

POLSTEAD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th April 2011 in Polstead Village Hall

Present: Nick Brandt (Chairman), Dave Crimmin (Clerk), Sue Wigglesworth (Babergh District Councillor), David Yorke-Edwards (Suffolk County Councillor), PCSO Amanda Coleman and 15 members of the public.

2011/01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Erica Pomerans, Brian and Margaret Regan.

2011/02 Minutes of Meeting held on 6th April 2010

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2011/03 Report from Suffolk Constabulary

PCSO Amanda Colman gave the following report. Good evening for those of you who don't know me I am PCSO 3108 Amanda Coleman your local point of contact for Suffolk Police based at Hadleigh. Over the last month the Babergh SNT's have been and are still visiting all the farms within the Babergh area, 'The Babergh Agricultural campaign' is an initiative aimed at reducing farm crime .We hope that by meeting all farmers/managers/gamekeepers that we will be able to improve our intelligence network and ability to share information with them more professionally. These groups are our eyes and ears in rural locations. They will know when a vehicle is out of place etc and we should seek to build these relationships and capture this knowledge. The idea is for each farm to be visited by the SNT to gain a one to one relationship with the owner / manager / keeper and to address any particular concerns they may have or feel.

Residents across Suffolk are being encouraged to join a new police and community partnership initiative, which aims to enhance the quality of life where they live. Suffolk Street Watch has been successfully launched in Ipswich and follows on from similar schemes elsewhere in the country. It will be only the second such initiative in the region, with communities in Bedfordshire being the only other people to enjoy its merits in East Anglia. Street Watch is run by local residents who want to promote good citizenship and support a stronger community while empowering communities to take ownership of their public spaces through high-visibility patrols. They are asked to walk in pairs wearing high visibility Street Watch jackets, for a minimum of two hours a month. It's a very sociable scheme and once launched, it is run by the volunteers for the volunteers — there is little need for police involvement. Other Forces have found a remarkable decrease in incidents of anti-social behaviour and low-level crime in the areas where Street Watch is running. Sgt Sarah Shrubshall is the county lead for Street Watch and is keen to encourage more schemes to start across Suffolk. If you are interested in starting a scheme in your area, then please contact Sgt Shrubshall on 01473 613500 or e-mail sarah.shrubshall@suffolk.pnn.police.uk in the first instance as she has all the information you will need. She is happy to come out to your area to speak to members of the public and gain support for further schemes.

With regard to crimes that have occurred in the Polstead area between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2011 there were 12 crimes reported of which 2 were detected compared to 12 reported and 3 Detected last year. These consist of 3 Burglary, 3 Criminal damage, 4 Theft related offences, 1 Harassment and 1 Endangering Safety of Aircraft. Theft related crime increased slightly some of which could have been avoided by vehicle owners not leaving valuables on display for the opportunist thief to steal. Heating Oil and Metal theft was also on the increase all over the country not just Suffolk and still is, what with the price of oil and scrap metal.

Please report any suspicious persons or vehicles in the area, if you can a direction of travel, descriptions, all or even partial registration numbers are always helpful. Just a reminder for those that didn't know as of the 1st December 2010 Hadleigh and Capel Police stations will be open on the following Days and Times:

- Capel will be open 10 am - 12 midday. Monday Wednesday and Friday
- Hadleigh will be open 1 pm - 3 pm Monday Wednesday and Friday

Signed Date.....

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If you have any comments or question or just need. some Crime Reduction advice then please do not hesitate to contact the Babergh East Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)
baberoeast.sntsuffolk.pnn.police.uk

2011/04 Report from County Councillor

David Yorke-Edwards reported that Annual Report from County Councillor David Yorke-Edwards for the year ending April 2011. I have been proud to have represented the people of Samford Division on Suffolk County Council for the six years since May 2005. Samford Division covers a mainly rural area of the County including the following parishes Bentley, Capel St. Mary, East Bergholt, Higham, Holton St. Mary, Layham, Polstead, Raydon, Shelley, Stratford St. Mary, Wenham Magna and Wenham Parva.

I am a member of the Audit Committee of Suffolk County Council and also currently represent the County Council on the following bodies:-

1. Babergh Community Safety Partnership
2. Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership
3. Suffolk Association of Local Councils
4. Suffolk ACRE Management Board
5. Eastern Angles Theatre Company
6. Tattingstone Quarry Liaison Group.

In February Suffolk County Council had to produce one of it's most difficult budgets ever. Our main problem was that our grant from central government for the year 2011/12 has been reduced by £37 million, this was a far larger reduction than we were expecting, and we will have an even larger shortfall of £43 million for next year to cover increases in our elderly population and other costs such as landfill tax. Our troubles will continue into the following year where our budget gap will rise to £50 million. However, one piece of good news is that for the forthcoming year our Council Tax is not being increased.

