

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** of **STURMER PARISH COUNCIL** held at **STURMER VILLAGE HALL** on **TUESDAY 01st MAY 2018 at 7:30 PM**, doors opened at 7:00pm for refreshments

MINUTES

APA01	NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllr David Finch James Cleverly, MP
APA02	WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN Cllr Garrod welcomed those assembled, shared the apologies for absence and laid out the agenda for the evening
APA03	APPROVE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY APRIL 2017 RESOLUTION – Minutes approved - Proposed Cllr Garrod, Seconded Cllr Mcleod-Jones
APA04	DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS Dist Cllr Diana Garrod – APPENDIX A County Cllr David Finch – APPENDIX B
APA05	CHAIRMANS REPORT Cllr Garrod report – APPENDIX C
APA06	CLERK'S REPORT <p>AUDIT - We recently passed our internal GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTING audit with flying colours and due to our turnover are now exempt from external audit.</p> <p>In 2017-18 we budgeted to spend £8,900 which included a grant of £1,000 to the village hall, which is a sizeable % of the parish council's income. We actually needed to spend CLOSER TO £11,000,</p> <p>BALANCE left at year end – just under £13,000 in the bank which is a tight margin going forward when assessing the risk to our finances.</p> <p>Your precept for the year was just over £6,000, indeed your precept for some years has been kept flat in terms of any increase. Your precept for this financial year has increased to £7,000 in small part to reflect the continued loss of what is called the Localism Fund but more importantly to reflect the true cost of managing your parish. Indeed even at £7,000 your parish finances are tight.</p> <p>You have two stalwart councillors who put in a huge amount of effort to personally maintain several areas of the parish, which in any other parish would be managed by a paid contractor.</p> <p>In round numbers we spent on the following – Administration of the Parish, hall hire, insurance, training, Affiliation costs, and PAYE has cost approx. £6,700 which represents almost all of this coming year's Precept and we have not come onto parish maintenance yet.</p>

	<p>GRANTS – A grant payment of £1,000 to the VH was not made in the previous year so in keeping with an expectation the PC had to honour that commitment and pay £2,000 in 2017/18, which was a large chunk of its available finances. As the Village Hall is in a fairly sound financial position, with healthy reserves, the PC intends to review the level of that Grant going forward.</p> <p>PARISH MAINTENANCE - accounts for another £2,250 of expenditure including Street lighting, Utilities, Grass cutting and general parish maintenance.</p> <p>So where are we now, we have £13,000 in the bank plus a precept due in plus a diminishing Localism Fund grant and a tiny amount from BDC for street cleaning totalling around £7,500.</p> <p>TO SUMMARISE - Your council will have a total of just under £21,000 at their disposal, which may seem a lot. To manage the parish successfully the council will need to maintain upward pressure on the local precept and be fiercely protective of the funds it holds whilst remaining good stewards of your money. You can rest assured your council will face this challenge head on.</p>
<p>APA07</p>	<p>PRESENTATION FROM GUEST SPEAKERS</p> <p>COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS – CAROLE JONES</p> <p>The Essex group was first to be established 20 years ago, working within a 5 mile radius of the responders home. In 2002 the response time to a call out was 10 minutes, in that first year they handled 6 calls, providing a 24/7 cover between the team and experienced just one day of formal training.</p> <p>By 2012 they were handling 81 call outs and provided 8,125 hours of clinical care during that year and new teams benefited from 5 days of formal training.</p> <p>For a group to be established it requires 10 volunteers who have to fund raise for their own equipment!</p> <p>The then Essex group now come under the East of England umbrella responding to cardiac arrests for 2 year olds and above.</p> <p>Carole explained how every minute without oxygenated blood circulation the chances of survival drop by 10%, so a rapid response is vital; she went on to explain the various pieces of equipment on display which they use during the course of their work.</p> <p>The group have purchased not only items of equipment but also bespoke garments clearly identifying them as First Responders.</p> <p>The service is constantly looking for volunteers, providing not only emergency response but in addition providing training to local companies, schools and youth groups. They are soon to embark on training 250 staff at Stansted Airport.</p> <p>You can learn more and contact the Steeple Bumpstead First Responders EZ25 via their Facebook page – EZ25.</p> <p>STURMER VILLAGE HALL – Mrs Jo Porth – APPENDIX D WOMENS INSTITUE – Sylvia – APPENDIX E STURMER FLOOD ACTION GROUP / SPEEDWATCH / STURMER HISTORY GROUP – Mrs Linda Bevan – APPENDIX F TREE WARDEN – Mrs Jo Porth – APPENDIX G</p>
<p>APA08</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TBC CLOSE – 8:54pm</p>

Signed.....Dated.....

APPENDIX A

Report by District Councillor Mrs. Diana Garrod to the Parish Assemblies within the Bumpstead Ward of Braintree District Council 2017-18

I was elected as your District Council Representative mid-term in October 2016 and will face re-election in 2019.

