

Shimpling Parish Meeting
Minutes of Annual Assembly of the Parish
Monday 9th May 2022, 7:00pm held at Shimpling Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: Liz Brunwin (Chair), Katie Haselhurst, Nathalie Brown, Mike Atkins, Gerry Shrimpton

District Councillors: Cllr Michael Holt, Cllr Stephen Plumb

Clerk: Natasha Byford

Public: Three members of the public attended

1. Minutes of last annual meeting:

The minutes of the last Parish Assembly on 5th May 2021 were confirmed.

2. To receive reports for representatives of the parish:

1. Chair's Report:

Chair Liz Brunwin gave the following report:

Thank you for joining us this evening. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Liz Brunwin and I have been Chair of the Parish Council for the last four years.

At this time of year, I get the chance to thank all those in the village who have helped us throughout the year so I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people – Laurence Rooke and Ted Pine, who do too many jobs to mention, Jayne Schofield and her team who deliver the village magazine and David Campan who carries out regular checks on the play park and keeps it litter free. I would also like to thank all those who have helped in support our village in way in the last year.

We are thankful for our Village Hall Committee for running events with a full weekend planned for the Platinum Jubilee. They have also organised the redecoration of the hall itself and upgrading of the electrics following an inspection from the local Fire Officer. They do a great job keeping the hall to a high standard and holding events to bring our community together.

Our village greens are kept tidy each year by Chris Cooke and his team from Lark Valley Landscapes and our thanks go to Chris and his employees for their hard work. I would also like to thank local farmer, John Pawsey, for arranging for the mowing of the grass verges leading up to the A134 each year in readiness for the daffodils which were planted by the WI several years ago.

Sarah Smith edits and produces our village magazine. The magazine is an important communication tool for our village, especially for those who do not have access to computers. Thank you, Sarah, for all your hard work in producing such a professional looking magazine for a modest cost.

Our District and County Councillors, Richard Kemp, Stephen Plumb and Michael Holt keep us in touch with what is going on 'out there' but are always available for help, advice and support. Thank you for always being responsive to our requests for help; it is much appreciated.

Last year the Parish Council registered The Bush as a community asset before its closure in January and following Bernard Essery's purchase of the pub I am pleased to report that it has now

reopened and is reinstating previous village events such as the St George's Day meal which was well supported.

It has been another busy year and thanks to grants from our District and County Councils and careful money management on our part, we have been able to do the following:-

- resurface footpath no. 7 and install guttering;
- purchase chairs for the Village Hall for those with mobility issues;
- build a step by the footbridge opposite The Bush;
- resurface the lay-by by the recycling banks;
- repair the telephone box/library;
- carry out repairs to the play park following the annual inspection;
- register Gents Lane as a quiet lane.

We awarded grants from our covid fund to the Village Hall Committee for the Jubilee Weekend, Meet the Neighbours Event and to the church for the cost of hiring the hall for Christmas wreath making

We were also able to subsidise the annual precept budget.

Lastly, we have just purchased a bench for our Village Green which will be installed in the Autumn and have arranged for wi-fi to be installed in the Village Hall which should be live in late June.

Natasha Byford, our Clerk, has had a great year taking us through yet another successful audit and I would like to thank her for all her hard work. Parish Clerks do a very important job acting as a linchpin - keeping continuity and giving advice to councillors and we are very lucky to have Natasha. I would also like to thank Stuart Palmer for continuing to act as a mentor to Natasha in a voluntary capacity.

We were sorry to have to say goodbye to Colin Johnston and Ken Rush who have been long-standing and committed councillors and look forward to welcoming new councillors to cover the two vacancies.

I will be stepping down as Chair this evening and the Parish Council will be run by a rota of Chairs for the next 12 months. I wish them all well and look forward to doing my stint in September. I have enjoyed my time in the Chair and I'd like to thank all of my fellow councillors for their help, support and advice during the last four years.

2. Finance Report for 2021/22

The Clerk gave the following report:

Finance Report: Total income for last financial year 2021/22) was £23,715.76 including the precept, £9,986.44, receipts from recycling, VAT refund, bank interest and grants of £9,616.90. The Parish Council made payments to a total of £19,605.27. Funds of £36,892.71 were carried forward this year as follows:

Treasurers Account: **£1,382.84**

Business Account: **£35,509.87**

Total Reserves: **£36,892.20**

This includes £1,970.63 of CIL money and £21,192.70 of Covid Grant fund, leaving the PC actual operational reserves of **£10,505.09**, slightly less than at the start of the year.

