

# Sturmer Parish Council

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Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY of STURMER PARISH COUNCIL held in the STURMER VILLAGE HALL at 7:30pm on Monday 09<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017

Present: Cllr Garrod (Chair) Cllr Carter Cllr McLeod-Jones  
Cllr Porth Cllr Collar Cllr Naylor  
County Cllr Finch James Clerverly  
Members of the public

APA01	JAMES CLEVERLY – CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE FOR MP
	<p>Chairman Diana Garrod welcomed Mr. Cleverly and all assembled, due to timing issues it was agreed to alter the proposed schedule to allow Mr. Cleverly and Essex County Councillor David Finch to speak first.</p> <p>Mr. Cleverly outlined the achievements of the Government and the Conservatives in particular, explaining the three core reasons for the PM calling a general election at this time can be summed up as a) BREXIT and the need to provide an atmosphere conducive for success in what will prove complex negotiations. b) A reset of the parliamentary term clock out to 2022 thus avoiding a general election, along with all the distraction it will invariably bring, during the complex negotiations. c) The need to calm what are currently febrile Parliamentary attitudes.</p> <p>With an eye on the impending General Election Mr. Cleverly asserted that he would ensure a credible local voice is heard whilst the needs of his constituents are understood and taken into consideration across wider national agendas.</p> <p>Q. Who is the selection for the retiring Sir Alan Haselhurst? A. Kemi Badenoch, known to Mr. Cleverly and a highly competent candidate who would prove an excellent constituency MP.</p> <p>Q. Were there risks in timing the General Election for June? A. It was a considered decision with risks minimised.</p> <p>Q. Migrant workers are essential to the local economy, what steps are being considered to alleviate concerns? A. There is no appetite to remove people from the UK, the strong expectation is the</p>

	<p>issue will be happily resolved during the very early stages of the negotiations.</p> <p>Closed with warm thanks from the audience.</p>
<b>APA02</b>	<b>ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVID FINCH</b>
	<p>Presented a potted overview of the County's Finances, Education, Health, Highways &amp; Economy.</p> <p>Finance - Over five years the council has removed c. £600Million from operating costs helping keep Council Taxes to a working minimum, thus placing considerably more money in residents pockets to spend as they see fit.</p> <p>Education – 220,000 pupils in Essex, with 90% of schools awarded Good to Excellent recognition but that this was no reason for complacency as there remained room to improve.</p> <p>Health – The population is known as “super aged” in that 22% are 65 and over, which brings peculiar caring challenges including increased needs and cost of provision for mental health related conditions such as dementia and Alzheimer disease.</p> <p>Highways – Everyone has a pothole, but seriously county roads are being improved and repaired at record rates.</p> <p>Economy – Essex is the 1/8<sup>th</sup> largest economy with an annual worth of £33Billion, the intention is to see that grow to £60Billion through four core strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Encouraging businesses to locate in Essex</li> <li>b) Ensure the infrastructure is attractive for digital technology companies</li> <li>c) Reduce the number of people needing to commute out of the County</li> <li>d) Establish Garden Settlements complete with homes/commerce/infrastructure/health facilities/schools and transport all being established in tandem, encouraging new communities who live and work in their community.</li> </ul> <p>Employment – There exists 4.8% unemployment in the County.</p> <p>Q. What is current make up of county council?  A. A mix of representation but the majority are Conservative councillors</p> <p>Q. Is devolution still under consideration?  A. Not as such as the intention is to be collaborative and not isolationist</p> <p>Closed with warm thanks from the audience</p>
<b>APA03</b>	<b>CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REVIEW</b>
	See APPENDIX A