I am pleased to represent the four Parishes within the Bumpstead Ward on issues affecting them at the District Council. I also aim to keep the Parish Clerk aware of issues that the Parish Council may find useful and direct them to the most appropriate Council Officer, Department or body that is able to deal with local matters.

I would normally hope to support the Parish Council's views on all things affecting their Parish and sometimes I have to consider issues in the wider community interest. A typical example would be the Braintree District Local Plan, and in particular the development of larger community settlements.

The District Council is obliged to provide within the Local Plan, development space for around 850 new homes each year, up to the year 2033, when the Plan will be updated.

The majority of the identified developments will take place in and around the major settlements of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, but in order to try and avoid widespread development of our villages it has been necessary to consider new developments to the East and West of Braintree. The proposal closest to this Parish is a development proposal to the West of Braintree, for 2500 homes during the life of the Plan, although space is being identified for more properties, depending on circumstances after 2033. These proposals will help ensure there is housing available for our children and grandchildren, with the necessary infrastructure of roads, schools, health and leisure facilities, shops, and employment land. Of particular concern is that planning permission has been granted for over 1800 new homes where building has not started. This appears to be due to developers sitting on land perhaps waiting for property prices to increase; an issue that the Council continues to address.

There has been reductions of Central Government Grant to local councils and the Council has found savings or opportunities for raising income for the financial year 2018/19 of around £877,000 whilst continuing to maintain all essential services and support the local economy and infrastructure.

The Council has identified capital investment as a key Corporate priority for the District and approved ringfenced funding of £28m for the District Investment Strategy. Investment intervention is required to support planned housing and population growth in the District. The District Investment Strategy targets capital investments to support infrastructure improvements, with particular emphasis on: improved healthcare facilities, enhanced town centres, increased employment and business opportunities and improved highways infrastructure.

Since April 2017:-

- Planning permission had been granted for over 1800 homes, supporting the delivery of much needed housing and has enabled the delivery of 130 affordable homes across the District.
- The Council has helped over 250 households from becoming homeless.
- The Councillors Community Grant Scheme has seen 124 grants awarded, totalling an amount of just over £104,000 and will continue this year.
- Recycling rates are currently at 52%.
- 555 of reported fly tips have been collected within 24 hours.

Cleaning up our streets and countryside currently costs the taxpayer in England almost £800 million a year, yet the levels of fixed penalties for this type of offence have not changed since 2006. From April 2018 new powers will come into force that would almost double the maximum fixed penalty for dropping litter from £80 to £150 and the default penalty would also increase from £75 to £100. From 1st April 2019, the minimum penalty is set to increase from £50 to £65. Local Authorities may set the penalties at any amount within these boundaries that they consider appropriate for their area.

In addition, there will be new powers to discourage littering from vehicles as, for the first time, Local Authorities (outside of London) will be able to issue a Penalty Charge Notice (civil fine) to the Registered Keeper of a vehicle for littering if it can be proven that the litter was thrown from their car – even if it was discarded by someone else. These powers will be used where the perpetrator cannot be identified.

The Council has recognised the need to protect larger public open spaces in the District from unauthorised access, including illegal encampments, to maintain the quality of the local area and prevent disruption and inconvenience to local residents and has installed fencing and bollards to nine open spaces across the district to date.

Incidents during 2017, including the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Arena bombing, are unfortunately recent reminders of the importance of being prepared for an emergency. Braintree District Council is required to plan and respond to major emergencies working alongside the blue light services. The Council has produced a robust new Emergency Plan reflecting the latest legislation, guidance and best practice. Whilst this is the overarching document it is supported by numerous “risk specific” plans including Flood and Severe Weather, Pandemic Influenza, Mass Fatalities, Communications, etc. We also have to assess risk and develop contingencies for impacts like fuel shortages, power outages or blackouts and more unfamiliar impacts such as space weather.

The Council plays an active role in the Essex Resilience Forum. This is a multi-agency partnership, made up of local councils, emergency services, health providers, the voluntary sector and many more organisations who work together to plan and prepare for a multi-agency response to a major emergency.

The next key piece of work to be undertaken by the Council is the development of a Recovery Plan; recovery for communities and businesses following an event is the responsibility of the local authority once the blue light services have gone. Each of the Councils services input will be key to the development of the Recovery Plan to ensure an effective recovery is possible whilst maintaining business as usual.

Work is ongoing to extend the number of premises available to the Council to act as rest centres in times of an emergency. The Council is looking to instigate formal agreements to cement this provision of a number of new premises throughout the District.

The Open Spaces Action Plan has been revised. The 2018 Edition had engaged Parish and Town Councils, Ward Members and Council Officers. The Plan outlines a table of proposals for the provision and enhancement of open spaces in Braintree District. Its purpose is to demonstrate the need for these and enable Council Officers to identify where financial contributions, being sought from Developers under the

Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document, would be spent. The plan forms part of the Council's evidence base for securing planning obligations from Developers to enhance existing open spaces, or provide new ones.