This is a much better position than was budgeted for, mainly due to the Covid Grants we have received. There was an underspend of around £270 on this year's budget.

The PC also received £393 from recycling revenue, which is not included in the budget as it is a completely unknown income.

Reserves: We have already allocated most of these reserves when the budget was created at earlier meetings.

	April 21	1st April 22	Notes
VH Maintenance	£1,000.00	£2,000.00	
New Laptop	£750.00	£750.00	
Play Equipment	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	Propose adding some money in readiness for replacement at some point
Lease VH Renewal	£1,000.00	£1,100.00	Propose adding enough for the renewal which is 2024
Covid Fund	£19,188.13	£21,192.70	
Elections	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	
Total Earmarked	£23,938.13	£27,042.70	
CIL	£1,689.64	£1,970.63	
Total General	£4,655.09	£4,655.09	
	£	£	
Total Reserves	30,282.86	33,668.42	

We are in a much healthier position than we were 3 years ago. We can now operate in a crisis, for example, if Babergh were unable to forward our precept payment.

There was no borrowing last year. No tenancies entered into. The lease on the Village Hall runs to 2024. There were CIL receipts of £1,970.63 made to the council for 2021/22. CIL Spending anticipated in the 2022/23 financial year is £0 currently.

Budget for 2022/23: A Budget was approved in November 2021 of £11,188.00. The precept was set to raise an income of £10,413.00, with £275 coming from the projected underspend in the 2021/22 year and £500 from the Covid Fund. Total income for year estimated at £12,383.63 from the precept and CIL amount.

Internal Controls: All finance practices follow the Financial Regulations adopted by the council and published on our website. They are managed by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and supervised by the members of the council. The accounting software Scribe and online banking with the two signatories are still working well for the Council, being a secure process and allowing suppliers to be paid faster.

Audit: The Audit for last year commenced on 21st April, once again, Suffolk Association of Local Councils is to be appointed. PFK Littlejohn LLP have been appointed to carry out the external audit of small local councils, but we are declaring ourselves exempt this year as we didn't meet the threshold.

The Clerk invited questions, there were none.

3. District Councillor Michael Holt and Stephen Plumb

Michael Holt and Stephen Plumb gave their update on the year's activity. Major highlights included:

- April - Council continues was offering support and Grants and working with other agencies. (for whole year).
- June – JLP was submitted for examination
- July – Hadleigh Leisure Centre was reopened after a Multi Million pound refurbishment.
- August – Parking strategy was approved and should be ready for approval by September 22
- October – Women's Tour came to Babergh / Glemsford, which was well supported by organisations within the village and the residents themselves. This year it will be going through Lavenham & Cockfield.

JLP Paused (The Inspectors' proposal would enable us to proceed with our Joint Local Plan in two parts. This would allow us to get our important social, economic and environmental objectives in place in a Part 1 Joint Local Plan adopted first, whilst the remaining work on spatial strategy matters and housing allocations are addressed in a Part 2 Joint Local Plan).

- November – Tree for Life programme was opened again.
- December – Babergh Parking charges were postponed.
- January - Work began on installing solar carports to help reduce carbon emissions in the council owned Kingfisher carpark in Sudbury.
New medical centre in Sudbury gets the green light, the new three storey GP Surgery and pharmacy will help to futureproof healthcare for the town.
- March – The Digital Skills Programme is part of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils post-Covid recovery strategy and is being run by MENTA using funding from Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund (SIGIF).
- April - Cabinet reshuffle due to 4 Conservative Members leaving their Group including the Leader John Ward, after the sacking of an Independent Cabinet member Derek Davis.

4. County Councillor Richard Kemp

Cllr Kemp couldn't make this meeting but the Clerk read out his report which is summarised below:

Covid-19

During another challenging year of Covid restrictions and changes the LDGI Group have worked hard to continue holding Suffolk County Council's administration to account. The advice and information on coronavirus is constantly changing. For the most up-to-date guidance, please use the following links:

- Latest Government advice: www.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Latest SCC information: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19>

If you have any specific queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined

Suffolk County Council voted in their budget for 2022-23. Our Group were concerned that the budget relied too heavily on transformation savings, and that the Conservative's did not take the maximum social care precept to fund adult care allowed by Government.

Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology that can lower bills.