We also hope that by working alongside the voluntary sector and implementing our policy of divestment we can avoid some of the cuts which have been proposed. One area which could affect us locally is the proposal which could lead to closure of the library in Capel St. Mary. We need to look at new ways of delivering services, and I hope that I can contribute to a change in outlook which will mean that we retain a library service.

2011/05 Report from District Councillor

Sue Wigglesworth reported that Babergh continues to deliver excellent value for money. The 2010/11 budget achieved £1.6 million savings and a further £1.7 million savings have been identified for next year. There is a freeze on Council Tax for the coming year and at £139.01 for a Band D property Babergh is in the lowest 20% nationally for Borough/District Councils and is the second lowest in Suffolk.

The year has been dominated by the coalition government's cuts in funding for local government. At the LGA Conference in July the new Minister of State for Local Government, Eric Pickles, made it very clear that he wanted substantial savings. "Show me the money" was his slogan. District councils across the country are working together to save money through shared contracts, shared services and shared management. Babergh has a waste collection contract with Mid-Suffolk and a new Shared Revenues Partnership with Ipswich and Mid-Suffolk which will be starting in May and will be based in Ipswich.

We have just completed the process of appointing a single Chief Executive and Charlie Adan will be starting her new job in the third week of May. (The salary is slightly lower than Babergh's current CE, but there have been, of course, costs around redundancy and pensions for the two out-going CEs.) We also have a shared Head of Legal Services which came about through a

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natural retirement at Mid-Suffolk. The new CE will continue the process of forming a single management team over the next few months and the predicted savings are all part of the £1.7million I referred to earlier.

The proposal which gives me considerable concern, is to merge the two councils and create a new Council with one set of policies and priorities. This is subject to a local poll, a review by the Boundary Commission and a final decision from the Secretary of State. A merger would create the biggest District Council in the country which, for locally- based services such as planning, safer neighbourhoods and housing, will require some sort of locality arrangements. The number of councillors would be nearly halved making their role less local and increasingly political. More savings could be made, but 80% of the predicted savings are through the integration of services and management. There is a risk that the sheer size of the merged councils could add more costs through locality arrangements than predicted and eat into the extra 20% of savings predicted for the single council.

Over the year I have continued in my role as Chairman of the Housing Panel.

- With the credit crunch the Homelessness Team have been working very hard to prevent people losing their homes.
- Making the most of our housing stock is essential and we have new incentives to encourage tenants who are under-occupying to consider moving to a smaller property.
- We hope to reach our target of 100 new affordable homes for the year but the exceptionally bad winter combined with the down-turn in the housing market has made building targets more difficult than usual. We also have a number of village local needs schemes in the pipeline and I'm pleased that Polstead PC is among those who have decided to do another local needs housing survey. It is so important to keep in touch with the needs of our own villages.
- After several years of negotiations we are, at last, making good progress with the redevelopment of the Poplar Road site in Gt Cornard.

New legislation takes a while but the government is making changes, not only concerning local government funding ,but also around council house tenancies and planning. Planning applications always raise the most public interest and in Polstead we are fortunate to have the extra protection of the designated conservation area, the AONB and the special landscape area. However, the need for more/bigger pylons is distressing and is beyond Babergh's normal protection policies. National Grid will be back and I know we are all hoping for a favourable solution.

I have represented Polstead at Babergh for 20 years and it is a privilege to have done so. We are now going into the 4-yearly elections and I hope to be returned. There is always more to do and I still have the energy to do it. Meanwhile, thank you for listening and I'm happy to take any questions.

2011/06 Report from Neighbourhood Watch

In the absence of Brian Regan the Chairman read the following report. You may recall that for a previous Annual Parish Meeting report I advised that Neighbourhood Watch was effectively defunct as a parish-wide scheme. I also suggested that individual areas within the parish might wish to implement their own schemes. To the best of my knowledge this suggestion was not publicised, neither do I know of any locality that has started its own Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

2011/07 Report from Polstead Village Hall Committee

Sue Wigglesworth reported that the Village Hall remains a key social centre for Polstead residents, which is fully booked throughout the year. The ladies toilets have now been fully refurbished and a project to refurbish the gents toilets is about to start. The film club has now shown over 80 films and annually this makes a £2,000 profit. Sue stressed that it is very important that all users of the hall have a representative on the management committee.

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2011/08 Report from Polstead Village Recorder

Bill Wigglesworth reported that during the past year. During the past year we have continued to develop our collection of records of Polstead and have received many welcome additions to our collection of records, documents and photographs. We are continuing to organise these to make them as accessible as possible, particularly to local residents and those with past links with Polstead. Our main activities have included the following.