Finally, I would advise you that in May the Cabinet will be considering allocating a further £360k from the New Homes Bonus to bring Superfast Broadband to 99% coverage in the district.

I am pleased to be associated with our dedicated Parish Councils, individual Parish Councillors and community groups and consider myself very fortunate to represent one of the most picturesque areas of Essex.

Cllr. Diana Garrod
District Councillor – Bumpstead Ward – Braintree District Council
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APPENDIX B

The Leader's Annual Report

Essex is a great county, from towns inside the M25 to coastal villages looking out to Suffolk. We have vibrant urban centres, international ports and airports, universities and world class firms, alongside beautiful rural countryside and the longest coastline in England.

I am passionate about better lives for people in Essex and believe prosperity is the best route to achieve that – so people can help each other, and themselves. Essex County Council is also ready to step in – to protect vulnerable children, to help care for older people and to support our economy to flourish.

As a public body it is important we spend taxpayers' money wisely, on the issues that matter to our residents. To offset reductions in government funding, we must constantly manage demand, reshape and re-imagine services and look for opportunities to generate income. It is also important we work tirelessly to secure investment into the county that can help make Essex an even better place to live and work.

Our role is changing. The digital revolution opens up new opportunities for how services are delivered and how residents access information and choices. Increasingly our job is to create opportunities for people and communities to choose and act themselves, rather than to simply deliver services over which the public has no say.

This Annual Report sets out some key achievements over the last year, our areas of focus over the next four years and some important financial information.

Key Achievements of 2017/18

- 94% of Essex schools were judged good or outstanding - three points higher than the national average
- We helped 1,330 young people not in education, employment or training to move into employment or learning

- We gave substantial business support to 22 firms resulting in about £2.3m finance raised and multiple new products brought to market
- We've resurfaced over 400 miles of roads – nearly 4 times around the M25 – and filled in 5,000 potholes.
- Reduced the number of delayed transfers of care due to social care to an average of 1,100 days per month
- Commissioned an independent review into ECC owned property following the Grenfell Fire.
- Continued to invest in our country parks which has increased visitor numbers by 7.5% to almost three qtrs. of a million
- Supported the creation of 11,370 apprenticeships in the county, and we'll continue to invest to ensure our economy has the skills it needs to thrive.
- Promoted activities and delivered services which helped reduce the amount of household waste over the last 12 months by 32kg per household
- Begun construction work on 64 housing units – 41 units for private sale and 23 units for independent living for people with learning disabilities

Opportunities for Community Funding

During 2017/18 I launched three separate initiatives that give local communities access to funding to make improvements in their local area:

- **The Local Connections Fund** - £500,000 committed to support community-led activity, using a crowdfunding platform known as The Essex Crowd Movement. Depending on the number of individual pledges (min. £2), ECC will match the fundraising efforts of qualifying projects up to the value of £5,000.
- **The Local Services Fund** - £500,000 to support more formal, traditional services by being more locally responsive and to improve local places. The fund is being administered by the Essex Association of Local Councils who publicise the fund to parish councils, housing associations, and other formally constituted local groups.
- **The Essex Lottery** – The lottery is open to anybody aged 16 or over who is physically based in Essex. Tickets cost £1 and the Jackpot can be £25,000.

The Local Connections Fund

The Local Connections Fund is run via the Essex Crowd (<https://www.spacehive.com/movement/theessexcrowd>), an online crowdfunding platform. This digital approach is designed to make it easier for more people to share and fund projects that would make their neighbourhoods better still. Essex County Council has committed over £500,000 to help back these ideas – with a maximum per project of £5,000.

There is no formal application cycle; people can upload their ideas when they have them, although individual crowdfunding campaigns will typically be no more than three months in duration.

Ideas come from local people, backed by individual and organisational financial and in-kind support. The Essex Crowd offers ECC the opportunity to back locally-popular projects that can make a difference – e.g. local crèches; community festivals and events; or Christmas lights.

The current number of schemes in the crowdfunding pipeline number twenty five at the 'idea' stage and two actually fundraising.

In time, the hope is that a number of different agencies will support projects including Essex districts and Clinical Commissioning Groups aligning funding to help projects.

The Local Services Fund

The Local Services Fund (<http://www.ealc.gov.uk/local-services-fund/>) is administered by the Essex Association of Local Councils on ECC's behalf. It offers revenue funding, providing formally constituted groups with the opportunity to submit proposals for localised services, capped at a maximum of £10,000 for a single year project or £5,000 for three year schemes.

The Fund allows local organisations to decide on service mix in their area - a different, more localised way of working. Match funding to see locally-appropriate activity – e.g. verge maintenance; community cafe offer; a community handyman; or a 'men's shed' service.

In the next and future rounds of funding, applicants will be required to seek endorsement from their local County Councillor before submitting an application. If this endorsement is not forthcoming, the application will not be considered.

A formal panel will meet on a twice-yearly basis and there is an expectation that the ECC contribution will be match funded by the bidding organisation.