GLI Group becomes Official Opposition

Since last year's County Council Elections, the Suffolk Green Liberal Democrat & Independent Group have been tasked with trying to hold the Conservative administration to account. The Conservatives having a strong majority with 55 seats out of 75, but we have been able to bring forward questions & motions throughout the year and challenge them to do the best for Suffolk.

No Carbon Budget for Scrutiny

Conservatives brought forward the first Carbon Budget for Suffolk, but it wasn't part of the main budget. So wasn't put through the Scrutiny process in the same way. The Carbon Budget is aimed to help us understand the level of emissions the Council are responsible for and helps to achieve the Council's ambition of being carbon-neutral by 2030.

It is important the Carbon Budget is scrutinised, as there are many issues with data collection and performance measures that weren't addressed. Our Group raised concerns about this and has been assured that this will form part of the general budget process for next year.

Levelling Up: A Devolution Deal for Suffolk?

The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However, we are concerned about a potential Mayoral position created in Suffolk and the effect this may have on marginalising districts in Suffolk.

Report into SEND Provision: Review & Recommendations

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision. The report found severe failings in the delivery of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans for children, serious issues in communicating with parent/guardians, as well as an inefficient work environment within the service.

The scrutiny committee have met since the report to listen to lead officers within the service and parents, debate necessary changes, and submit recommendations for improvement. This included extended training, newly appointed managerial posts, and new accountability structures to help deal with the issues outlined in the previous report.

Bus Back Better: Initiative from the Department for Transport (DfT)

The Bus Back Better scheme was launched this year, aimed at updating, expanding, and improving our bus services in Great Britain. The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council approved a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submitted to Government, while Suffolk County Council still wait for DfT to confirm the final funding.

All proposals of the BSIP that were passed by Cabinet can be viewed here: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

Biodiversity Recommendations to Enhance

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirmed plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Our Group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council's ambitions moving forward to enhance biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions.

For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

Local Electricity Bill: Suffolk GLI Motion Passed by Council

A motion submitted by our Group ask Suffolk County Council to support the Local Electricity Bill, which is a proposed Bill waiting to be debated in Parliament for its Second Reading, was passed unanimously by the Council. The Bill seeks to localise energy supply, making local electricity cheaper, more reliable, and community based.

Details of the motion and Local Electricity Bill can be found here:

<https://powerforpeople.org.uk/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-councillors>

Lorry Route Map Review in Suffolk: Interactive Map to be Published

Suffolk County Council undertook a review of recommended lorry routes across the county; the first major review of the network since 2011. Suffolk County Council invited parish and town councils for their views, and to provide up to three routes where they believe HGV traffic has the highest impact on their communities.

The review will be completed in Spring 2022 where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For further information, please contact lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk,

New Investment in Drainage and Footway Infrastructure

The Cabinet approved £10m to replace broken pipes and new installations, as well as an additional £10m to increase the maintenance of selected footways in Suffolk.

Sizewell C: Where are we now?

Our Group has asked searching questions regarding this project, arguing the environmental and socio-economic impacts on local communities are far too great. The Government announced their strategy to retain investors, by shifting the costs of Sizewell C onto consumers, in the form of a taxpayer subsidy known as a 'Regulated Asset Base' funding strategy.

Our Group rejected this strategy, and strongly recommended that the Government reconsiders before it puts the burden of cost onto our local communities, and instead looks into investing in cleaner, cheaper, and quicker forms of renewable energy available to Suffolk. Suffolk County Council have announced their general support for Sizewell C but have taken up 'important concerns' to the Secretary of State.

Locality Funds / Budget

I continue to support organisations, charities and events within my Parishes with donations from Suffolk County Council allocated Locality Budget. If you have any projects, purchases or events you would like funding for please submit your request to me in writing for consideration and I can submit them to Suffolk County Council.

Thank you

As always I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the very many people who help and support me in the role of County Councilor including Parish Councils, District Councillors and Parish Clerks to name but a few.

Volunteers in the form of groups or individuals continue to contribute immensely to our communities with their dedication and commitment to service, and on behalf of everyone I extend a sincere vote of thanks to each and every one of them, they really do make an amazing difference!

5. Police Report

There was no police presence and they were unable to attend or send a report.

6. Village Hall Committee – Marian Peck

Marian was unable to attend so the report was read out by Cllr Brown on the VHC:

After a year of stop and start, events planned, then cancelled, we finally opened in October. The hall was looking very smart after being redecorated in August. The Hall Committee had continued to remain functioning well, albeit by e-mail.

