

# BUCKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING BUCKLESHAM REPORTS

Tuesday 4th May 2021

Reports Received from ~

1. Suffolk County Council, Cllr Patricia O'Brien
2. East Suffolk Council, Cllr Richard Kerry
3. Bucklesham Parish Council, Cllr Heather Owen
4. Bucklesham and Foxhall Community Council, Ruth Johnson
5. Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall, Evelyn Bloomfield
6. St Mary's Church, David Wardle
7. St Mary's Church Lunch, Elizabeth Fern
8. Bucklesham Primary School, Emma Lea
9. Bucklesham Carpet Bowls, Derek Barrett
10. Bucklesham Bumps, Babes and Toddlers Group, Stephanie Clarke

*Judi Hallett*

Interim Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council, May 2021

# SCC ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

This is a selection of news items from Suffolk County Council that have featured over the last 12 months.

## March 2020

### **Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative.**

Suffolk County Council (SCC), working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, has been successful in gaining over £3M of funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within buildings used to provide frontline public services. Working with Concertus, the council has been preparing a range of packages to support the decarbonising of various buildings in the Council's estate including applications for the council's headquarters at Endeavour House in Ipswich, four rural fire stations, Beacon House, Waterloo Centre and Leiston Children's Centre.

The council's Children and Young People service also reviewed their portfolio of school buildings along with Concertus. This review resulted in the submission of grant applications for nine schools across the county, all of which were successful.

### **Suffolk wins funding for the next stage of A12 improvements**

Announced during the Government's budget, Suffolk County Council has been successful in winning £830,000 of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) to take forward its plans to improve the A12 East of Ipswich.

This project is specifically looking to increase capacity and improve overall traffic flow at junctions and will explore the potential for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the A12.

## April

### **More than 98% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day**

On 16 April, it was reported that over 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of the schools preferred by their parents.

Suffolk County Council received 7,602 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2020.

## May

**On 20 May, Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service announced the launch of its new Suffolk Heritage Explorer website at [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk](https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk).** This offers uses a

completely free resource of interesting, up-to-date information on the archaeology and history of Suffolk.

The new website includes an upgraded searchable interactive map and a database of known archaeological sites, which can be used to discover more about Suffolk's history from the comfort of your home.

## June

In June, a Lowestoft-based charity was the first organisation to benefit from free solar panels, as part of Suffolk County Council's Renewable Energy Fund.

Nirvana Health and Fitness, on Pinbush Road in Lowestoft, is now hosting a 70kWp solar panel installation and is benefitting from zero-carbon electricity.

The council's £400,000 Renewable Energy Fund is open to eligible businesses looking to reduce their energy costs and carbon footprint through solar power. Successful applicants will have solar panels supplied and installed for free.

Once the panels are installed, the business is sold electricity at a better rate than their existing tariff, so they will see immediate savings.

By June 3, more than 100,000 households across Suffolk were using **faster broadband**, thanks to the council-led Better Broadband for Suffolk programme.

The partnership - between Suffolk County Council, Openreach, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and local councils – has made faster broadband available to around 150,000 premises so far, since being launched in 2010.

It means the current total superfast broadband coverage in Suffolk stands at more than 96 per cent, with plans currently in place to reach 98 per cent coverage before the end of the year.

The work will be carried out by Openreach – operator of the UK's largest phone and broadband network, used by of BT, Sky, Plusnet and TalkTalk – and is set to start as soon as deployment under the current contract ends. Work will continue until September 2022.

## July

At its meeting on 14 July 2020, the council's Cabinet reviewed and agreed an extensive programme of recommendations to achieve this **ambition to create a 'net zero' authority by 2030**.

The plans include dozens of changes and new ways of working, from making its pool car fleet all-electric, to making it mandatory for all future committee decisions to consider the net zero ambition.

Being 'net zero' means that the council will remove its carbon emissions where it can; if it is unable to do so, it will compensate for those emissions. The council will adopt a more

detailed method to measure its carbon emissions output, so that it can more accurately track its progress on an annual basis.

As of 1 July 2020, people with vans, trailers and trade waste can now book to visit nine of Suffolk's **11 recycling centres**.