Current events

We have continued to record events in Polstead which we feel may be of particular interest in the future. These have included, first, the consecration of the extension of the churchyard by the Right Reverend Nigel Stock, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, on 8 December (*see below*). Bishop Nigel also dedicated the recently reordered South aisle to St Cedd (who is said to have preached under the Gospel Oak in 653 AD).



Completed churchyard extension



Consecration of the churchyard extension



Bishop Nigel

Secondly, two recent developments beside the village green are worthy of mention. The first was the erection by the Parish Council of a shelter for those waiting to meet school buses etc, on the South side of the village hall (*see below*). The provision of shelter, which was held up for many years due to doubts about where it should be sited, sadly comes after the cancellation of many day time bus services. Second was the remodelling and planting of the bank opposite Cock Farm which was carried out by the Village Hall Committee and the Community Shop (*see below*).

Thirdly, we have continued to record other on-going events, as opportunity offers, for example, the Gardening Club walk in Stoke by Nayland Cherry Wood in Spring 2010 (*see below*).



Shelter on Polstead Green



Bank by Heath Road



Gardening Club at Cherry Wood

Pictures of local events are always welcome; and if anyone feels that an event should be recorded please contact one of us and we will do our best to respond.

Records of the past

We have made a number of further important additions to our collection of records, to add to the many photographs and other records we already hold.

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Burial records

Martin and Jackie Mitchell have been very kindly up-dating of the index to the detailed burial records we have from 1876 to 1986; and revising the map that was originally compiled by the Women's Institute in the 1980s. Final updating continues to fill in the gaps as far as possible and the information will be available soon.

History of Polstead School

Anne Lewis has compiled an excellent set of records on the history of Polstead School (1886 to 1990), which is available for anyone interested to consult. Anne would still welcome any further material, such as photographs etc., which may be available.

Public Houses in Polstead

Anne Lewis has also extended our collection of records of past public houses in Polstead. She would very much welcome any further information or old records about them that anyone may have. In particular, she would like to learn more about the Black Horse in Polstead Street, Stoke by Nayland, which until the second quarter of the twentieth century was in the parish of Polstead.

Brewery Farm

Hugh Lilley has kindly lodged with us records from Brewery Farm, Bower House Tye, dating from the last years of the 19th century onwards, when the farm operated as what today would be known as a micro brewery, making quantities of ale for local farms to keep their workers going. In 1894 beer was being sold for 10d per gallon.

Report on the excavation of the churchyard extension

We now have available the first report by the Suffolk Archaeological Team on their excavation of the churchyard extension in 2009. A copy can be made available for inspection by anyone wishing to read it. This was the first full archaeological intervention at Polstead and has confirmed the history of settlement here going back well before the arrival of the Romans in the first century AD. A number of Late Iron Age remains were discovered, including what are thought to be two "feasting pots", which are still undergoing detailed analysis. Some worked flints also came to light. It is evident that settlement on the hill around what is now the site of the church has a very long history. A further report is due to follow once full analysis of the finds has been completed.

Open Day

We held a second successful Open Day at Polstead Village Hall on Sunday 14 November 2010. The event again generated a lot of interest and was very well attended by local people and others looking through the many varied records, some seeking information about their past relations and everyone enjoying the social atmosphere.

The date coincided with Remembrance Sunday and Martin Mitchell kindly produced a special exhibit of the names on the Polstead War Memorial and Roll of Honour in the church. We are seeking further information about, and possibly memorabilia concerning, those from Polstead who fell and those who served in the two world wars.

A further feature was a continuous slide presentation on the hall's large screen of a selection of photographs of Polstead over the last 100 years. Many who came recognised themselves, or others, from days gone past.

At the end of the afternoon we showed two wartime films relating to the area from the East Anglian Film Archive. First, "Wartime Suffolk", about the direct impact of war on the local countryside, and, secondly, "Spring Offensive", about the major effort made in 1940 to bring as much land as possible into cultivation, following the agricultural depression of the 1930s, so as to feed the nation during wartime. (*See below*).

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Open Day 14 November 2010



Open Day



Open Day

We again made a surplus from selling refreshments during the day and we have now built up a small reserve fund to cover future activities.

Suffolk Recorders' Day, October 2010

Together with Martin Mitchell, we jointly attended the Suffolk Recorders' Day on 17 October 2010 at Elmswell Community Centre. As usual, this was a very successful day. Topics included a number of very interesting accounts of the activities of other local recorder groups covering contrasting interests; and, as usual, we were left with plenty to reflect on.

