsidy.

**West Suffolk Council** - You will have seen that St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath are working even closer together under the name of West Suffolk I. We already have joint staff sharing with one Chief Executive Officer. There has already been a saving of £4 million across the two Councils but further savings are needed. The next step might be a joint

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Council but this won't happen overnight because there has to be an agreed plan to have a mutual Council Tax base and this will be something which is consulted on.

## 5. To receive a report from the Mayor of St Edmundsbury (Cllr. Julia Wakelam):

The Mayor is the public face of the Borough, and is the First Citizen. The role is ceremonial and acts as the lead for SEBC on formal occasions. James Oakes donated the Gold Mayoral Chain.

Occasions attended; Remembrance Service, Minden Day (To remember the battle of Minden) Jenkin Smith, Alderman Service at the Guild Hall School.

Selection of Engagements attended; Royal Photographic Society, Judged the Photo exhibition. Inspected the sea cadets. Southgate Fun Day, Homeguards Concert, Art Exhibition in Tuddenham, Golf Day at Flempton, Elderberries Club, Schools, Air Force Cadets.

Also a member on the Development Control Committee.

## 6. Police Service Report/Q&A Session (PC Paul Fox, Suffolk Constabulary)

PC Fox did not attend.

## 7. Q&A Session – Eastern Concrete Representatives (Tom Baker, MD & Simon Asher General Manager)

Mr Baker spoke about the impact on the Community and that he wants face to face relationship. The site has been here since the mid 1960's. Improvements need to be made to the site and it is hoped to consult with the community and local Councils. This is the only plant in the Bury St Edmunds area and is therefore very busy. The local economy forms the corner stone, with improvements to infrastructure and buildings, concrete is needed. The plans for the site are to envelope the plant into 1 building, thus improving the natural landscape, containing noise and dust etc. Conservation work is to be carried out and wildlife encouraged. Turnover of the staff is minimal with 9 employees at the site, turnover is substantial as it is a high value product. Visibility concerns are to be addressed. The plant hopes with support and help from the Parish Councils to lobby the Highways Agency to improve roads local to the plant (West Stow Lane etc.) and to look at the speed limit on the road at the entrance to the site. There are no plans to apply for a licence for more HGV's, as the plant is running at full capacity and has hit the critical mass. It was agreed that noise pollution would be looked at and hopefully controlled through contracts and mitigation with drivers, to ensure designated HGV routes are appreciated and used. Regular toolbox/safety talks are given to drivers to ensure they are polite. It was also agreed to look at H&S Reg's to check on options for sound emitting devices and flashing lights to warn when lorries are reversing, to help with noise pollution. The noise from the loading/unloading shovel will hopefully be contained in the new building and application, and it was agreed to look at lighting surveys with the new application.

## 8. To invite a report from local clubs and societies:

- *St Martin's Church (Revd. Canon Mark Haworth & David Yates):*

Revd. Haworth spoke to the meeting and explained he has 7 churches, it was agreed to split the Fornham's into two separate churches, as they are two separate parishes it made sense. This should encourage interfunction and will hopefully thrive better with independence.

David Yates offered his thanks to Revd. Haworth and reported the following;

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The church in the village had another busy year in 2016, both in terms of attendances at weekly services, special services at church festivals like Easter and Christmas, and community events.

Thanks go to our Priest in Charge, Revd Canon Mark Haworth and Hon. Assistant Priest Revd Sylvia Bareham for carrying out the majority of services during the year, supported by other team ministers when necessary. 1054 people attended services, including 60 children, that's nearly 90 a month for the 2 services on Sundays and 2 on Tuesdays, but always room for a few more.! Additionally, we officiated at 5 funeral services in church, 4 at the crematorium, a burial of ashes, a Marriage Thanksgiving and 3 baptisms for 641 people, including 30 children. 545 residents at Fornham House attended the weekly Communion Service over the year. In total 2240 benefitted from the 103 services held throughout 2016, so the church is still very active in the life of the village.

We were pleased to see the Parish Council at the Remembrance Service, and hope this will encourage others to come to this important service in the nations heritage.

The church continues to be well cared for thanks to a small team of cleaners and flower arrangers, as well as a fabric group who maintain the condition of the building and make improvements where feasible, practical and viable, under the strict guidance of the Diocese authority, whose appointed Architect carries out detailed inspections every 5 years, and makes recommendations for regular maintenance.

Our regular Book Sales Coffee and Cakes were held 4 times during the year and continue to be very popular, with people coming from the surrounding area as well as the village. As well as raising money for the church maintenance, they are a valuable social event, for folk to drop in and have a chat over tea and cake. Our regular concert by The Tudor Rose Singers was again well attended, and a very enjoyable social evening of mixed music with some organ pieces on our recently restored wind pipe organ, with a wine buffet. The annual combined fete was held at Fornham All Saints Community Centre last July, and will be at Fornham House, FSM this year. Always a good day out with lots of stalls, games, tombola and prize draw etc. and teas.

We have just held our Annual Meeting to elect a Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the coming year. With our Priest in Charge, Mark Haworth, proposing to separate the management of the 2 Fornhams churches, this means a smaller more focussed Council, meeting not less than 4 times a year. Sylvia Hilton and David Yates were re-elected as Churchwardens for another year, in the absence of any additional nominations, together with Anita Rooney (secretary) as new Deputy Warden and we are grateful to Heather Long, Sarah Cooledge, Joan Webb and Maureen Groves (with one vacancy to be filled) who continue to form the rest of the Council.

