

STRADISHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Stradishall Annual Parish Meeting
9th May 2022

PRESENT: Parish councillors **Ady Swift (Chairman)** **Adrian Lee**, **Robert Deeks**, **Jonathan Masefield**, **Ian Hutchinson (Vice Chairman)**

Also present: **Sally Allen (clerk)** and no members of the public.

The meeting was chaired by Parish Council Chairman Ady Swift

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from parish councillors Ed Hollingsworth and Debbie Gates. County Councillor Bobby Bennett and District councillors Nick Clarke, Karen Richardson and Marion Rushbrook also sent their apologies.

2. Approval of the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 10th May 2021 were confirmed and signed as correct by the Chairman.

3. West Suffolk councillors reports

The full report is available on the Parish council website:

[West-Suffolk-Council-ANNUAL-REPORT-2021-2022.pdf \(onesuffolk.net\)](#)

4. Report from Suffolk County Councillor Bobby Bennett.

The full report is available on the Parish council website:

[Microsoft Word - Suffolk County Council Annual report 2021 - 22.docx \(onesuffolk.net\)](#)

5. PCC report from Jane Helliwell

PCC Secretary, Jane Helliwell, sent a written report:

Because of Covid restrictions in 2021, there were only 2 PCC Meetings held, and the PCC was further reduced in number to 3 which left only the Rector and 2 others to take on the responsibility of the Church and building.

In August 2021 the builder who had been employed to replace tiles on the Chancel roof became worried about the tiles falling on the adjacent public footpath and the roof condition itself was now in a very perilous state. The last Quinquennial inspection in 2017 indicated a total renovation cost of a minimum £200,000 which will probably now have rocketed to £250,000 plus. The windows, stonework, wall paintings, the 2 side aisle roofs as well as the Chancel roof and plaster all now needed urgent attention and there could almost certainly be rotten timbers hidden from view. The alternatives were either to talk to the Diocese with a view to permanently close the Church, or, to form a Restoration Committee of villagers to undertake this project. If the building was to be renovated then money was needed to bring it into the 21st such as heating, updating the lighting and providing proper disabled facilities. Although there are grants available, the PCC has no one who could spearhead such a massive fundraising campaign or the money to employ an expert on grant applications.

Some in the past had wondered whether the village would like there to be a joint community centre/church but there are problems with no official car park and the building is Grade 1 listed. Therefore, a village meeting was held on Wednesday September 15th in the Parish Church and 44 people attended including 3 Parish Councillors, villagers and other organisation representatives. After long discussions and some offers of help the meeting closed on a positive note to try the joint community/church approach. Restoring the Church comes first though. On October 7th 17 people including the Archdeacon met at the Benefice Hall in Wickhambrook to discuss the way forward. After much discussion it was agreed to form 4 groups:

Group 1: Major fundraising through grant applications.

Group 2: Local Fundraising within Stradishall.

Group 3: Restoration of the Church through architects, builders etc. and to obtaining Diocese faculties.

Group 4: Churchyard maintenance, but not cutting the main grass which Adrian Lee undertakes.

The PCC has to approve all decisions from the above groups.

A further 2 PCC meetings was held and at the 1st, 2 new residents were co-opted onto the PCC committee. Since then, all groups have been busy putting together plans and the Church was able to re-join the Benefice Service Rota. Several people attended the special Remembrance Day service in the Church in November and it was a full Church for the Carol Service in December which was followed by mulled wine and homemade mince pies. We are looking forward to the planned Easter weekend activities and are busy organising the Queen's Platinum Jubilee for the village.

As always, we are grateful for the annual £600 that comes from the Parish Council each year which helps maintain the Churchyard and that will help Group 4 cut back the trees behind the Church and pay for a skip to remove the accumulated rubbish from that area

6. **The John Hoult Charity**

The charity's financial report is as follows:

Balance at 31-Mar-2021 £11,835.54

Income

Rental income £200.00

Interest £0.92

Total £200.92

Expenditure

£0

Current Balance £12,026.46

Bank Reconciliation

Current Account at 31-Mar-2022 £2,791.01

NS&I Account at 31-Mar-2022 £9,235.45

7. **Chairman's Report**

Parish Council Chairman, Ady Swift gave a short report:

Since my last report, it has been pleasing to see a return to near normal business, with face-to-face meetings resuming. Whilst there were benefits to the virtual arrangements, that were enforced by the pandemic, the engagement and interaction of physical meetings was missed. One of the benefits of the Zoom period was the increased involvement of members of the public. Therefore, seeing this trend continue as we return to normal has been a positive legacy of the challenging period we worked through. The numbers attending the meetings, and their input, has been of immense value and is much appreciated. It always assists the council, when reviewing important local matters, to have a true feeling and understanding of the thoughts and concerns of members of the public.

As ever, I would like to thank my co-councillors for their hard work, dedication, and support over the past 12 months. In particular, could I thank Debbie Gates for allowing the meetings to take place at Café 33. This has proven to be an excellent venue at a time where other alternatives to the Shooting Lodge were limited. I would also like to offer my personal, and I am sure, the entire councils' thanks and appreciation to our Parish Clerk, Joanne Kirk. It has been a very difficult year for Joanne, and this makes her efforts and extremely hard work even more valued by us. It is also a good opportunity to welcome our new, Joint Clerk, Sally Allen to the Stradishall 'team'. Sally will be working closely with Joanne, over the coming months, to assist Joanne with her transition to lessen her workload and we look forward to supporting her in, eventually, taking over as our full-time clerk. We also look forward to offering Joanne a suitable farewell, at the appropriate time, in recognition of her years of work and support in Stradishall.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to our County Councillor, Bobby Bennett, and our District Councillors, Marion Rushbrook, Karen Richardson, and Nick Clarke. All have been regular attendees at our meetings, with valuable input. In particular, their active interest, direct involvement, and dedication on key local matters has been exemplary and, from feedback I have seen, is hugely appreciated by the residents of Stradishall

8. Financial Report

The parish clerk presented the Council's financial report. The full report is available on the parish council website:

<http://stradishall.onesuffolk.net/about-us/meetings/annual-parish-meeting/annual-parish-meeting-2022/>

9. Village issues raised by members of the public

No issues were raised

The meeting closed at 7.05pm

Signed

Dated.....

DRAFT