

Parish Council Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2022

Once again the Bucklesham Parish Council had a very busy year.

We said farewell to Judi Hallett, who we owed a huge thank you to for stepping in to be our Interim Clerk for a year and guiding us through so many very necessary changes.

We were delighted to appoint Ruth Johnson as our new Clerk in July. Ruth has been a fantastic asset to the Council and has spear headed many further improvements to Council business and village life.

We welcomed Suffolk County Councillor, Patti Mulcahy, and expressed our interest in working closely together in the future.

We continued to work closely with East Suffolk Councillor, Richard Kerry and who helped us with his Enabling Community Budget, which has benefitted many village groups. We also welcomed East Suffolk Councillor Mick Richardson, who made a big impact in such a short amount of time. Both Richard and Mick spent many hours attending our meetings and we valued their reports and frequent updates which can be passed on to all our villagers via the Bugle Bulletin.

In the Autumn, along with The Sicon Foundation, we planted 420 trees around the edge of the Playing Field. Volunteers from the village along with Parish Councillors created a 'woodland walkway' to enhance the area for generations to come.

Cllr Rhea Gardner continued to be our representative on the Felixstowe Peninsular Partnership and thanks to this we were able to apply for more grants to support village projects. Thanks to Rhea's attendance at these meetings and informing us of the possibilities, we also received two 'Chat Benches' that were installed along the newly created 'Woodland walkway' on the Playing Field.

Sadly, Cllr Gina Burgess resigned after several years service. Gina was a very proactive Councillor and her input will be very much missed by all Councillors and the Clerk. In Gina's absence, Rhea Gardner offered to be our representative with SALC and attended meetings throughout the year. This allowed us to keep up to date with all that goes on there and also gave us a voice.

We welcomed Cllr Trevor Bickers to the Council who will bring a wealth of knowledge with him. I am sure Trevor will be a huge asset in the years to come.

The Bugle Bulletin, an email alert service for informing the village of issues that cannot wait for the next edition of the Bugle, continued to prove very popular, with several more villagers signing up each month.

We successfully gained 'Quiet lanes' status for Church Lane and the end of Levington Lane. This was a lengthy process and required a lot of work.

The bulb planting was a big success with numerous villagers taking bulbs to plant around the village, including the year 6 leavers from Bucklesham School.

We installed 4 pieces of outdoor gym equipment on the Playing Field which has been very well received. We also replaced the broken basketball hoop and goal nets.

We employed the services of a handyman, Kevin Coe, to complete several jobs around the village. Kevin refurbished the BT phone Box allowing us to repurpose it as a village Information Point. He also removed the old flood lights on the Playing Field and installed the newly purchased finger pointer signs showing the way to the Church, the Playing Field and the Village Hall.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all the Councillors over this last year for their hardwork; the achievements by all was tremendous. Everyone played a part in our success. Again very many thanks.

Heather Owen, Chair

Housing Report 2021-22 A small part of what we do! – Cllr Richard Kerry ESC

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The repair and maintenance of the HRA stock results in an annual spend of approximately £7.5 million. The repair and maintenance of the housing stock is undertaken by a workforce of approximately 80 building trades and further management support staff. The operations, and the financial flow it generates results in significant financial benefits to the local economy.

The Council retains a stock of 4,500 properties for rent. These properties contribute to meeting a substantial and growing demand for affordable homes and support a corresponding number of households, many on very low incomes. In so doing the Council's housing service makes a vital contribution to the diversity and strength of local communities.

The HRA is a ringfenced account funded by the rent paid by HRA tenants. Ensuring that HRA properties are repaired promptly and maintained in good condition reduces the time properties need to be kept vacant in which state they result in a cost through, for example, lost rent and increased costs of deterioration.

The delivery of the HRA repair and maintenance activity is currently subject of a transformation project to introduce digital technology to remove the onerous paper-based way of working.

Carbon Neutral?

The Council signed up to be Carbon Neutral this will have to include the HRA housing stock. The team and I have had meetings with other Registered Providers (RPs) on this subject and how to tackle the problem.

The consensus is to approach in a fabric first method to up the EPC rating first before adding modern heating methods as these need to be evaluated. Air Sourced Heat Pumps are expensive to run, will Hydrogen be introduced into the gas mains?