All visitors will need to pre-book an appointment online, where they will be asked what type of vehicle they will use and whether they are bringing household or business waste. To prevent queuing on neighbouring roads, people without a booking will not be able to enter the site. Social distancing measures also operate on site.

There are a number of restrictions in place to help support social distancing at sites and to make sure waste is dealt with efficiently. These include:

- Vans with trailers will not be allowed on any site.
- Only one visit per household or vehicle within seven days. This allows more visitors on site, while maintaining social distancing and protecting the health and safety of site staff and users.
- Trailers must be no more than 750kg max gross weight, single axle and unbraked. No other trailer size or type is permitted.
- All waste should be pre-sorted to make your visit as quick and simple as possible and to maximise recycling.

## **August**

**On the 5 August, it was announced that Suffolk Highways completed its 1,000th resurfaced mile**, following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network.

## **September**

**Monday 28 September saw the public able to access The Hold, Suffolk's flagship new heritage facility on Ipswich Waterfront.**

The Hold, a versatile new building, will be the permanent home of the Suffolk Archives Ipswich branch and is shared with the University of Suffolk, who have dedicated teaching spaces within the building.

The creation of The Hold and its associated countywide programme of events and activities, has been made possible thanks to a grant of £10.3m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and further funding support from other national organisations and local Suffolk heritage groups.

On September 23, it was announced that 100 **fast charging points for electric vehicles** will be installed in rural parts of the county by Suffolk County Council.

The council will be reaching out to interested parish and town councils and non-profit organisations to put in fast chargers where there are currently none. The funding will cover the installation and set-up costs, meaning very little expense for the hosts and possibly creating a source of income for them.

This project is the first to benefit from the council's Suffolk 2020 Fund, which was announced earlier this year. This is a £3m fund for the council's own projects to bid into. Projects must help address the council's climate emergency declaration and must improve Suffolk for all residents in years to come.

The £300,000 award will link into the council's existing Plug In Suffolk project, which was launched in February 2019. It is the UK's first 'fully open' public fast charging network for electric vehicles, meaning drivers simply pay by contactless payment with no need to register their details.

## **October**

**14 October marked the launch of Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England.**

Adopt East will work across local authorities in Southend, Thurrock, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. Adoptionplus, Barnardo's, and Adoption UK are also part of the partnership. The Adopt East alliance will deliver the highest quality adoption service to children and families throughout the region by bringing together the expertise and skills of all its partners.

In October, it was announced Suffolk's natural environment will receive investment for tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife.

**£228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund** will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.

Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. It will also help establish around 10 community tree nurseries, which will support more planting in years to come. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities.

## **November**

**Construction of Lowestoft's Gull Wing bridge** will get underway early in 2021, following final approval of the scheme on Wednesday 25 November by the Government.

The Gull Wing project team at Suffolk County Council received official confirmation that its full business case has been approved, meaning that the £73.39m funding from the Department of Transport can now be accessed.

On November 12 it was announced that Suffolk County Council successfully delivered the **largest digital care project** in its history, from procurement to delivery in just 16 weeks.

Working alongside care technology specialists, Alcove and Rethink Partners, the council delivered over 750 Carephone devices to elderly and vulnerable people, both in and outside of formal care settings, to help them, their families and care providers stay in touch during the coronavirus pandemic.

## **DECEMBER**

**On December 16<sup>th</sup>, Suffolk won the Most Innovative Family Information Service award at the National Association of Family Information Service Awards (NAFIS), 2020.**

The award highlights the work undertaken to adapt Suffolk's online Community Services Directory, **Suffolk InfoLink** ([www.suffolk.gov.uk/infolink](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/infolink)), to meet the public's rapidly changing needs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Community Information Team and teams across the children and young people's directorate worked together with thousands of community partners to collate and provide information to support to the public. Many service providers in the voluntary and community sector were quick to adapt their offer and were supported to use Suffolk InfoLink to promote these opportunities to the public.

## **January**

**Suffolk 2020 fund project embraces love of the great outdoors – Discovering Suffolk**

The Discovering Suffolk project was launched in January 2021.

The aim of the project is to raise further awareness of the range of great walking routes, areas of interest and the variety of landscapes that form Suffolk's beautiful countryside through public rights of way and points of access.

