



# LITTLE CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Kevin B. Money 7 Roach Vale, Colchester, Essex. CO4 3YN

Tel: 07810781509 email: [clerk@littlecornard-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@littlecornard-pc.gov.uk)

Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/littlecornardpc/>

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup>. May 2024 at 7pm at Little Cornard Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Karen Gilbert (Chair), Cheryl Crane, Clive Johnson, Nigel Monk, Scott Savage, Mark Smith, Jill Thomas, SCC Cllr James Finch, BDC Cllr L. Parker and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk).

There were 9 members of the public present plus a Police Sargent

1. **Apologies for absence** None received
2. **Welcome from the 2023-2024 Chairman** (Karen Gilbert)
3. **Confirmation and signing of Minutes of Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup>. May 2023 All Agreed**

## Reports

### 4. James Finch (County Councillor)

**Library Services** – The Council has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans in May to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, now an independent charity. This will enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024 when a new contract will be drawn up.

**Suffolk Fire Service to bring control room back to the County.** SCC Announced plans in June to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk independently of Cambridgeshire. The company behind a project to deliver a new IT system as a joint venture, initiated in 2019, has run into technical and financial problems, causing a significant delay. This will protect and upgrade the call centre specifically for Suffolk residents.

**£100m broadband investment in Suffolk under government's Project Gigabit** Better broadband is on its way for around 80,000 properties across rural Suffolk in a £100 million investment under a £5 billion government infrastructure programme. This will build on our Better Broadband for Suffolk programme which has helped to deliver wider access to superfast broadband to be installed by City Fibre.

**Highways Repairs** Following the ever-increasing demand for road repairs, the SCC Cabinet approved an extra £10 million in November to repair and resurface local roads in villages and residential areas across Suffolk over 3 years. This was followed by the Government announcement to invest £609m into highway maintenance in the East of England of which £107.5m has been ringfenced for Suffolk over the next decade, including £3.4 million in financial year 22/23 just ended.

**Almost £1 million extra committed to investigating the flooding following Babet** Since the storm, targeted recovery work has been carried out across the county to ensure damaged highway infrastructure is repaired, those whose properties were flooded get help and that investigations can start which will identify how to reduce flood risk. As lead local flood authority, the county council has a duty to investigate significant flooding and establish the source of flooding, factors which may have caused the flooding, the impacts on people, services and infrastructure and any actions which could be taken to increase resilience to future storm events. In any usual year, Suffolk County Council carries out around 3 or 4 of these investigations. Following Babet, up to 100 are likely to be needed.

**Suffolk County Council's Adult Social Care service rated Good overall by Care Quality Commission** Following a period of intense inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Suffolk County Council has become one of the first councils nationwide to achieve this standard. CQC's final report rated the overall quality of Suffolk County Council's Adult Social Care services as "Good" and highlighted areas of strength including, the quality of its leadership, the culture of learning and support for staff, the range of digital care options available under CASSIUS, the good relationship between social care and health colleagues and locality team knowledge and understanding of community needs. This rating is also a testament to the high levels of financial investment the council has consistently put into Adult Social Care over the years, especially during the dark days of the pandemic, and shows how through imagination and service transformation, they are delivering on the priority of us all to put people's health and wellbeing at the top of your local authority our agenda for adult social.

**Budget 23/24 Overspend** Over this last 12 months, budgetary control and forecasting has been a major challenge for the County Council. Special Educational Needs, SEND school transport and care costs are the main factors for SCC forecasting to spend £22.3m over its original £688.1m budget for the 23/24 financial year.

**24/25 SCC budget Approved with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable adults and young people.** Suffolk County Council has confirmed its financial budget for 2024-25. The £752.8m package was approved at the Full Council meeting on Thursday 15 February 2024, with the priority to protect vulnerable adults and children across the county. This represents an increase of £64.7m over the 23/24 financial year.