As the village had seen a number of new residents moving in, the 'Meet Your Neighbours' event was an ideal opportunity to welcome new friends and for old friends to get back in touch. The evening was a great success.

People met at the hall once more, just before Christmas for a 'Mince Pie, Mulled Wine and Christmas Jumper' evening, which was also very well supported.

The committee is currently heading up the Queen's Platinum Jubilee planning events, with volunteers from within our community showing very willing to be involved.

Following a 5 yearly fire inspection, the electrics had to be updated in line with new regulations. This work was carried out and the necessary report and certificate sent to the Fire Officer for our region.

Throughout lockdown, we have been very grateful for the financial support of the Parish Council, refunding utility and electrical costs, plus a donation towards our 'Meet the Neighbours' event. Gerry Shrimpton also successfully applied for a BDC Locality award, with which some new chairs for less mobile hall users, were purchased.

Hall lettings were virtually impossible, but a local dance academy, which needed practice for single dancers, an allowed activity, ensured a steady income throughout the summer.

As always, I would like to thank all the VH Committee members for their help and support, through these difficult and often, frustrating times. Hopefully, we can get back to organising events for our community, as before.

In addition to maintenance of the village hall, members of the committee take on the day to day jobs to ensure the hall is a welcoming and pleasant space for hall users, while carrying out regular risk assessments, in line with the Health & Safety policy. New members to the committee are always welcome.

It just leaves me to say, that I will be stepping down as Chair of the VHC, after our AGM on 16th May. I will remain to help with events and lettings, but having been part of the committee for over thirteen years and Chair for the last six, I feel it is time for someone new to take the lead.

It was noted that the VHC AGM will be the 23rd May, not the 16th as there was a diary clash with the PC.

7. WI – Stephanie Eady

Unfortunately, the WI were unable to attend and didn't send a report.

8. Halifax Trust – Jenny Pine

Claire Wilson gave the following report on behalf of Halifax Trust:

Objectives

The Halifax Trust was founded in 1863. It provides grants and bursaries prioritised as follows:-

- a) The primary school serving the Parish of Shimpling for special benefits of any kind not normally provided by the local education authority.
- b) Bursaries for people under the age of 25 who either attended the Primary School serving Shimpling, Alpheton & Bridge Street or whose parents live in Shimpling.
- c) If there are funds in any year not required for the above, they may be used for charitable purposes for the general benefit of the residents of Shimpling.

Three meetings were held during the academic year 2021/2022

6th October 2021 & 16th March 2022.

An additional Special Meeting was held on 7th June 2021 regarding the vacancies for a Trustee and Administrator

Current Trustees Chairman – Richard Weller-Poley

Treasurer – Jenny Pine

Nick Smith, Darren Hickey and Stuart Palmer

At the meeting of 7th June 2021 Stuart Palmer was appointed as a Trustee and Claire Wilson was appointed as Administrator.

Distribution of 2021/22 Bursaries & Grants (Autumn Meeting)

Lawshall Primary School

We continue to support the well-established music project. This year the children are learning the guitar and we received some lovely thank you letters from the children involved in this project. We have also given a grant to Shimpling PCC of £45 for a Christmas tree and £250 to Shimpling Village Hall committee towards the cost of the children's activities taking place during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Bursaries

Nine bursars studying away from home, and five living/studying from home were approved for payment, a decrease of five on last year.

Finance & Governance (Spring Meeting)

The Parish Council appoints trustees. Our accounts and activities are audited annually and regulated by the Charity Commission. Our investments are managed by CCLA (specialists in investments for charities). The performance of their funds continues to be above average and risk to capital below average.

Our annual income from investments is i.r.o £14K. One local person makes regular monthly donations for which we are very grateful.

Applications for grants should be received by 30th September, in time for the October meeting. Notices appear in the village newsletters, but please tell anyone you think may be eligible for a grant about the Halifax Trust.

9. PCC of St Georges Church – Charlotte Blyth

Charlotte was unable to attend so the Clerk read out the following report on behalf of the PCC:

Church Annual Report for Shimpling Parish Council May 2022

2021 was another year of adapting to new ways of doing things for the church, as it was in many other areas of life.

At St George's we moved from small, monthly, socially-distanced, mid-week services, without any singing, to having pretty-much normal Sunday services again, on the third Sunday of each month at and weekly at Long Melford.