The key element of the Discovering Suffolk project is the development of a smartphone app alongside a range of supporting QR codes fixed to rights of way signposts located along different routes to promote walking, cycling and exploring in Suffolk's countryside.

## **February 2021**

Suffolk County Council's cabinet confirms its support for Freeport East

On February 23, the cabinet of the county council confirmed its support for the creation of a new Freeport (Freeport East).

The Freeport would cover both the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich as part of the Government's aim to create a number of Freeports across the country to drive job creation, investment and international trade post Brexit.

A Freeport includes secure customs zones and tax sites where business can be carried out inside a country's land border, but where different tax and customs rules apply.

Freeport East has several unique aspects which make its bid for Freeport status particularly strong. This includes global and regional connectivity, with 36% of all the UK's container traffic passing through the Port of Felixstowe, unrivalled international connections, particularly with Asia, strong connectivity to the Midlands and the North, thereby supporting the government's "levelling up agenda" in these areas. The bid also stands out as supporting other national objectives such as the development of new technology and the push for clean energy. The Port of Felixstowe has recently won funding to trial a pilot 5G network and has strong research and development links with Cambridge and Essex

Suffolk County Council pushes ahead to new levels of digital connectivity as it launches sensor "gateway" roll-out.

Suffolk County Council launched a new initiative on Friday 19th February, deploying 'gateways' to build a network that covers all of Suffolk.

This will enable individuals or organisations to measure things like temperature, sound and movement via sensors linked to the Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN).

The network is being built in partnership with Norfolk County Council and funded by the New Anglia LEP. Once finished, the network will be made up of almost 100 'gateways' or data receivers and transmitters fitted to public sector buildings across the county. This will make Suffolk's rollout part of the largest free to use LoRaWAN deployment in the UK. Norfolk County Council launched its part of the network last September.

Businesses and individuals can buy their own sensors, adapt them to measure different things like visitor numbers, weather data and temperature, and tap into the gateways for free.

On February 17 it was announced that Suffolk Highways allocated an extra **£2m to support the fight against flooding.**

Drainage and flooding, Rights of Way bridges and resurfacing of roads in Suffolk have been allocated extra funds for the 2021/22 financial year following Department for Transport's funding announcement.

## **Major infrastructure projects now underway in East Anglia**

**PATRICIA O'BRIEN**

## **Housing Directorate – Briefing from Councillor Richard Kerry – May 2021**

**Housing Maintenance** – We continued to operate a reduced service during the Covid lockdown period, ensuring our tenants remain safe and secure in their homes by attending emergency repairs and essential servicing. This will ease on Monday 8 March when more routine repair and maintenance work will start once more, albeit with staff and tenant safety remaining as a priority.

Our staff continue to undertake works in void properties adhering to strict social distancing measures and restricted working numbers in each property. Essential welfare adaptations necessary to prevent hospital admission and expedite hospital discharges continue to be undertaken for all residents both Council tenants and in the private sector.

ESC has purchased a property in north Lowestoft to house rough sleepers, this project has been identified as a Council priority, and work is underway (including weekend working) to convert this to a 7-unit managed property for use at the earliest opportunity.

### **Housing Development**

Whilst some of the construction industry has slowed down as a result of social distancing and material supply shortages, the Housing Development Team has taken this time to move forward previously stalled projects and prepare them for delivery in 2021 and beyond. January saw Planning Approval granted for the redevelopment of the former Post Office site to provide 9 new affordable homes. The Housing team also obtained planning permission for a new Council owned Supported Housing Unit in Lowestoft to house rough sleepers, this is being delivered by our own Housing Maintenance Team. Planning submission for a 61-unit PassiveHaus scheme in Felixstowe has recently been submitted and we anticipate this being determined by the Planning Committee in April / May. In addition to the new build programme, we have actively been seeking s106 opportunities to purchase more affordable housing where these align with the Council's development aspirations. We continue to work towards the ambition of carbon neutrality by 2030 through improvements to our existing housing stock and are concluding the initial investigations into an adaptable Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for ESC. The Team are looking to run a pilot retro fit refurbishment to test the proposed MEES and then evaluate other potential properties within the HRA stock for improvement.