The Essex Lottery

The Essex Lottery is an exciting weekly lottery which has been set up by Essex County Council to give local charities and good causes an easy and effective way to raise extra funds. In total 60p from every £1 ticket sale goes to the good causes – more than double the National Lottery.

So far over XXX charities and good causes from right across the county of Essex have signed up to benefit from the lottery and over XXX tickets have been sold. Tickets are available from www.essexlottery.co.uk

Our Budget for 2018/19

We have set high ambitions for Essex and for Essex County Council in the face of a difficult financial context and the Council has a strong record of sound financial management, focusing on providing efficient services that matter to residents.

We have a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reduction in grant funding, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for services like caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting those families who need it, the financial situation continues to be challenging as we work to build a budget that works for Essex residents both now and in to the future.

The Council will spend a gross budget (including schools) of £1,847m and a capital programme of £299m to deliver our priorities in 2018/19.

We have an outstanding track record of delivering value to tax-paying residents. We have delivered £350m of savings in the last 4 years by driving out inefficiency, generating income and reducing costs, and the budget now presented is based on delivering a further £59m of savings and efficiencies in 2018/19. This track record has enabled the Council not only to maintain services in new and improved ways at lower cost, but also to invest for the future so that Essex is a better place in which to live and work.

Despite our efforts, price increases, population growth and increasing demand for services, particularly for social care, means we will need to utilise the 2% Social Care precept facility offered by government, and increase Council Tax by 2.99%. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from the savings required across other portfolios. The council tax for a band D property will be £1,221.75; this is an increase of £1.12 per household per week.

We need to ensure effective services not just for today, but for the future. Therefore we have ambitious plans for our capital investment - a capital programme of £299m, an increase of £32m on that for 2017/18. This investment will help deliver our strategic aims and priorities, and in some cases give us a return on investment. The programme includes investment in independent living schemes for older and vulnerable adults, generating greater supply of housing, sufficiency of school places (including schools for children with special needs), and in schemes to promote economic growth, including improvements to the roads and footpaths that we all use daily. We are also providing an extra £3m investment in our highways over the coming twelve months.

We are determined to achieve the best service for residents in the most efficient way, this demands that we fully exploit the digital opportunity; therefore additional investment is provided for digital transformation. We are also investing in our skills and capability to become more commercial and seek out opportunities to drive up income, which will have a specific focus over 2018/19.

The Revenue Support Grant will be phased out completely by 2020 (a £28m reduction in 2018/19) so our income will be derived from remaining specific grants, council tax, business rates, fees and charges and other trading revenues. Our responsibility to taxpayers demands focus on the generation of discretionary revenues, where we will use commercial thinking in all that we do. We will encourage payment for services as appropriate and where there is a demand for them and an ability to pay.

This budget will enable the delivery of our four strategic priorities:

- Enable inclusive economic growth;
- Help people get the best start and age well;
- Help create great places to grow up, live and work and;
- Transform the council to achieve more with less.

Enabling inclusive economic growth

Economic growth will improve not only the living standards of people in Essex but also their health and wellbeing, opportunities and life chances.

There are a number of challenges we need to overcome. While the number of well qualified people in Essex has increased, the workforce is less well qualified than the UK as a whole and productivity remains lower than elsewhere.

We all know there is enormous untapped opportunity in the economy of Essex and an entrepreneurial spirit that is hard-wired in to our DNA which will we capitalise on in the future.

Amongst other things in the next year we will:

- Develop a local Industrial Strategy for Essex
- Invest £14m in broadband and £126m into major road schemes and maintenance. With an additional £3m set aside for potholes and footpath repairs.
- Invest £87m into mainstream schools and £17m into special schools bringing an additional 2,750 places.

Help people get the best start and age well.

ECC has a critical role to safeguard and support the most vulnerable people in the county. Over 65s projected to increase to almost one third (32%) by 2030.

The council is a proactive children's service authority delivering integrated services to children and families, with just over 1,000 children in care. We have the third lowest rate of children subject to a child protection plan in the country.

With demand for services growing faster than our funding streams, especially in adult social care, we need to continue our shift from a reactive service, to one that is focused on prevention, early intervention, recovery and enablement. Working with communities, the NHS and our private care sector will help achieve this change.

Some of our priorities for next year are:

- Grow the Essex Fostering Service to increase market share, reducing placements in more expensive independent fostering agencies
- Seek to increase the number of care providers rated good or outstanding by continuing to invest in the PROSPER programme; dementia training and rolling out the Gold Standards Framework for End of Life
- Launch a major initiative to improve physical activity in the population

Help create great places to grow up, live and work

Essex will need to build at least 136,000 new homes over the next 20 years - a 22% increase in the current number of homes. We are committed to facilitating that housing growth in such a way that the characteristics of the county we cherish are protected and enhanced. We are not just building new homes, we are building communities.

In the next year we will work with MHCLG to develop a strong partnership approach towards securing new homes and infrastructure in sustainable garden communities.