The cost of this must be borne by the HRA and cannot be passed on to the tenants. These works will run into multi millions a conservative estimate between £100-£150 million not to be found down the back of the sofa, so the money will need to be borrowed. This may also see us cut down on our extensive development programme you can only spend a pound once.

Development

We continue to develop new homes for the HRA, the most prestigious to date will be the passive house design on the former Deben High School Site in Felixstowe, 41 units to remain as Council Houses. Projects in Lowestoft and Beccles are being progressed and we are also purchasing 106 homes from developers across East Suffolk including Darsham and Woodbridge if planning permission is gained, we hope to construct or purchase a further 170 in the next two years.

Private Sector Housing in 2021/22

The private sector housing team deliver a diverse range of services that together can be considered as services that keep people safe at home.

The service is constantly evolving to meet the priority needs of the community and over the last 12 months some highlighted achievement include:

- Increasing the number of homes adapted for people living with a disability from 143 in 2020/21 to 331 last year. Independent Living East Suffolk provides a comprehensive support service which was brought back in house in 2020.
- Being awarded Government funding to deliver a Suffolk wide programme to raise awareness around energy efficiency in Private Rented properties. It is unlawful to rent out a home with a very poor energy rating of F or G. Alongside this we have also been able to secure Green Homes funding to offer free energy efficiency improvements to low-income households including wall and loft insulation, solar PV systems and heat pumps. A very important project in the light of rising energy bills.
- The Council has also agreed to resource a 3-year programme to tackle our most problematic long term empty homes which number 238. This work will commence later this year. A new member of staff will be joining the team to find and connect with the private owners and drive this work forward, bringing these wasted homes back into use.
- The Stepping Home service provides solutions to housing issues that are non-medical but prevent people from being discharged. The service does whatever is needed from moving furniture, clearing hoarding, deep-cleaning, fixing key safes and providing access ramps to help people get where they want to be and free up hospital accommodation. A highly commended finalist on the Municipal Journal Awards last year the service has also been selected as a finalist in the Local Government Chronical Awards.
- We also inspect homes owned by private landlords- licence Homes of Multiple Occupation (HRAs) sort out travellers home the homeless – clear cluttered and vermin infested homes – serve notice to private landlords who provide inadequate unsafe homes.

It has been an absolute pleasure to lead such a caring and conscientious bunch of officers that make up the housing team the largest single group of employees at ESC.

And yes, there is a housing crisis in this country that needs addressing along with the appropriate infrastructure.

CLlr Richard Kerry Cabinet Member for Housing Ward Member Orwell and Villages.

Bucklesham and Foxhall Community Council Annual Report 2021

The Parish Councillors, acting as Community Councillors, continued to ensure the Community Council was a working charity for the village in 2021.

All Councillors understand that 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 AGM will take place later in the year but all Parish Councillors agreed to continue as Community Council Trustees: Evelyn Bloomfield, David Brinkley, Rhea Gardner, Clive Lenton, Heather Owen and Lynda Seagroatt along with our new Parish Councillor Trevor Bickers who also understands the expectation that Parish Councillors will act as Community Councillors. 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 2021 ~

Grant Name	On Behalf of	Amount
Suffolk Community Lottery Fund	Village Hall	£2,880
East Suffolk Community Fund	Toddler Group	£1,650
East Suffolk Enabling Communities Budget	Village Hall	£2,000
Locality Budget	Village Hall	£1,000

The Current Trustees will stand again in 2022 while continuing to look for permanent trustees from the village for the future. This will be reviewed in a year.

Ruth Johnson
May 2022

Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall Annual Report for year ending 31st Dec 2021

I can report that the Village Hall Committee worked very hard again 2021 ensuring the future success of the Hall.

We spent a lot of time and considerable effort ensuring we remained COVID Secure and could stay open to all those groups that wanted to meet. We regularly updated a thorough Risk Assessment and provided copies to all users. We ensured signage remained clear within the Hall instructing users how remain COVID Secure. We kept the hand sanitising stations at the entrance as well as throughout the Hall and provided masks free of charge to Hall users. Our fantastic member of staff, Bridget, continued to manage the Hall's cleaning regime as never before with daily visits, committing to thoroughly clean the Hall before and after each booking.