<b>APA04</b>	<b>CLERKS REPORT</b>
	See APPENDIX B
<b>APA05</b>	<b>DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT</b>
	See APPENDIX C
<b>APA06</b>	<b>LOCAL STURMER HISTORY GROUP – LINDA BEVAN</b>
	See APPENDIX D
<b>APA07</b>	<b>SPEEDWATCH – GRAHAM COLES</b>
	<p>Nine members to date but more required and would be made very welcome. Training provided although the activity is very simple to grasp with the ultimate results truly worthwhile to the parish. Anyone is welcome to come see the teams in action before offering to join the team, they act in teams of three on routes strictly specified by the Police.</p> <p>The results of this group work work can ultimately lead to the Police setting up their road-side speed monitoring utilising the latest TruCAM technology.</p>
<b>APA08</b>	<b>W.I. – SYLVIA ALWORTHY</b>
	A surprising insight into how the WI's reputation for "jam and jerusalem" is no longer appropriate; albeit some 50 years young in this area the organisation exists in this age to aid ladies young and old to meet and forge new friendships, provide a vital source of contact for new and or lonely members of a community, to become involved in local events, learn many new skills plus introduce folk to a far wider national family.
<b>APA09</b>	<b>STURMER VILLAGE HALL &amp; TREES – JO PORTH</b>
	See APPENDIX E & APPENDIX E Pt2
	Meeting CLOSED at 8:50pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Chairman's Report – Annual Parish Assembly 09<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Welcome everyone to our Annual Parish Assembly, it's lovely to see you all here this evening. I would like to thank our County Councillor; Mr David Finch and our Parliamentary Candidate for the Conservative Party; Mr James Cleverly, for giving up their time to come this evening.

I will give an overview of the Councils activities over the last year. However, I will not take too long as there are a number of other organisations who wish to update you on their activities.

There have been some changes to the PC since our last Annual meeting. Following the death of our former Clerk; Rachel Mitson in March 2016, Graham Coles resigned in May, Mr Alan Carter was co-opted in June and Mrs Elizabeth Naylor in November. Mr David Porth stepped down as Chairman in August 2016. He had held the post for some 40 years and I would like to acknowledge his past and present work as he continues as a council member. Our former Vice Chair; Barbara Collar also stepped down after 23 years rather than take the post of Chair, but also continues as a member and I was then nominated as Chairman in September. Our new Clerk and RFO Mr Ian Brown started with us as a locum in January and has become a valuable asset to our team. During the time we were without a Clerk, Mrs Jo Porth very kindly stepped in to carry out these duties and I would like to give our thanks for her efforts during that difficult time. She reclaimed a VAT refund of £3545.47. I have a small gift for her and some flowers in recognition of the excellent job she has done. (present £50 gift vouchers Sturmer Garden Centre and flowers).

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. We monitor footpaths and verges for overgrown vegetation and report potholes on the highways. The long awaited layby at Riverside Bungalows has now been completed and now all of our allocated existing Section 106 money has been spent.

We have commented on approximately 13 planning applications which have included larger proposed developments of 95 and 65 houses at Steeple Bumpstead and a controversial Standby Electricity Generator Facility within Haverhill, proposed on the edge of our village.

The former Spinning Wheel site in the centre of the village has 9 new houses being built, comprising of 2 x 2 beds, 2 x 3 beds and 5 x 4 beds ranging from £250,000 to £500,000. I have spoken with Dan Fitzgerald of Radford Homes today and he has confirmed that they are on schedule to complete and be off the site by about the end of June or beginning of July. This application was originally made in 2010 and having spoken with the Planning Department at Braintree District Council today, I was told by Natalie Banks that it will be subject to the Unilateral Undertaking Section 106 agreement and the Parish Council should receive £16,818.91. This figure has not been paid by the land owner as yet, and may therefore be subject to further funds as this figure is index linked.

The PC has aspirations to replace the existing vehicle activated speed signs and this is one area that any additional money the council receives, may be spent as speeding is a constant concern for a majority of residents in Sturmer.

We are currently awaiting the new Street Cleaning Agreement from Braintree District Council, a service we have utilised for a number of years and hope to renew this shortly.

ROSPA inspect our Pocket Park play area annually to ensure the safety of the children. We supplied additional play bark at a cost of £191.88 in May last year. The last inspection indicated only a very low level risk, as algae was forming on the safety tiles. However, this was quickly rectified through cleaning. A new litter bin was also installed in August 2016.

Emma Black – from the Stour Vale & Dedham Vale Project has provided fruit trees which have been planted at the amenity walk. This was 2 x dessert apples, 1 x damson and 1 x plum. Alan Carter has taken responsibility for this project and maintains and waters them. Both Alan and David carry out a number of maintenance tasks around the village in an effort to reduce cost. This has included washing the road signs, painting the stand for the village sign and the mile stone, and generally tidying the village and the amenity walk.