One of the new adaptations made during lockdowns was to livestream the 10:30 services from Holy Trinity, Long Melford each week. This has now become a permanent feature, and is a great way to make the services accessible not just to people locally, but also to many much further afield.

The services are easy to access through the HTLM Facebook page on their website, and for those without broadband DVDs of the weekly services are posted out, so anyone can be included, whether they are confined to their home or able to go to church in person.

This continues to be much appreciated by those who are still shielding for health reasons, as well as those who find it difficult to get to church.

In our Benefice, made up of four churches in three villages: St George's here in Shimpling, St Peter and St Paul in Alpheton, and both Holy Trinity and St Catherine's in Long Melford, there is a wide variety of styles of regular worship – from the beautiful, intimate services at Alpheton and Shimpling parish churches in their peaceful settings; to the more formal services at Holy Trinity, with the choral tradition, including the weekly 10:30 Holy Communion and Choral Evensong on the first Sunday of each month; to 'Messy Church' and 'Wild Church' activities for families with primary age children; family services once a month at Holy Trinity; Informal Worship Services; and 'Fusion' Youth Group, so there's a great deal going on in the benefice, and of course besides all that there are always the christenings, weddings and funeral services.

During 2021 a great deal of time, prayer and thought went into planning ahead for the anticipated inclusion of Lawshall Parish Church in our benefice later this year, due to a reorganisation of the parishes immediately north of us.

It is felt generally by those who have been considering this change, and its implications, that it is at once both a great opportunity to develop relationships with families in Alpheton, Shimpling and Lawshall, through having a presence at Lawshall School (which the vast majority of the local children attend) and also a challenge in terms of the ministry team being spread thinly.

Hearing about the huge amount going on you will understand that a team is exactly what's needed as there's far too much for Matthew, the Rector to do on his own.

With this in mind a leadership team of people is being developed, including, in addition to Rev Matthew, Rev Henry and Rev Judith, a 'Reader' – Malcolm Offord, a Youth and Family Worker, and a number of 'Elders' who take part in leading elements of some services. It's good to hear different voices, and this represents a way of offering services in all the villages.

Lawshall has not yet formally come into the Chadbrook Benefice, but we anticipate this later in the year, and there is currently an informal arrangement which means that the Chadbrook Team are leading services there, including midweek communion, 'Messy Church' and 'Wild Church' family activities, weddings and baptisms.

Matthew and our Youth and Family Worker, Pam have led assemblies at Lawshall and Melford Primary Schools, which have resulted in these services being very well attended, with many families developing links with the church.

There is some new blood on our PCC (Parochial Church Council) too – Darren Hickey, who is passionate about offering church services appropriate for young people, and who is also able

to be hugely helpful on the technical front. Also we were very pleased to welcome Andrew Cracknell as our new treasurer, taking over from Sue Fahie Wilson after several years of faithful service. Sue has been so generous with her time, and I'm sure that we would all like to give her our heartfelt thanks for being so generous with her time and talents.

Liz Brunwin is our very efficient and well organised secretary – who also gives up much time to support the church in many ways. We need to thank her too.

While we're on the subject of thanking, Mike and Ted must be thanked for the great job they do looking after the churchyard.

We don't have a churchwarden at the moment, but members of the PCC are sharing out those responsibilities between them.

Our fundraising efforts were curtailed rather in 2022, though we had an alternative Spring Market and an in-person Christmas Market at the Village Hall.

We plan to have a fete at Chadacre on the 24th September this year, and look forward to pulling out all the metaphorical stops for that one.

Details of all the services mentioned and other events organised by the church are available on the websites: <http://www.alphetonandshimplingchurches.org> and <https://longmelfordchurch.com>

Cllr Haselhurst added that the children have really enjoyed being in All Saints' Church in Lawshall to worship together again as a whole school after missing a number of special occasions due to being in class bubbles throughout the pandemic. Rev'd Lawson has been energetic and enthusiastic, giving the children interesting and inspiring times in The Church. We have been supported with music and ideas for carrying out regular worship within school as individual classes, which we are very grateful for. Rev'd Lawson has also supported us in helping source additional financial support for a family who were struggling following a parent's death. The charity that Rev'd Lawson put us in touch with were able to send financial support to this family to help with food and clothing for their four children. Many of our families are enjoying the Messy Church sessions and we look forward to continuing to work closely together in the future.

Cllr Brunwin closed the Annual Parish Assembly by thanking everyone.

There being no further business the assembly concluded at 7:38pm.