The council has a key role to play as a custodian of our environment for this and future generations. Our stewardship requires that less waste is produced, less carbon emitted, more homes and businesses protected from flooding and the use of our green space is maximised. New housing growth in Essex has the potential to deliver more connected, healthier communities.

Next year we will develop a Great Green Plan for Essex to unlock the value of our green assets.

I believe that individuals, families and communities are the best guardians of their own interests. Where it is appropriate to do so, we should support communities to help themselves. But we also recognise there are times when public services need to step in.

Next year we will bring forward a number of initiatives to should support communities to help themselves by seeking to foster and build community capacity and capability:

- Continue investment to establish vibrant hubs in our communities that include library and registration services with other partners and our communities
- Develop a single point of access to optimise effectiveness of funded community schemes, including community agents and care navigators
- Develop new citizen-led approaches to enabling communities to improve well-being

Transform the Council to achieve more with less

We have delivered **£350m of savings** in the last 4 years by driving out inefficiency, innovating, generating income and reducing costs.

We are always conscious that the money that Essex County Council spends is taxpayers' money and we must invest it wisely on services that directly affect every resident and their communities and improve their lives.

And we need to ensure effective services not just for today, but for the future. Therefore we have ambitious plans for our capital investment - a capital programme of £299m, an increase of £32m on that for 2017/18.

This investment will help deliver our strategic aims and priorities, and in some cases give us a return on investment.

As part of our innovation and adapting to the digital revolution we are increasing our digital and commercial capabilities as we aim to transform our services to be better, faster and cheaper.

In addition next year we will:

- Deliver £59m of further savings
- Develop a more commercial approach to enable further investment in services
- Optimise the use of our buildings, through changing and modernising working practices

Chairman's Report – Annual Parish Assembly 1st May 2018

There have been some changes to the Parish Council since our last Annual meeting. Elizabeth Naylor resigned soon after moving from the village and we would like to welcome Mrs Ruth Taylor as her replacement. Ruth was co-opted at our last meeting and is currently looking at funding opportunities with Tesco for the provision of additional play equipment. We have carried out a number of activities during the last year, which have included monitoring street lights and ensuring repairs are carried out to those owned by the parish. The cost of LED lights was explored, but this was not found to be cost-effective at present. We monitor footpaths and verges for overgrown vegetation and report damage to the highways to Essex County Council, but unfortunately these are on-going tasks. The last ROSPA Play Safety Report for the Pocket Park identified only low, minor risks which have been addressed; the report is displayed on the website. We have had some unsavoury activity take place at this location and I am pleased to say that I spoke with a Police Officer from Essex Police only last Sunday, who was parked at the layby for some time. I advised him that his presence was appreciated.

In preparation for the new Data Protection legislation, archiving of documents has taken place and these are now housed in the village hall filing cabinets and the PC has appropriate registration with the ICO.

Last year I reported aspirations to upgrade vehicle activated speed signs as speeding traffic remains a constant concern for residents and whilst replacement is not cost-effective, I am pleased that we now have in place an activated Slow Down sign at the Essex end of the village as an additional deterrent. The PC purchased 100 x 30mph stickers for the Speed Watch Group to distribute and place on refuse bins; the take-up was good. We still await the outcome of the speed survey undertaken by ECC and I would like to assure residents that attempts to reduce speeding through the village remains a priority.

In response to residents, we have installed further dog fouling signs and an additional bin has been installed along the amenity walk. Vandalism occurred to the bridge at Lion Meadow and this was repaired by Essex Highways and again after natural wear and tear.

The village Emergency Plan was reviewed and updated as the safety of residents is of paramount importance. The PC applied for £150 from the Councillor's Community Grant for the purchase of a multi-tool to help with works to the amenity walk and I am pleased that this has been put to good use.

In response to residents, we have applied to ECC Highways for a bus shelter near the village sign and this has been agreed in principle, subject to suitable location and funding; which sadly will not be this year.

We have commented on approximately 13 planning applications, some of which have been controversial, and have included works on trees with a TPO's at Wheel Chase, proposals for 7 bungalows west of Crunch Croft and 16 dwellings in The Old Orchard Paddock. Also the appeal by Gladman Developments for 65 houses at Steeple Bumpstead, which was dismissed.

The new development, Wheel Chase, in the centre of the village still has houses for sale and the Unilateral Undertaking Section 106 agreement monies of some £20,000 have not yet been allocated by the Parish Council as there are restrictions relating to the spending of the grant for 'open spaces'. We welcome any suggestions on how residents would like to utilise these funds.

It should be remembered that the Parish Council is made up of volunteers who are passionate about the upkeep of our surroundings and want to ensure that basic services are properly funded. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members, particularly those who play an active role, over and above their required duties. Also other village voluntary groups who give up their time to provide outings, entertainment, interesting activities and support for residents. Your contribution is both welcome and valued.