We received £1,795.60 Transparency Grant to help the council with its obligations under the Transparency Code in relation to IT equipment and provision of a website. Elizabeth Naylor maintains our website and is also currently updating our Assets Register, while Kate frequently takes to the village with her litter stick and bin bag to clear the unwanted debris and fast food packaging along the verges. Colin Canter, a village resident takes care of the War Memorial.

Mark Novels from the Sturmer Flood Action Group has handed the Emergency Plan over to the PC and this will need updating in June. The work that this group has carried out in the last year has been invaluable to the village.

It should be remembered that the Parish Council is made up of volunteers who are passionate about the upkeep of the surroundings and want to ensure that basic services are properly funded and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members, together with other voluntary groups to give up their time for the benefit of the village, this includes The Sturmer Fayre Committee, who did the village proud with their amazing event in September, The Village Hall Committee, The Sturmer Flood Action Group and Sturmer SpeedWatch.

I will now hand you over to our Clerk, Ian Brown for a financial report

## APPENDIX B

### STURMER PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

#### CLERKS REPORT MAY 2017

As you know I am new to the council, myself and the internal auditor have reviewed the accounts and I am pleased to announce your parish council have been good stewards of your money.

Allow me to share some details

The Council budgeted to spend £ 8,500 during the year 2016 2017.

They actually spent £ 6070, however that is primarily due to two items - the late payment of a grant to Sturmer village hall of £1,000 which has dropped into this current financial year.

Plus they budgeted to spend £2,000 on staff related costs but ended up spending just £758, so all in all give or take a few pennies they were within budget.

So some prudent forecasting and cash management going on during last year.

The year ended with just over £15,000 in reserves.

DETAILS – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

PRECEPT – £5,500 PLUS OTHER AGENCY FUNDING FOR STREET CLEANING AND THE LIKE TOTALS £6,800 IN ROUND NUMBERS

ADDITIONAL INCOME FROM A TRANSPARENCY CODE GRANT OF c. £1700 – CREATE AN ONLINE PRESENCE PLUS ONGOING TRAINING WITH A POTENTIAL TO INTRODUCE SOCIAL MEDIA?

£2,000 – ADMIN -INSURANCE, AUDITING, STATIONARY

£350 – UTILITIES

£500 – STREET LIGHTING

£750 – GRASS CUTTING

£1200 PARISH MAINTENANCE

HALL HIRE, TRAINING, EXTERNAL BODIES SUBS, H&S INSPECTIONS OF PLAY EQUIPMENT AND SOME SMALL GRANTS.

ITEMS OF NOTE INCLUDE £400 ON A NEW WASTE BIN IN AUGUST AND SOME £550 ON SPECIALISED BATTERIES FOR THE AUTOMATED SPEED INDICATORS.

unaudited accounts will appear on a noticeboard near you early June to await final external audit and comment.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **District Councillors Report – Sturmer Parish Council** **Annual Parish Assembly 09<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

I was elected in October 2016 and am therefore not able to provide the parish with first-hand knowledge of activities that have taken place over the whole year. However, I have been delighted to take advantage my allocation for the Councillor's Community Grant of £1,500 to March 2017 and a further £1,500 to March 2018, where I am able to support small community projects that are easy to deliver. I have £1,200 remaining for 2017-18 and welcome applications. I am pleased to have assisted and advised a number of residents in the Bumpstead Ward on a one-to-one basis with concerns relating to planning, school transport, waste and accommodation and I will continue to support those who need advice relating to Council services. I will provide a brief overview of some of the changes that have taken place in the last year that may be of interest.

#### **Environment, Communities, Strategic Growth and Infrastructure**

The District has achieved 71% superfast broadband coverage across the District in conjunction with Superfast Essex and continues to lobby Network Rail to improve local rail services; both are ongoing. Community Priced weddings have been introduced at the Town Hall following the closure of the Registry Office in Braintree. The Council has improved the housing conditions of vulnerable residents by launching a pilot handyman service and has awarded five organisation grant funding of £94,000 for life enhancing projects' through the District and Greenfields Community Fund. The Council has also approved a District Investment Strategy to invest £28 million to improve health facilities, town centres and infrastructure as well as investing in opportunities that support growth and provide a return for the Council.