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Despite the recently announced uplift in government funding and asking for an increase in Council Tax of 4.99%, it is still not sufficient to cover the rising costs imposed by inflation, or more importantly the increasing levels of demand for services - in particular children's care, special educational needs, and disabilities (SEND) and home to school transport. Focusing on those children who have extremely demanding needs and no-one else to turn to, is the right thing to do. SCC have therefore confirmed that 60 new members of staff will be recruited to drive forward important reform to the way special educational needs and disability (SEND) services are delivered in Suffolk. This includes an increase in permanent SEND staff of nearly 15%. These new posts will support the improvement of the quality and timeliness of assessments, plans, reviews, and communications with families. To provide care and services for vulnerable children and adults, the next two years will see an additional £42.7 million allocated to children's services, and an additional £29.9 million for adult services. However, this means £64.7 million of savings needs to be found at the same time over 2 years which include:-

- £11 million of staffing costs through changing the way services are delivered and restructuring across the council.
- £30.6 million of additional savings from an extension of the council's hugely successful Adult Social Care Transformation programme.

The council's budget will therefore increase by 8.6% (from £693.0 million to £752.8 million), some of which is generated by a 4.99% increase in the council's share of Council Tax, and additional Government funding. The increase of 4.99% to Council Tax is made up of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care. This will see the council's share of a Band B property's bill rise by £1.12 per week, compared to last year.

Cllr J. Finch then took questions from Councillors and residents

## 5. Lee Parker (District Councillor)

Cllr L. Parker outlined the activities throughout the previous year

### May

- Local elections: 10 Greens, 9 Independents, 7 Conservatives, 5 Liberal Democrats & 1 Labour Cllr made up the new Council.
- Coalition agreed between the Greens, Independents and Liberal Democrats with the sharing of leadership across the 4-year term.
- The long running Bellevue House issue appeared settled as contracts were exchanged.

### June

- Council reiterates its objection to pylon proposals.

### July

- Cabinet sets its strategy for the next four years citing climate housing and community at the heart of its priorities.

### August

- Cost of living support for residents reviewed. - £100,000 made available to council tenants, a reduction in council tax for low-income households and £150,000 to households struggling with rent.
- A 30% increase in funding to Citizens Advice Bureaus to accommodate increased cost due to increased demand.

### September

- Inspectors declare the long-awaited joint local plan part one to be sound and can progress to adoption. The plan has been seven years in the making.

### October

- Baberghs new website was launched.
- Storm Babet. Suffolk resilience forum declares a major incident and provides cross agency support to those affected by flooding in the district.

### November

- A consultation begins into measures that might streamline energy efficiency upgrades to listed properties.



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- A consultation was launched to help shape the future of Babergh following the strategy announcement in July.
- The joint local plan was adopted at full council.
- There was a call for land to support nature, to increase tree coverage and to improve biodiversity.

## December

- Parking charges are back on the agenda. Babergh Cabinet declares that it needs to consider all options faced with a potential shortfall of £1.8M of funding.

## January

- Babergh urges the government to fix the broken funding for councils after cost of running the council was expected to rise by 12.8% year on year.

## February

- A balanced budget was delivered albeit by use of £1.2 million of reserves.
- The parking charges petition was heard.

## March

- Babergh District Council was named the best council in the UK.
- Parking proposals were considered by the scrutiny committee and will now be forwarded to cabinet for consideration next month.

## April

- Babergh District Council formally objected to NG's plans for more electricity pylons between Bramford and Twinstead – saying the impact on the countryside is too great.
- Following a call-in of Babergh Cabinet's decision to implement parking charges, its Scrutiny Committee requested the decision be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration as it concluded not enough emphasis was given to all available options such as a one hour free period.

Cllr L. Parker then took questions from Councillors and residents

Cllrs J. Finch and L. Parker left the meeting at 7.30pm

### **6. Local Police Officer** Sgt. Williams with Mark Smith Neighbourhood Watch

- New policing model in Suffolk has been set up. More community focus. Delegated police officer for all local areas.
- Little Cornard continues to be a low crime area.
- Burglaries are the highest crime in the area. Neighbourhood watch scheme in Little Cornard is working well between residents and police.

Cllr M. Smith informed the meeting that following the successful reinstatement of the scheme in July 2003. The scheme now has 60 members from 38 households in Little Cornard. We are still looking to sign up other people/properties

The Little Cornard NHW What's app is working well alongside the Residents App.

We will continue to put crime prevention articles in the magazine.

We are still waiting for Suffolk Highways to approve the sites we have proposed for our NHW signs. This has been chased again last week. We have made a complaint about the time it has taken.