The formalities of merging the 7 churches in our Lark Valley Benefice with the 3 churches in the North Bury Team continues, under Mark Haworth, and the Church Commissioners are now finalising the legal documentation. This will have little implications for how St Martins continues to provide services and events, with all the churches continuing to cooperate and support each other, and manage and support themselves individually, thus providing a variety of Places of Worship available to everyone in both town and country. We are planning to carry out some improvements including removal of the Yew near the War Memorial to give more space for the Remembrance Service, replace the lead water supply pipe with current specification plastic and replace the old worn carpet in the south aisle area. A detailed inspection has been carried out of the supporting framework to the 6 bells in the tower and major works are required if the bells are to be brought back into full use again. Quotations for the works are now being obtained, possibly including providing

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an upper ringed floor allowing better use of the ground floor say for kitchen facilities. Finally, grateful thanks to the Parish Council for the annual grant of £750 last year towards the £2,262 cost of the churchyard maintenance of grass cutting, hedge & yews trimming and boundary wall repairs last year.

- the Gardening Club (Clerk read out on behalf of Frances Harpley);

Fornham Garden Club, from its inception in 1995, has continued to thrive, with a current membership in excess of 70 and a healthy balance sheet. Meetings are held on the Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm in Fornham St Martin Village Hall, with a guest speaker covering a variety of topics from planting up hanging baskets and containers, to trees and shrubs for small gardens, plants for an herbaceous border, roses and so on, for 10 months of the year. A visit to a local garden of interest one evening in the Summer and a dinner during January bring us round to our AGM in April very quickly. We currently enjoy at least four outings during the months May to September, all of which have brought happy and special memories, and this year promises to be no exception with visits to RHS Wisley and Sandringham Flower Show just a sample. Over the years we have donated funds to a variety of national and local charities, the latest recipient being the Local First Responders Group, who rely on public support for their funding. Details of our existence and activities appear in the local bi-monthly Fornham Bugle and the monthly Lark Valley Benefice Magazine.

- the Ladies Club (Beryl Dykes);

We have regular speakers giving talks on subjects from Looking Good & Beauty, Mary Tudor, 102 Days Around the World to Confessions of a Tax Inspector (which was actually very good). We have a Christmas Dinner and a Summer Social Evening. In June we visited Little Saxham Garden and gave Tea to residents at Fornham Lodge. We meet on the Third Wednesday of the month at 7:45pm in the Village Hall, you don't need to be a lady to join, but you do need to be female.

- the Toddler Group (Jean Cook);

The group was formed in November 1989 as a breakaway group from Fornham All Saints which had grown too big! I have been involved in my present role since April 1995 having previously attended as child-minder to my grand-daughter who now attends as a mum with her baby son. The aim of the group is to provide play and socialising for all children from birth to school age and of course a time for mums to chat together over a cup of tea or coffee. We provide drinks and biscuits for the children and the mums take it in turn to provide a cake or small cakes each week which we sell at 20p per portion and this usually covers the cost of all the refreshments over the year. Our year runs from September - July in conjunction with the school year and is open to anyone from the village and surrounding area. We charge a joining fee of £2.50 per term and a weekly attendance fee of £2.00. We are affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance which involves paying an annual insurance premium which this year was £84.16 covering us for loss of equipment etc. I would add that all involved in running the group do so on a purely voluntary basis and also each mum/child-minder is responsible for their child/children.

- Elderberry Friendship & Social Club (Peter Forster);

Formed in 2009, it was formerly an over 60's club, with a membership of 32, funded by the West Suffolk Community Trust. We have monthly meetings in Fornham All Saints Community Centre which includes games, craft and talks. In 2014 we were lucky to have a Christmas Dinner at the 3 Horse Shoe Pub, funded by Cllr. Hopfensperger. The membership now stands at 35 members and is open to anyone over 50. We regularly hold Bring & Buy and

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Car Boot Sales to raise funds for trips. In 2017 we did a Coach trip to a show and a meal. We rely solely upon donations.

- the Village Hall Committee (Maureen Hockett);

The hall is used regularly and has bookings most days, including regular Toddler Group, Ladies Group, Yoga and workshops. We have had 13 children's and family parties this year and it was used by 16 organisations. It has been booked twice this year as a Polling Station. Slimming World is now held here on a Monday at 7:30pm. The Committee often uses their own DIT skills to help maintain the hall, and we give thanks to David Beckett for volunteering for DIY and Gardening. Steve Rodwell is still involved and our thanks to him for dealing with the weeds. We recently had repairs carried out to the ceiling and to the chimney, to improve ventilation and to reduce the noise of the birds. Works took 12 days and part of the hall had to be closed off, and some meetings cancelled, our thanks to all for their patience during this time. Our thanks also to the Parish Council and Cllr. Hopfensperger for their donations. We are currently looking at improvements to the lighting at the front and far side corner and the fire escape. Costs are managed well, the largest bill being the Electricity, which we thank the Parish Council for their donation towards this. We are looking at purchasing new chairs. Parking has improved, although the posts installed had to be removed as they kept being raised when the hall was in use causing issues and the lock was also damaged. In November 2017 Colleen is to leave us after 7 years, we offer our thanks to her and we will miss her as she has been a true asset. We are always in need of new volunteers.

The Parish Council extended their thanks to Maureen and Phil.

## **PUBLIC FORUM:**

- A resident raised concerns whether the King George V field was under the management of the Parish Council and if so, should the accounting statements be published at this meeting. The Clerk advised that the transfer of the Trusteeship and the Deeds had not yet formally happened and therefore the Parish Council was not yet responsible for the Field or its accounts.
- The issue of free speech and Public Forum during meetings was raised, the Clerk and the Chairman of the Parish Council advised that the Public Forum, and the wording on agenda's is a Best Practice Formality and that the Parish Council welcomes public feedback and questions and although the best place for this is the Public Forum at the start of meetings, residents can make a statement of questions during items on the agenda at the discretion of the Chairman.

**Meeting Closed at 8:40pm**