### **Digital Transformation**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February Housing launched a new online service for Housing Tenants. The service, called 'MyHome East Suffolk', will allow Tenants to view their Rent account, create statements, set up Direct Debits, update their tenancy information and exchange Messages with Officers in a secure environment. The service is fully mobile, allowing Tenants to access the service on their phone, 24 hours a day. It is also embedded into their MyEastSuffolk account, where they have a single point of access for all their Council services. This new service allows Tenants to 'self-serve' transactions with the Housing Service and will assist greatly during the ongoing pandemic. This is also a significant investment to enhance our service for our tenants in the longer-term.

For vulnerable tenants, and tenants without access to technology, we will continue to deliver services via our traditional channels (our telephone contact centres and using paper-based forms).



MyHome builds on the earlier implementation of innovative analytics software RentSense to better manage tenants' rent arrears and maximise rental income. In addition, Housing has established a new system of digital tenancy files, replacing the legacy system of paper files.

In combination, these changes achieve significant digital transformation of our tenancy services, delivering customer benefits, operational efficiencies and financial benefits to East Suffolk Council.

During 2021, further content will be added to MyHome, so that tenants can diagnose faults and schedule repairs appointments with the Housing Maintenance team.

## **Housing Needs**

### Next Steps Accommodation Programme

In July 2020, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government invited local authorities, Registered Providers, and their local partners to engage with the next stage of their COVID-19 Rough Sleeping response- the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). This programme has made funding available to support local authorities and their partners and it includes capital funding for the provision of accommodation and associated long-term revenue stream to ensure people are supported in their new tenancies.

ESC received confirmation from Homes England on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 that our bid had been successful, and our proposal is to deliver a seven-bed unit of supported housing in Lowestoft in partnership with Orwell Housing, who will lease the accommodation from ESC and provide management, care, and support.

This provision will be directed at former rough sleepers who need a higher level of support before they are able to live independently and sustain a tenancy. The NSAP funding will enable us to deliver supported housing which rough sleepers and single homeless people can access and live in for up to two years, ensuring they have a roof over their heads and access all support required to ensure they do not need to return to the streets.

Planning Committee granted approval for the change of use application on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021, and on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Homes England confirmed our qualification as an Investment Partners for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. Works on site are underway and completion will be by the end of June 2021.

This project will allow some of the most vulnerable members of our community to access and sustain accommodation, which is suited to their needs, and offer housing solutions which are in line with the person's support and care needs and aspirations to live a relatively independent and 'normal' life.

### Funding and future Bids

A further £15 million has been allocated to support the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic. This scheme – called the 'Protect Programme' – will help areas that need additional support most during the restrictions and throughout winter. East Suffolk Council has submitted a bid, and this is currently being considered by MHCLG. If successful we will have to spend this funding within year and no later than the end of March 2021.

We are also in the process of co-producing the Rough Sleeping Initiative Bid for 2021/22 (RSI4) and this is due for submission on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. It is reassuring to know that Government is committed to continue to support this initiative and there will be no reduction in our overall RSI 2021/22 budget from 2020/21 (£698,447.93).

### **Housing Strategy and Enabling**

In collaboration with planning policy colleagues, a process and policy for the spending of commuted sums has been produced. This is for internal guidance only.

Housing Market Data Report has been completed to provide Members, Parish Councils and communities with an overview of the housing pressures in their areas.

Work is underway to produce an 'Older Persons Housing Strategy' with consultation (virtual) beginning in the Spring 2021. Publication is expected Summer 2022

There will be a presentation to Parish Councils at the next PC forum with planning colleagues on the benefits and delivery models of affordable housing, including community led housing models. Further, more detailed seminars are planned for the Spring for wider community engagement.

### **Tenant Services**

We continue to have a front-line service for Tenant Services officers, but home visits are only being conducted for essential purposes such as sign-up of new homes. All other queries are being handled by phone, email and letter.

'myHome East Suffolk' launched on 1<sup>st</sup> February and the roll out of this with tenants is progressing with 18 tenants signing up in the first week with only our corporate social media campaign. The tenants' magazine promotion will be landing on doorsteps in mid-February and leaflets will be in the tenants rent letter arriving early March to continue promotion of the portal.