All regular bookings returned and the private hire for children's birthday parties increased considerably meaning that income from bookings increased from £6,151.00 in 2020 to £8,770 in 2021.

We successfully received 14 more Grants to help with loss of income, for projects to ensure we were COVID Secure, and to continue with our renovation projects. We installed French Doors in the Committee Room which opened out onto a newly laid Patio Area with picnic benches.

Our Expenditure this year was £24,588, however this was more than covered by income from the Grants which was £29,274, and from increase in revenue.

A full breakdown of the accounts has been recorded for all to see the continued success of the Hall in 2021. The Hall had a surplus of income over expenditure of £8,286.89. Our Reserves stand at £20,000 as an insurance in case of future lockdown restrictions impacting on Hall hire.

To sum up: the year 2021 ended with a bank balance of £30,243 compared to the balance at the start of year of £16,762 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 2022

St Mary's Church Annual Report

St Mary's is very happy to be back to a new normal. Services continue to be fortnightly but at last we are back to singing hymns and serving refreshments after each service.

Every month we hold a Library/Coffee morning in the church, where anyone can pop in for a book or a coffee or a chat – or all three. This is very popular with the Monday Morning Walkers.

The monthly Church Lunch held in the village hall, open to residents and church members, resumed in October.

There is also a Bible Study group held in some ones house every month.

Fundraising activities are regularly held each year and last year there was a Tea and Croquet afternoon, Historic Churches Ride and Stride and a Christmas Fayre.

The Church also regularly collects food items for FIND (Families in Need) plus food donated at the Harvest Festival, and vouchers also donated Christmas.

Last year our knitted Christmas Tree from 2020 became a Valentines Tree decorated with over 500 hearts made by the Community. Later in the year an 'Open Church' afternoon gave the opportunity for people to view the tree and for the Church to say 'thank you' to all involved in this project. One heart was delivered to every home in the village along with the quarterly Church Newsletter.

The Church is open every day and in a lovely peaceful setting. Everyone is welcome to enjoy this space.

David Wardle
Churchwarden

Church Lunch Report

With considerable pleasure, St Mary's Church Lunches, much missed, started again in October, on the 4th Friday of each month, our 20th year.

Our Village Hall is airy, spacious and very clean. Everyone who could, returned for a good lunch in good company. We are a group of seven who cook, prepare and wash up happily. We charge £5 which includes the Hall hire charge. We were very appreciative of a Community Council Grant during pandemic which has covered the Hall charge for a year.

We welcome thirty or so village residents and Church members. A recent East Suffolk Food Safety officer visit awarded us full marks.

Elizabeth Fern

May 2022

Bucklesham Primary School Report May 2022

In December, the school saw Mrs Lea move onto a new Headship, with an interim Head in place before I started as Head teacher last week. I really enjoy working in a small village Primary school at the heart of the community, and am really looking forward to the journey ahead working in partnership with the families and staff. We are very keen to continue to develop links with the village and parish – please do get in touch.

This year, we were pleased to be involved in the village project where we made creatures for the river that went on the tree in church. Our older children enjoyed going to Bucklesham Playing field to dig holes for the new trees that were being planted. At Easter, all of the children were delighted with their crème eggs they received from the church.

This year has still seen some challenges managing Covid cases in school, but it is nice to see school returning to some sort of normality. I look forward to the many exciting opportunities in the year ahead.

Miss Rachael Rudge

Head teacher

Bucklesham Bumps, Babies and Toddler Group



May 2022

Report for Annual Parish Meeting May 2022

Bucklesham Bumps, Babes and Toddlers is now well into its second year and is well established as a popular group for parents to attend with their children aged 0 to 5 years.

We now have a lovely group of regulars as well as occasional attendees some of which have now become part of the group operation team.

Often our group is fully booked with up to 20 children of various ages in attendance, taking part in activities such as arts and crafts and music and rhyme.

We have regular feedback from those attending saying how lovely it is, from being warm and welcoming to the lovely space its held in.

We regularly post photos, and get feedback on our Facebook page so please feel free to check it out.

We would like to express our thanks to all those who have supported us over the past year to become the group we are including the Parish Council as without them we would not have been able to get up and running.

Jenny Cribb

On behalf of the Bucklesham Bumps, Babies and Toddler Group