I am in regular contact with the Community Police Officers in Sudbury under Sergeant Williams and as you may have noticed we have seen regular patrols in our village.

PC Coughlan and PCSO Partington manned a stand at the Church Flower Show and I have extended an invitation to them to attend the Village Hog Roast on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, on or off duty!

I would also like to thank them for attending the Parish Council meetings as and when required.

Following on from the successful reinstatement of our scheme I have been asked by Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch to take on the role of The Area Neighbourhood Watch coordinator responsible for Bures, Boxford, Waldingfield and the villages in between. I have decided to accept this role and look forward to working with the respective Parish Councils, Police Officers and setting up more local schemes.



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A resident proposed a vote of thanks to Mark Smith in setting up and co-ordinating the Neighbourhood watch scheme

Sgt. Williams left the meeting at 7.40pm

## **7. Little Cornard Parish Council Annual Report (Karen Gilbert)**

I apologise in advance if this gets a bit like an award speech or other but thanks are truly due this year. We began the year with three new councillors, Jill, Scott and Mark, and I'd like to thank them for joining and all the other councillors for their commitment to the village this year, giving up their time to serve on the parish council. They serve as volunteers and all have special skills to offer to help the council and community achieve the best we can. I am very proud of our great team.

We have seen Cllr Smith organise and run our new Neighbourhood watch, due to the burglaries we and much of Suffolk were subjected to. I often look at the positives in any situation and in my view the outcome has been some much better communications with the police - they have restructured to benefit the rural communities, and the village has pulled together in ways we couldn't imagine – communicating on WhatsApp groups, supporting each other, passing info about, welcoming newcomers brilliantly and not to mention having a good old moan! The police said at our Flower Festival our Neighbourhood watch is one of the most engaged communities in Suffolk.

Our Defibrillators have had one deployment in the first year – proving the vital contribution they provide to us.

As always James Finch and Lee Parker have provided great support to our village in their County and District roles – Babergh locality budget has contributed to purchase a bench for the green, to enable visitors and residents to enjoy the valley view. Cllr Savage will play bench fairy to install it for us (thank you Scott). We have continued to represent the Villages View in the face of National Grids planned pylon project – we have tried to remain true to what is important to our village and the valley. We await the Examining Authorities decisions on many matters regarding this issue.

We have begun a long project to champion speed limits in our lanes with Cllr Finch – after the quiet lanes project completion and a 20 mph being brought in in nearby Assington.

We have worked with Suffolk Wildlife trust to preserve and protect our wildlife assets in the village – the Mere.

One of our residents suffered a house fire – again out of despair came the community. Cllr Smith has aided Shaun to get back to his new normal, pulling on resources available to Shaun, and offering vital support.

Jeremy Apter gave Shaun a place to live to ensure he could remain local and keep his Tommy close.

(Thank You Mark and Jem.) Shaun's house is virtually rebuilt. Not too long before he's back in Little Cornard Parish. The community came together to help Shaun financially – that was another shock for him but shows what a great place this is to live - we in the council were more than happy to facilitate the collection of money.

More community spirit came in the storms last winter – clearing of debris and roads – this would always have happened but we have new communication capabilities now (WhatsApp) and this enables those that can help to pull together.

I personally have been supported massively in the last year by our Clerk Kevin Money, he's shown great patience and offered me counsel on matters as they arose – and I'm really grateful. (THANK YOU KEVIN) Cheryl – our Vice chair has also supported me greatly. I call her Miss "don't miss a trick" as not a lot gets by Cheryl. Thank you, Cheryl! That concludes my report for 2024.

## **8. Village Hall (Nigel Monk)**

A verbal report on the village hall from Nigel was given

## **9. Update from Ruth Adams on the Speed Watch**

Speedwatch is trying to reduce speeding in the village. More volunteers are required. More police support could assist in reducing speeding. The speed camera van comes to the village twice a month.

A vote of thanks was proposed for Janice.



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## 10. Public Forum

A resident spoke about Herb Farm. It has been neglected over the past years and is trying to bring back as it should be. More visitors would be welcomed. Unofficial retreat and nature centre. 2 planning applications have been refused so have gone to appeal.

The Chair then closed the meeting at 7.55pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

*K Gilbert*  
K. Gilbert  
Chair

16<sup>th</sup>. July 2024