Social Housing White Paper came out in November titled 'The Charter for Social Housing Tenants'. The Charter is in 7 Chapters each focussing on a different theme, such as safety or tenants voice. There is still an element of detail missing from the Charter but we will be working over the coming months to ensure we are working in line with it.

2020 has been a challenging year for social landlords and collection of rent. As a result of the pandemic more of our tenants have faced financial hardship, loss of their jobs and increased Universal Credit claims. Any court action was suspended for a significant part of the year and many landlords have faced increased rent arrears. Due to the implementation of predictive analytics we have been able to continue to reduce our arrears profile and had our best quarter 3 performance for 4 years.

Cllr. Richard Kerry

## **Parish Council Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2021**

While the whole world slowed down in 2020 due to the global pandemic, Bucklesham Parish Council has never been busier.

We owe a huge thank you to Judi Hallett for stepping in to be our Interim Clerk for a year and guiding us through so many very necessary changes.

I would first like to add a huge thank you to Patricia O'Brien for her many years service to our Parish Council and for all the help and guidance over this time, especially on County Council matters. Her Locality Budget has certainly helped us to fulfil Villagers' expectations. Patricia's Reports on highways situations has been invaluable.

I also would like to thank Richard Kerry and Melissa Allen who have helped us with their Enabling Community Budget, which has benefitted many village groups. Many hours have been spent attending our meetings and we value their reports. They also keep us informed on a weekly basis by email which can be passed on to all our villagers via the Bugle Bulletin.

We started in July by purchasing copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide' to ensure we were all following correct procedures and that we all knew exactly what was expected of us in our roles. We were very fortunate to have Judi offer simple and fun free training sessions which refreshed and updated our knowledge. We also all signed up to the Code Of Conduct.

Our Chair, Ruth Johnson, expressed her desire to apply for the position of Clerk in July 2021 once Judi's Interim year had come to an end. In order to be eligible to take on this role, Ruth needed to have been resigned from the Council for a full 12 months. Therefore it was with regret that Ruth resigned from the Council. We were very fortunate, however, that it was perfectly acceptable for Ruth to continue in a role as village volunteer. As such she continued writing the Bugle newsletter and spent the year developing the new village website, the Friends of the Playing Field, and the Bugle Bulletin. She also shadowed Judi for the year to ensure she was in a good position to apply for the role of Clerk.

As well as adopting updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as well as new procedures, we also updated 20 other policies which will ensure the future professional and efficient running of the Council. We also completely overhauled the Asset Register and added many things that were not previously included.

We finally managed to install the much requested Speed Indicator Device. We had relentlessly pursued this for nearly three years. Thanks to Cllr Clive Lenton for offering to be the SID manager, along with a small team of village volunteers. The monthly reports make for extremely interesting reading.

Following numerous complaints about the conduct of the visiting football teams, and after carefully studying the terms of the original conveyance, the Parish Council decided there was no other option than to call an end to the hire of the Playing Field to external football teams. We must thank David Riddleston for his tireless years' service in managing the football pitch, in all weathers, in order for others to play. Thanks again to Cllr Clive Lenton for his assistance with quite a few issues arising on the Playing Field this year. We installed

CCTV at the entrance to the Car Park with new signage and, once the dangerous poplar trees were finally felled, a very smart bow top fence was installed. We will continue to develop the field in the years to come by completing the felling of the trees along the south and west sides of the field, and planting a woodland walk in conjunction with the Sicon Foundation, who Ruth and I met in January.

Cllr Rhea Gardner offered to be our representative on the Felixstowe Peninsular Partnership and thanks to this we were able to apply for, and successfully receive, a grant for the new Bucklesham Bumps, Babes and Toddler Group. Thanks to Rhea's attendance at these meetings and informing us of the possibilities, we also applied for a second grant to help the Village Hall develop their garden area and once again we were successful.

Cllr Gina Burgess offered to be our representative with SALC and has attended meetings throughout the year. This allows us to keep up to date with all that goes on there and also gives us a voice. Gina recently talked of the difficulty in community engagement and involving younger members of the community in Council business. This has now become an agenda item for their next meeting. Thank you to Gina for taking on this role and representing us so well.