#### **Planning**

The Council has granted planning permission for over 1200 homes, supporting the delivery of much needed housing across the District. Braintree Council continues to work on a new Local plan which will guide development in the District between now and 2033. Once adopted this will replace the 2011 Core Strategy and the 2005 Local Plan. As part of the Local Plan, the Council is required to boost significantly the supply of housing as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Alongside this, the Council is also working on exploring the potential of creating three new garden community settlements. This is the largest and most complex project this authority has ever been involved in, working in partnership with Colchester, Tendring and Essex County Councils. This remains subject to decisions made by Council as part of the local plan process.

Your District Council will continue to strive to ensure the right support and resources are in place across the organisation to make sure key corporate programmes, projects and services continue to be delivered.

Thank you.

**Cllr. Diana Garrod (Bumpstead Ward)**

## APPENDIX D

### May 2017 Annual report of Sturmer Local History Group

This is the annual report for the Sturmer Local History Group for 2016/17.

Sturmer Local History Group was set up nearly 6 years ago to create an archive as an ongoing record of the heritage of Sturmer. We have press cuttings, photographs and documents of various kinds which make up the archive.

Most of our records are stored in the village hall and are available to anyone with reasonable notice. We are also happy to supply copies for a reasonable fee. We can also search our records for any information needed and arrange an appointment to view the archive if desired.

We are always looking for information for the archive and welcome contact from anyone who thinks they can help.

We are not seeking to set up a museum but we welcome good photographs of interesting artefacts with a brief description.

The research we carried out for the heritage trail in the village provided materials for the archives.

We added oral histories and various projects such as researching the names of those on the war memorial. We are continuing with house histories.

Information is also available on line.

We held a history walk for Wickhambrook History Group last year and another was held for Recorders of Uttlesford History on 6 May of this year. We cover part of the heritage trail and provide copies of the leaflets so those taking part can complete the trail on a self-guided basis. We

also encourage groups to take some refreshment in the village hall, garden centre or pub.

We are continuing our Victorian Schoolroom with Stanley Drapkin Primary schoolchildren in June. We estimate over 300 children have attended these events since we started them for our heritage trail project.

We attend talks and trips from the various groups we are affiliated to. This year these have included a tour of the new storage facility at Saffron Walden Museum and talks on medieval festivals and using local history resources for theatre.

We hold an annual meeting and an outing once a year. This year we went to the small Jam Museum at Tiptree and the tea room and craft shop nearby. Our main way of keeping in touch with members is by email and updates in the village magazine. Residents are welcome to join the group by supplying their email address to the Secretary.

Everyone with an interest in the on going history of Sturmer is welcome to join us.

We thank all who have supported us so far.

Linda Bevan

2017

## APPENDIX E

### Sturmer Village Hall Charity (registered number 262450) Report for Annual Parish Assembly 09/05/2017

#### Regular users of the Village Hall

The hall continues to be used by Sturmer 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.

Private hire has increased in the past year accruing almost £290.

#### Income

Several measures to make the hall economical viable have been undertaken during the past year, the hourly rate for hire was increased last October to £12 per hour from £10 for private hire, and to £12 per session for Sturmer groups, £20 per session for 'special events'.

The trustees are aware that many village groups would find a greater increase in the hiring fee difficult, and would make their use of the hall for meetings and their own fund raising unviable.

Unfortunately we have noted that some private hirers are baulking at the £12 hourly rate.

Total income £2120.

#### Expenses

Despite our best efforts, utility bills continue to increase, items such as Insurance, Electricity, Water, P.A.T. testing, Fire protection, PRS/PPL total £2,125.

#### General Maintenance

We have replaced four heaters for more efficient heaters, also reducing the 'rosy' glow many hirers disliked. We are now looking at replacing the florescent lighting to LED lighting, the Rural Community Council of Essex helping us with research and possible a grant application.

We decided to treat our constantly crumbling brickwork with cladding which has greatly improved the appearance of the hall, our thanks to local craftsman, Stephen Pledger for excellent work.