Inquiries

We continue to receive a wide range of inquiries, mostly about possible links with past residents of Polstead. During the year these have included:

- (1) An inquiry from the USA seeking confirmation that an early settler in the mid 17th century had been born in Polstead (eventually it turned out that he had been born in Boxford).
- (2) A survey of 17 members of the Lilley family buried in Polstead.
- (3) Two inquiries, one from New Zealand, relating to the Sowman family, which flourished in Polstead in the mid 19th century.
- (4) An inquiry concerning the memorial in Polstead churchyard to George Barnes, a farm labourer at Bower House Tye, who died in 1871 at the early age of 41, leaving a widow (buried in the same grave in 1906) and eight children, the last of whom was still living with his mother in 1901.

Following up these and other inquiries has added considerably to our detailed knowledge of past inhabitants of Polstead.

Future activities

We intend during the next year to:

- (1) continue to develop and improve our records and ensure their safekeeping in good conditions;
- (2) hold another Open Day on **20 November 2010** which, as usual, will be open to anyone interested;
- (3) press on with establishing a recording facility for oral testimony of current residents; and
- (4) maintain and improve the information available on the Polstead web site.

Any suggestions about other things we might be doing would be most welcome.

Bill Wigglesworth (ww@reedheath.keme.co.uk)

Anne Lewis (annelewis1@tiscali.co.uk)

2011/09 Report from Polstead Tree Warden

Jim Marshall gave the following report. VISITS: I have had a number of enquiries leading to visits to individual properties in Polstead and Polstead Heath.

RESPONSIBILITIES: As Tree Warden I am best used as first point of contact regarding tree matters as my principle role is to advise on who should be consulted next (e.g. the local council or

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other professional help). Tree wardens do not have any legal responsibility and are not able to give technical advice.

ANCIENT TREE SURVEY: I was contacted by Suffolk County Council regarding a survey of Ancient/Historic Trees. I am unable to do a formal survey but would however be pleased to receive any information on such trees in the Parish.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS: We need to do an audit of paperwork held in the Parish concerned Tree Preservation orders. The documents I hold end in the 1990's. I will contact Babergh District Council and Polstead Parish Clerk to see if we should have copies of any more recent documents.

2011/10 Report from Chairman of Polstead Parish Council

Nick Brandt felt that it was appropriate to look back over the last 4 years as the parish council election is now upon us. He thanked the councillors for the work and support and in particular to two councillors who were now stepping down, Michael Hackford after 15 years service and Theresa Ravensdale who has served one term. Nick also wished to thank Brian and Margaret Regan for the support and handover to the new council in 2007.

The council has evolved its own approach and style i.e.

- Continuing to support the main institutions - grass cutting the churchyard, clock maintenance and contributing to the Village Hall heating costs
- Continuing to support Suffolk charities, commenting on 30 planning applications on which Babergh District Council and PPC disagreed on 4 occasions
- Avoiding as far as possible bureaucratic activity:
 - Reorganisation of local government
 - Parish plans
 - Quality parish Councils
 - Courseswhich enables the council to concentrate of village priorities.
- Looking at ways to improve life in the village:
 - in the number of allotments let
 - Bringing the footpaths under control and maintained that way
 - Steps in FP4 and FP35
 - Strimming the pond bank
 - John's Walk
 - Reclaimed land by pond bridge
 - Surface of path in Dollops Wood by SCC
 - Painting pond railings
 - Kids fishing
 - Village Shelter.
- Socially with the Hog Roast and Christmas Carol Service.

It has failed though to improve Polstead's standing in the Village of the Year competitions.

With the issue of the location for the village shelter being solved by Sue Wigglesworth and the Village Hall Management Committee we now have the perfect site. We must also thank BDC's Conservation Officer Michael Collins and both Alan and Avril Humphries for their support of the project. We must mention Michael Hackford for ensuring that this project, after many failed attempts in the past, has finally come to fruition.

In the last year the council had met on 11 occasions which were well attended, constructive and with one exception, the councillors were able to agree or agree to disagree.

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The Precept for 2011 / 2012 will increase by £2,730 from £11,770 to £14,500. This is an average increase of 15p per week / per household in Polstead. This is not out of line with other Town and Parish Councils and is necessary to:

- Build up reserves
- Keep village up to scratch
- Finance projects in future.

There are a number of considerations for the new council:

- Carse Pond
- The Localism Bill
- Abolition of the Code of Conduct and the Standards Board
- Planning Powers
- The locals needs survey regarding affordable housing in Polstead
- No grants likely in 2012 / 2013 for footpaths
- The Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

2011/11 Reports and Question from members of Polstead Village

There were no reports or questions raised.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.