The new Village Website is a vast improvement on what we had before, and we have had a lot of very positive feedback from the village and particularly from our Internal Auditor, who recognised the amount of information available and the ease of finding it. It is now full of Parish Council news, as well as all things Bucklesham. We will continue to develop it and keep it up to date as a method of communication with the village and others.

The Bugle Newsletter is now in its seventh year and we have also developed the Bugle Bulletin, an email alert service for informing the village of issues that cannot wait for the next edition of the Bugle. This has proved very popular, with 67 villagers already signed up and more joining every week.

We were able to support several groups that asked for our assistance by providing small Grants in accordance with our Grants Policy. Of particular note were the Grants to support the new Bucklesham Bumps, Babes and Toddler Group. We also applied for two Grants on their behalf, ensuring they were able to be up and running in a matter of just a few months. We have had many members of the new group thank us for our help as the group has proved invaluable to them in this difficult year. We have also underwritten the Third Party Fund commitment for the Village Hall's Tarmac Grant to replace the hall roof.

We are in the process of listing two of our village lanes as 'Quiet lanes'. This is a lengthy process and has required a lot of work so far. We held a public consultation and are now waiting for Suffolk County Council to begin the next stage of the process.

We welcomed a new Councillor, Lynda Seagroatt. Lynda is very keen on improving Community Engagement and has already shown an interest in helping to organise village events in the future. I am sure she will be a huge asset to the Parish Council in the years to come.

We have many plans for the year ahead. We are extremely pleased to have appointed Ruth Johnson as our new Clerk and she will take up the role in July. We are also very lucky to be able to call on the services of Judi again while Ruth is in training and completing her CiLCA qualification. We have plans for the future use of the phone box, we are organising a bulb planting day for the autumn, we will continue the development of the Playing Field facilities, and will continue managing Bucklesham Village to the best of our ability.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all the Councillors over this last year for their hardwork, as it really hasn't been an easy year with many things going on, but the achievement by all has been tremendous. Everyone has played a part in our success. Again very many thanks.

Heather Owen, Chair

## **Bucklesham and Foxhall Community Council Annual Report 2020**

The Parish Councillors, acting as Community Councillors, affirmed their opinion that the Community Council was a vital asset for the village which needed to be protected. Many grants and awards of money are only available to Community Councils and are not open to Parish Councils. The Parish Council continues to ensure that the constitution is fully adhered to and that any money raised under the auspices of the Community Council is spent solely in the village and on village projects.

The 2020 AGM was cancelled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and Lockdown Restrictions in place. However, via email correspondence the following Parish Councillors agreed to continue as Community Council Trustees: Evelyn Bloomfield, David Brinkley, Gina Burgess, Rhea Gardner, Clive Lenton, Heather Owen and Lynda Seagroatt. Ruth Johnson will also remain a Trustee as a member of the public.

The Community Council did not pursue any fundraising activities however the following Grant Applications were made on behalf of Village projects in 2020 ~

<b>Grant Name</b>	<b>On Behalf of</b>	<b>Amount</b>
From Existing CC Funds	Knit and Natter	£600
Food and Drink Fund	Church Lunch	£1,442
Hughes-Hallett Fund	Bumps, Babes and Toddler Group	£1,660
From Existing Funds	Bumps, Babes and Toddler Group	£200

The Current Trustees will stand again in 2021 while continuing to look for permanent trustees from the village for the future. This will be reviewed in a year.

Ruth Johnson  
May 2021

## **Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall**

### **Annual Report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020**

I can report that the Village Hall Committee did not let a little thing like a global pandemic get in the way of protecting the hall again this year and despite the difficulties of losing nearly a whole years bookings, the hall not only survived but thrived.

In March 2020 we lost all of our regular bookings as no groups could meet due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Once these were lifted in the Summer, understandably, none of the regular groups were willing to return yet. We were approached by two external groups, Baby Sensory and Evolution Karate Academy, who had lost their usual venues and we were therefore able to offer them temporary places while our village groups were on hold.