Ongoing maintenance, the front door and lock need replacing, and the front outside of the hall requires painting as does the kitchen.

### Sturmer Fayre.

The Village Hall Charity was delighted to support the very successful Sturmer Fayre, in kind, and even more delighted to be awarded £500 grant from the Sturmer Fayre which provided 42% of the cost of our splendid new curtains.

As an added bonus from Sturmer Fayre we are delighted to welcome a new trustee.

### Sturmer Village News.

The Sturmer Village Hall Charity collates, sends to print and pays for Sturmer Village News which is printed quarterly and news, stories, photographs and advertisements are most welcome.

All but approximately £70 of the cost this past year was covered by income from advertisements, the shortfall being taken up by the village hall charity, again as a result from Sturmer Fayre we have new advertisers.

The trustees would like to thank all those who help to deliver the Sturmer Village News to every property in Sturmer including those on the Bumpstead Road, Coupals Road, Water Lane, Hill Lane, Linnetts Lane and Church Walk.

Feedback has shown that leaving extra copies of the village news at Sturmer Nurseries, The Red Lion and at the village hall has proved to be successful.

### Equipment available to hire with the hall

Please look at our display of items that can be hired with the village hall, fun casino games, Kurling without Ice, sound system, crockery, cutlery and glassware, we also have a projector and screen with excellent resolution.

We will be hosting a BBQ and Kurling open afternoon/evening on Saturday 17 June between 4pm and 8pm.

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

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

We have had much positive feedback on our efforts to maintain our lovely little hall in good condition, and hope that we can make others aware of the facilities we offer.

Jo Porth, Secretary/ Treasurer Sturmer Village Hall Charity.

09/05/2017

## APPENDIX E Pt2

### Sturmer Tree Warden Report for Annual Parish Assembly 09/05/2017

#### Tree Preservation Orders.

In May 2016 The Old Orchard were given applied for and were given permission two fell two diseased and dying trees.

Trees at the Spinning Wheel development are being monitored as are the bluebells growing in the undercover, it is hoped that liaising with Dan Fitzgerald we will be able to tidy under the trees once the development is complete.

#### Tree Warden Meetings

The meeting arranged for the end of May last year 'A Walk in the Woods' at Lamarsh unfortunately had to be cancelled at the last minute.

An invitation to meet with Jon Stokes from Tree Council, to be held in Chelmsford last August, unfortunately I was unable to attend.

#### Scattered Orchard Project

A meeting was held with Emma Black from Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Environment Fund to find suitable sites for this project.

The aim of the Scattered Orchard project is to plant local varieties of fruit and nut trees in each Parish in the Stour Valley. Planting small clumps of traditional fruit or nut tree on publicly accessible land means local people can benefit from the trees, enjoying the blossom in the spring to eating their fruit/nuts in the autumn, for future generations also providing habitats for a wide variety of wildlife.

Four trees have been planted along the railway line amenity walk, 2 apples and plum and a damson and I can report that they were covered in blossom this spring.

#### Chalara – Ash Dieback

Monitoring through the village is continuing and to date it would appear no large trees have succumbed.

To lose the Ash trees throughout the village would make a devastating difference to our landscape, as Ash has become one of the most prevalent tree species along the amenity walk, footpaths and bridleways of the village since the loss of Elms from Dutch Elm disease.

### Latest news from the Forestry Commission

#### Distribution

Confirmed findings as at 12:00 noon on 3rd April 2017:

10-kilometre grid squares with one or more *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (Chalara) infections confirmed in the wider environment:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total	% of all 10k squares in country
Scotland	7	5	33	125	10	6	186	16.9
England	82	60	161	224	310	17	855	58.2
Wales	0	2	5	31	96	10	144	54.3
N Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
UK (total)	89	67	199	380	416	33	1185	41.8

There is some evidence that certain Ash may be immune to the disease, I do hope so.

### Hedge Bridleway Number 20

The wildlife hedge planted along bridleway 20 now in its third spring is thriving and is acting as a wildlife corridor connecting 2 small areas of woodland.

### 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.

The hedge nearest to the baulk will be topped in the autumn.

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.

09/05/2017