Cllr. Diana Garrod
Chairman – Sturmer Parish Council

APPENDIX D

Sturmer Village Hall Charity Registered number 262450

Report for Annual Parish Assembly 01/05/2018

Regular users of the Village Hall are the Carpet Bowls Club, Sturmer and District WI, Sturmer Parish Council, Sturmer Local History Group, St. Mary's Church Sturmer, Silver Swans and Old Tapper's, Yoga and Suffolk West Federation of W.I's on a regular basis, and is of course the polling station for General, County and District elections.

We have hosted meetings from coffee mornings to glass fushion, from birthday parties to willow weaving.

This year private hire has accrued £170 and hire of equipment £50.

Income

Total income for the year for the year 2017/18 £4,634.

Our electricity suppliers E.on are now paid on a monthly direct debit as this proved to be cheaper than paying on a quarterly invoice.

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year 2017/18 £6,205.

We have installed LED Lighting, hoping that this will decrease our electricity costs. Obviously this installation incurred a cost of £1,493.

Another large expenditure was the need for a new main door, not one that can be bought 'off the shelf' as it has to be wide enough to comply with the Disabled Discrimination Act, this was at a cost of £1,158.

Sturmer Village News

The Sturmer Village Hall Charity collates, sends to print and pays for Sturmer Village News which is printed quarterly.

The Sturmer Village News is delivered to every property in Sturmer including those on the Bumpstead Road, Coupals Road, Water Lane, Hill Lane, Linnetts Lane and Church Walk, copies are also delivered to those advertisers who do not reside in the village, the trustees would like to thank all those who help deliver the Village News.

As I am sure you are aware the cost of paper and print has risen considerable over the past year, some say due to increased use of email and worldwideweb.

Total cost to the village hall charity for the year 2017/18 was £761 with £570 being recovered by advertisements.

The trustees have discussed this almost £200 shortfall, and the immediate effect will be that the extra copies that had proved so useful for village organisations and advertisers and placed in the garden centre, pub and village hall will have to be cut.

Also discussed was the possibility of printing the village news on a four monthly basis instead of quarterly, of course this would decrease the amount raised in advertising revenue as well.

The Sturmer Village News is available on the Sturmer Community Hub website.

General Maintenance

The rear courtyard garden is being maintained on a regular basis as is ongoing maintenance of gutters and forecourt drainage.

The kitchen has been painted in this past year.

The outside front of hall is scheduled for painting this year.

Grant

The Village Hall Trustees would like to thank Sturmer Parish Council for their ongoing support and the generous grant of £825 in January 2018 which covered the Village Hall Insurance Premium.

Fashion Show

We joined forces with St. Nicholas Hospice and held a fashion show in the spring, we are pleased to say it was a great success, and we would like to thank our models and all those who supported the event.

River Stour Festival Events

The Village Hall Charity is hosting two events a Fun Run and Walk to be held on Bank Holiday Monday 28 May.

The Haverhill Running Club have joined with the Village Hall Charity in this event and under their affiliation, registration and insurance has been covered.

First Aid cover costs are to be made by a donation.

The trustees are applying to the District Councillors' Community Grants to cover the cost of medals.

Help will be gratefully accepted for stewards and refreshments at the village hall and on the all-terrain course.

The second event is a Midsummer photographic competition

Photographs to be taken of Stour Valley and/or Sturmer between 21st to 24th June 2018, again prize money for gift tokens is being applied for under the District Councillors Grant scheme and will be awarded at an event in the village hall on Saturday 6th October, when we will also be showing the film 'The River Runs Through Us' on a continuous loop, together with a historic display of the River Stour within Sturmer, the event will be from 2:00pm to 5:00pm and refreshments will be available

Retirement

Our long time caretaker, Sheila, retired at the end of 2017 after almost 50 years, Sheila was helped for many years by her husband the late Ted.

The trustees would like to record their thanks and gratitude to Sheila for all those years.

Policies

The Village Hall Trustees have recently reviewed and adopted:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Fire Precautions and Evacuation
- Child and Vulnerable Adults Policy

And is in the process of reviewing and updating the Risk Assessment.

Equipment available to hire with the hall

There is a wide range of items that can be hired with the village hall;

- Fun Casino Games.

- Kurling without Ice.
- Sound system.
- Crockery, cutlery and glassware.
- Projector and screen with excellent resolution.

Memberships

Sturmer Village Hall is a member of Community Action Suffolk, through which our Insurance is arranged with Zurich, as part of Village Halls Plus Group.

We are also members of the Rural Community Council of Essex, which over the years has proved an extremely valuable source of information and support.

Trustees try to attend both these organisations annual village halls conferences.

Trustees

We currently have seven trustees, representatives from Sturmer Parish Council, Carpet Bowls Club, WI and four elected trustees.

On behalf of the trustees, anyone who would like to join us on the Village Hall Charity would be most welcome.