We spent a lot of time and considerable effort ensuring we were COVID Secure and could reopen to those groups that wanted to – and were allowed – to meet once restrictions were lifted. We undertook a thorough deep clean of the hall and employed a professional company to ‘fog’ the entire area. We attended weekly meetings with Community Action Suffolk via Zoom Conferencing to ensure we were completely up-to-date with all current rules and regulations, and gained knowledge and advice on how to reopen successfully. We completed a thorough Risk Assessment and provided copies to all users. We ensured signage was clear within the hall instructing users how to be COVID Secure. We installed hand sanitising stations at the entrance as well as throughout the hall, and at a separate exit providing a ‘one way’ system. We purchased paper towels for hand drying and disabled the electric hand dryers, replaced all bins with foot-operated pedal bins, and ensured all users of the hall adhered to strict new COVID Secure Hire Agreements. Among several conditions, this special Hire Agreement states that all users thoroughly clean all ‘touch points’ before and after they use the hall. Our fantastic member of staff, Bridget, took on far more than ever before and committed to thoroughly clean the hall before and after each booking.

Both guest groups were so pleased with the facilities at the hall, particularly the efforts made to be COVID Secure, that they asked if they could have a permanent place as regular bookings. We owe a huge thank you to the Church Lunch and the Knit and Natter Group for very kindly agreeing to swap their own meeting days to accommodate this. This generous act, which we know did inconvenience some, will allow us to rearrange the bookings timetable and make best use of the available slots. The Village Hall is not financially viable

without the bookings from outside groups. The understanding shown by the Lunch Club and Knit and Natter has meant that we can now permanently offer Baby Sensory and Evolution Karate Academy their previously temporary slots. These two groups generate an income for the hall of £7,200 per year. These bookings will allow us to keep the cost of hiring the hall so low for villagers.

With support from the Grants Officers at Suffolk Community Foundation we successfully received 14 Grants to help with loss of income, for projects to ensure we were COVID Secure, and to continue with our renovation projects. Some Grants paid for the hall hire for a year in advance for specific groups. We are particularly grateful to the Bucklesham Parish Council, Bucklesham's District Councillors Richard Kerry and Mellissa Allen, Foxhall's District Councillors Ed Thompson and Chris Blundell, and our County Councillor Patricia O'Brien, not only for their generous grants but also for their support.

Our Expenditure this year was £16,533.46, however this was covered by income from the Grants which was £18,668, and from the two new groups hiring the hall. We moved the considerable East Suffolk Council Business Support Grants into our Saving Account to keep as a reserve should the loss of income prove to be unsustainable. We had many significant outgoings on maintenance, all paid for with the various grants, including further refurbishment of the kitchen, a newly built cleaning cupboard and renovation of the old space for the Toddler Group, and a considerable project of the renovation of the Committee Room. We also replaced the old, leaking oil tank with a brand new tank and digital reader for monitoring the level of oil.

A full breakdown of the accounts has been recorded for all to see the continued success of the hall in 2020. The hall had a surplus of income over expenditure of £8,286.89. This is in reserves as an insurance in case of future lockdown restrictions impacting on hall hire.

To sum up: the year 2020 ended with a bank balance of £16,762.38, compared to the balance at the start of year of £8,475.29. This success is due to the dedicated Committee who work together as a great team to protect our fantastic community hub for the whole village, our brilliant member of staff, Bridget, and the 14 grants we were successfully able to secure from various funds.

**Evelyn Bloomfield, Chairman ~ May 2021**



## St Mary's Church

St Mary's Church is beautifully situated on the edge of the village and is enclosed by many trees, including several ancient yews. A church has been on this site since the Domesday Book was compiled in 1086.

When the COVID 19 pandemic struck, all churches in the country were closed until re-opening was allowed from late June, for private prayer only.

At the end of the first 'lockdown', Sunday services were allowed again and commenced in Bucklesham on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Regular fortnightly services have continued since then even though many churches in the country are still closed.

Since re-opening, all our services have been well supported with a very pleasing, marked increase in congregation numbers. We have been served well by organ music and limited singing at our services but we are eagerly looking forward to the re-introduction of full congregational hymn singing, which can't come soon enough.