APPENDIX E

Women's Institute

W.I. UPDATE FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2018

The W I. the Womens Institute, is a wonderful organisation at local. county and National level. Sturmer W.I. is thriving , friendly group of women who meet up every 2nd Monday, we have some excellent speakers on a wide range of topics. We also get together for outings, craft meetings, book club , walking and playing the ukulele and enjoy meeting up with other W.I's for events and County Craft days held in our village hall thanks to two of our members who are now representatives on County Federation Committees.

We recently enjoyed a visit to the Hawstead War Huts organised by County Federation, it is a new site being developed and is definitely a new tourist attraction and most interesting. Our W.I took us to visit Newmarket Stud, it was very enjoyable and quite fascinating to learn more about the horses.

We will be visiting Fullers Mill Garden for our June Meeting, a special evening opening for our W.I. this is a beautiful garden near West Stow with plenty of wonderful plants run by the Perennial Society.

We are celebrating 50 years of Sturmer & District W.I. in Suffolk West Federation with lots of events, our Golden Gliding from the local Essex airfield near Ashen on 6th June, spectators welcome to see us go up and hopefully come down again !

We would welcome some new members so do come along as a visitor to find out more about us, you will be sure of a friendly welcome and an enjoyable evening.

I also like the fact that the W.I. Organisation has carried out a lot of valuable work, lobbying the government on a wide variety of topics through our annual resolutions (we choose one for each year) over the last 100 years. Plastic pollution in it's many forms are being brought to our attention and the W.I. is at the fore front and is forcing changes within supermarkets and businesses alike as well as keeping us informed on a wide variety of other topics.

If you wish you can work your way up from local, then County and finally National W.I and find talents that you did not know you possessed ! W.I. certainly develops you as an individual person and improves your potential.

We have quite a few members who come from Haverhill in our group and it would be very nice to have more ladies from Sturmer so do come along and join our very friendly and informative W.I.

APPENDIX F

Sturmer Flood Action Group

Six of us formed the Sturmer Flood Action Group after the last big flood in Sturmer in February 2014.

We received a late warning for the flood that day and a number of vehicles were written off.

We decided to try to improve the flooding situation and inform people of ways to protect their homes.

We have published regular articles in the Sturmer Village News and given our contact details. We are also on the Sturmer Community hub website.

We circulated a number of leaflets to properties liable to flooding on the main road.

We found it was difficult to find out which of the many agencies was responsible for what and who to contact.

With this in mind we held small core meetings of the six of us plus an officer from each authority independently.

The Fire Service attended one of our first meetings and said they would rather help with preventing flooding than come out in boats to rescue people when it flooded and could offer volunteers to help us. We joined them to clear the ditch between the pub and next property. They also returned to help in Water Lane.

A representative of Anglian Water attended and as a result the sewer pipe across the bridge at Water Lane which had become rusty and vulnerable was replaced. They also tidied the pumping station and continue to help as problems arise.

At a very early stage we met the Environment Agency and they agreed to give an earlier warning of floods which has been successful so far.

As many of you will know much of the flooding here is caused by blocked gullies and Highways proved the hardest to contact. However, recently they have done some work in Water Lane and we continue to report problems and speak to them when they visit the village.

Although Essex County Council Highways would not attend our core meetings ECC sent members of a newly formed group – Local Flood Management.

This team had been set up under an Act of Parliament in 2010 following serious flooding nationally.

Essex County Council is now the lead local authority for flooding and LFM is the team dealing with this.

The team were running a scheme called “Where does water go” and agreed we could be part of the pilot.

This involved surveying all the ditches in Sturmer to see where the problems were. This record is now online on the ECC website.

As a result the Parish Council cleared their ditches and vegetation along the amenity walk and this has led to a much drier and more pleasant area all year round.

The Group also reported blockages on the Stour Brook.

A large tree was removed downstream of the bridge in Water Lane by the Environment Agency as a result.

Also about 50 tyres and other debris was removed from the Brook near Pope Mill by Braintree District Council.

Numerous other problems have been found and dealt with although some are more difficult to get resolved like Hill Lane. We keep a log of all issues and update it from time to time.

We have also been commenting on planning applications from a flood point of view.

We received a certificate of excellence from ECC and have been used as a good example for other groups. We have also met a couple of the groups to discuss our work. We are also a member of the National Flood Forum which offers advice to groups and publicises their activities.

Finally, we are continuing to liaise with all the agencies involved and will keep surveying ditches and removing problems before they build up where possible.

Please look out for updates in the village newsletter.

By Linda Bevan

Speedwatch

The group has commenced work for 2018, new members are always welcome!

Annual report of Sturmer Local History Group 2018

This year we produced our first Recorders' Report. History Recorders have the role of gathering historical records but are also expected to record what happens today as it will be history tomorrow. Our report was sent to Suffolk Local History Council who will pass it to the Suffolk Records Office. We also produce an annual report on the activities of the history group and this is sent to Recorders of Uttlesford History who pass it to the Essex Records Office.

We have attended talks about the Reformation and the Royal British Legion.

With the WI we visited the War Huts project at Hawstead near Bury St Edmunds. This project aims to reconstruct the huts used to house and organise troops for the First World War. They are also planning to build a trench system. All of this will be open to the public including schools. At the fund raising event we heard a folk band singing songs based on oral histories from the war.

We also joined in with an event at Saffron Walden Museum to celebrate 100 years since women got the vote.

We are holding a Victorian Schoolroom event again for local schoolchildren in June and will provide an exhibition (including a section on Armistice 2018) for the River Stour Festival.

Our annual trip will be to Clare to see the museum, church and Freemasons' Hall.

We are meeting Nigel Hicks and his family in the summer for a guided tour of the heritage trail and church. He is a descendant of William Hicks who was the Rector in Sturmer for many years and was at the Battle of Trafalgar. Nigel has provided much information about William for our archives.

This year we also heard from the daughter of one of the family who lived at Old Station House when it was a railway station. She had been looking for pictures of Sturmer for her mother's birthday and sent some of her mothers' memories of Sturmer to us from the US.

We have also continued to update our archive as usual and replenish leaflets on the heritage trail. Linda Bevan 2018

Linda Bevan

Sturmer Tree Warden
Report for Sturmer Annual Parish Assembly
01/05/2018

Trees Wheelchase formerly Spinning Wheel Site.

Several meetings were held onsite with the Braintree District Council, Landscape Officer, representative of Radford Homes, parish councillors and myself, permission was granted to fell two diseased and dying trees, to cut back branches on some trees covered by T.P.O's including Lime and Plane trees, the landscape officer and myself stressed that the undergrowth and a surviving Elm should not be removed although not covered by T.P.O., not only for their own sake but particularly as this was in the middle of the nesting season.

The undergrowth contained English bluebells, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, which when the T.P.O order was made on the surrounding trees in 1989, the then Braintree District Council, Landscape Officer informed me that although the bluebells themselves could not be listed they were a most valuable asset to the site.

The Elm tree, assessed to be a healthy tree, and only a few years ago The Tree Council were asking for information about surviving Elms, the current Landscape Officer stated should remain although not covered by T.P.O.

On returning from holiday I was amazed and totally disheartened that the Elm had been felled and that all the undergrowth cleared including ground ivy, excellent insect cover and most of the bluebells grouted up.

I was told that the Elm had to be removed because County Highways said it impeded the site line from the Wheelchase development onto the A1017.

Despite my phone calls, it seemed one cannot talk directly to anyone from County Highways on this matter, and so I only have the Radford Homes explanation.

I am told that County Highways have the final say over trees supposedly in sight lines even though they may be covered by T.P.O's.

I received many phone calls from villagers and I apologise to the village for not being able to do more to save the tree and the bluebells.

Currently the undergrowth at the site is showing a few remaining bluebells, a few daffodils, there were some aconites in March and a lot of what might be termed as perennial weed growth. It also opened up the houses to the A1017, ironic when they were being advertised as being in a woodland setting.

Scattered Orchard Project

The four trees planted along the railway line amenity walk in 2016/17, 2 apples, a plum and a damson under the project from the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Environment Fund, have survived despite the laterals and poles being damaged.

Hedge Bridleway Number 20

The wildlife hedge planted along bridleway 20, now in its fourth spring is thriving, and is acting as a wildlife corridor connecting 2 small areas of woodland, as tracks in the winter snow proved.

1,200 tree guards have now been removed to allow the lower laterals to develop.

Hedge along A.1017 opposite Red Lion.

The hedge nearest to the baulk has flourished better than that near to the Sturmer Village Sign, mainly due to ground and water conditions.

Our thanks to parish councillors' who have topped the hedge early spring 2018.

Jubilee Oak on Sturmer Common

Continues to thrive.

Braintree Celebration of 25 years of Tree Wardens

I was invited to attend a tree planting at Marshalls Park, Braintree to celebrate this event.

It is always a pleasure to meet with other tree wardens and Sturmer was represented from the start of the scheme 25 years ago.

Councillor Wendy Schmitt, Deputy Leader of Braintree District Council and Kristina Janson-Binns from The Tree Council attended and planted three Indian Bean, *Catalpa bignoniodes*, chosen as they are not susceptible to any current disease.

The Tree Warden scheme arose from the disastrous autumn gale of 1987 when 18 people died and 15 million trees were torn down in a matter of hours.

The late Melvyn Crowe was amongst the first together with The Tree Council leading the way to learn lessons from this terrible storm and how to go about replacing trees.

Melvyn was so passionate about trees that he was invited to join The Tree Council steering committee and he helped influence the Tree Warden Scheme nationwide.

Chalara – Ash Dieback

Monitoring through the village is continuing and to date it would appear no large trees have succumbed although leaf growth this year has barely started.

Tree Guardian Update

Amanda Turberville, Ecology and Environment Officer at Landscape Department, Braintree District Council, regularly forwards the Tree Guardian Update from The Tree Council. This only comes as email, if anyone wishes to receive please let me know and I will forward.

Jo Porth, Sturmer Tree Warden. 01/05/2018

DRAFT