David Wardle

Churchwarden

May 2021

## Church Lunch Report

Very regrettably we have not been able to hold our monthly Church Lunch at the Village Hall since February 2020. As soon as ever we are allowed we'll have a joyous return celebration as it is much missed as that key combination of sharing a meal with friends, 2020 would have been our twentieth year.

The lunch is open to Bucklesham residents whether or not members of our church family and to church members who live elsewhere. Between twenty-five and thirty persons attend. Food preparation, serving (and the aftermath!) are shared among seven persons, enjoyable hard work.

Bucklesham Village Hall has lightweight collapsible tables and the kitchen is spacious so the venue is ideal.

Elizabeth Fern

May 2021

## **Bucklesham Primary School News 2020**

The past year has certainly been a challenging one as it has been for many people. We are very pleased to now have all the children back at school and they have shown great resilience in adapting to change.

Throughout the pandemic it has been great to see how the community has been there for each other. We would like to say a huge thankyou to all the members of the village who provided Easter eggs and knitted chicks for the children. They were greatly appreciated and the time and effort that was put into the project reflects the kindness and closeness of the community.

As lockdown eases, we are very keen to be involved in any community projects and are looking forward to working together with you all.

Mrs Lea  
Headteacher

May 2021

May 2021

Bucklesham Carpet Bowls.

The Carpet Bowls Club has not met for over 12 months and at the moment are awaiting advice from Suffolk Carpet Bowls Association as to how and when we may start up again.

The main problem is social distancing, and until this is relaxed things are looking bleak.

Hopefully we will find a way to make things work and will be bowling again very soon.

**Mr Derek Barrett**

Bucklesham Carpet Bowls Chairman

## **Report for Annual Parish Meeting May 2021**

The new 'Bucklesham Bumps, Babies and Toddler Group' is a brand new group in Bucklesham for villagers and their preschool children.

Over the summer months, many parents with preschool children met up on the village playing field and identified a need in the village for a Toddler Group. There was no such group in the village at the time, and no nursery or Early Years provision until the children reach school age. Some of the parents in the village who wished to join had no access to transport and therefore could not travel to other areas to access such a group. There were some in the village who were suffering from loneliness and isolation and we really wanted to address that need. We felt that a toddler group would not only benefit those parents, providing much needed support, companionship and friendship, but would also help the children, learning through play and developing friendships, vital for educational progression and childhood development.

With the situation regarding the Coronavirus we were unable to hold any fundraising events ourselves so we contacted the Bucklesham Community Council to ask for help and advice on how to set up the group. They immediately applied for grants on our behalf to help with start-up funds. We also requested support from the Parish Council who generously donated £500.00.

The grants we received through the Community Council enabled us to pay for the hire of the Village Hall for a year while we become established in our numbers. We also provided the group with many resources suitable for children and babies ranging from 0 – 5 years, as well as storage facilities and cleaning equipment to keep the toys safe.

We meet on a Thursday morning in the Village Hall from 9.30 until 12pm. The group is thriving and we have many ideas for activities for the months ahead. It has made a huge difference to the lives of many new parents during what has been a difficult year for all of us.

## **Some feelings from our members ~**

*"The group has just been such a breath of fresh air after so long of not being able to be in the same room as other mums and babies.*

*My son has gained so much from being able to socialise and see new faces it makes a big difference to our week.*

*It's so well organised, we feel very safe and welcome and can't wait to go whenever we can!"*

Abby

*"Thursday's toddler group is something we look forward to every week. It's great for both of my children. It's lovely for my youngest to finally see other babies and my toddler loves to take part in the crafts and play with the toys.*

*It's so well run and we're grateful we have the opportunity to come!"*

Kim

*"Having this group set up has been amazing, so welcoming and fun.*

*As a 1st time mum, this has been perfect, it's helped both me and Amelia build relationships with others and was much needed boost after a majority of my pregnancy and maternity leave in lockdown"*

Jenny

*"Thursday mornings are genuinely the highlight of my week, it is so nice to see the children interacting after so long not seeing anyone, and my son picks up a new skill from it pretty much every week. The group is extremely welcoming and well run and I hope it will be able to continue for a long, long time!"*

Kriszti

**Stephanie Clarke**

On behalf of the Bucklesham Bumps, Babies and Toddler Group