

## Holbrook's Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom  
Present: Cllr J Ambrose, Cllr G Abbott, Cllr R Allinson, Cllr M Holmes, Cllr S Ingleton, Cllr D Martin, Cllr S Peck, Cllr M Robertson, Cllr C Sawyer, Cllr A Wright, County Councillor David Wood, District Councillor Mary McLaren and 13 members of the public.  
In attendance: Holbrook Parish Clerk

### MINUTES

1. **Apologies** were received from Tom Maltby, headteacher of Holbrook Academy.
2. **Introduction and welcome:** Cllr Ambrose thanked everyone for joining the meeting and asked everyone to mute their microphones to minimise background noise during the meeting. He asked those present who were familiar with Zoom to please use the Raise Hand facility to indicate if they wished to speak or ask a question. Otherwise, he invited them to raise their hand and he would invite them to speak. He reminded them to remember to turn on their microphones prior to speaking

He explained to everyone that the meeting was not a Parish Council Meeting, but the Annual Parish Meeting of Holbrook. No decisions would be made. He added that the Parish Council welcomes parishioners to come along to the regular monthly meetings of the council to raise their concerns., The meetings were usually held on the third Monday of each month.

3. **Payment of the peppercorn rent for the Reade Field**, to the Headmaster Mr Simon Lockyer from the Royal Hospital School. Cllr Ambrose said that the first presentation of the reed for the Reade Field was made in July 1968 in the presence of the Queen Mother at the opening of the Fire Station. The lease started on 15th July 1968 and runs for 99 years. Cllr Ambrose went on to say that last year he believed was the first time the payment was not made so he had added a second reed tonight to cover the arrears.
4. **To receive a report from Mr Simon Lockyer:** Mr. Lockyer thanked Cllr Ambrose for the reeds all of which sit in the corner of his office and provide a talking point for visitors. He said that this year has been more about isolation rather than engagement. Like all schools on the peninsula, it has been a challenging year. He was pleased to meet with 3 new heads of local schools and looks forward to working with them in the future. A joint bid with Holbrook Academy was submitted prior to COVID to provide enhanced technology for students of both schools. Due to COVID, no funding had so far been received, but they hope to be able to pursue this and other joint projects in the future. Links with local charities have flourished. The school has been operational almost every day since 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, looking after overseas children and children of key workers, etc. Mr. Lockyer said he felt very fortunate that the school was able to transition very quickly to remote teaching and they managed to deliver remote learning to many different time zones throughout the pandemic. Notes and Nibbles, a much-appreciated lunchtime music event locally, had become virtual and had been much enjoyed. Mr. Lockyer said that, whilst Academic results have been important, the health and welfare of the staff and pupils had been their most important focus. He was pleased to say that they had had only one case of COVID during the year and had instigated a rigorous testing programme. Before the end of term all pupils and staff were tested 3 times, and he believed this rigorous approach had limited transmission of the virus successfully. It sadly meant that their pupils were unable to come into Holbrook as they would have done in the past and this will remain for the time being.

He concluded by saying that he was very much looking forward to welcoming the children back to the school for the start of the summer term.

5. **To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019.** The Clerk summarised the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019. It was proposed by Cllr Allinson and seconded by Cllr Ingleton that the minutes be adopted. All present were in favour.

6. **To receive the Annual report of the Parish Council from the Chairman,**

“We were unable to hold the Annual Parish Meeting last year due to Covid restrictions. However, we had held the monthly parish council meetings on Zoom which has been successful and enabled the council to carry out its duties.

I am glad to say that we have a full council and during the year Christine Holmes stood down and we welcomed Roy Fisk and Alec Wright to council.

In 2020, Linda Goodyear resigned as our clerk. We appointed Jo Hazelwood as the clerk to the council and I am very pleased that Jo has quickly settled in.

Some highlights of the past year include the completion of the Reade Field project which has proved to very popular with residents, both young and old; the setting up of the Holbrook Helpers which has now moved to being a good neighbour scheme with same name, over the year it has provided support and assistance to villages and we will hear more later from them. We now have a community help scheme but Covid has prevented the members working but hopefully they will start on working soon as restrictions are lifted.

The Holbrook Society organised a scarecrow competition in 2020 and it saw over 40 entries raising funds for Saint Elizabeth Hospice and judging was a difficult job for me. They have something planned for this year and we will hear more later.

My thanks go to our District Councillor Mary McLaren and County Councillor David Wood who stands down this year and I thank him for his support over the years and for securing funding for our speed sign and the CSHG.

You may have no doubt seen our Community Caretaker around the village and thanks go to him but it is not an excuse to drop litter, we have several bins around the village, so please use them. Dog fouling comes up at meetings, the majority of dog owners are considerate and clear up after their dogs and others, but there are still a few that do not pick up after their dogs.

Thanks also go out to the P3 group who have continued to work to ensure the public footpaths around the village are kept clear, this has been especially welcomed as many of us have been discovering the lovely walks we have around the area.

Councillors have attended when possible Babergh Liaison, Police, Alton Water User Group, Community Development, Shotley Peninsula Tourism Action Group and SALC meetings for which I am thankful for as it ensures the workload is spread around everyone.

Our district and county councillors have been active to represent Holbrook and provide regular updates at our monthly meetings, I will be asking them to give you an update later.

Council meetings see us discussing many things, including planning applications throughout the year and most were recommended for approval but we recommended refusal for the site on along Hyams Lane behind the Fire Station which BDC also refused. There is a new application in for the site and this will be considered by Council at its next meeting.

Other matters discussed have include the continuing problems of car parking, dog fouling and where we can site a bottle bank, we have still to find a location for this.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for supporting me over the year and for the experience they bring to the council. I must also thank both our clerks for supporting the council throughout the year and me in my role as chairman. Also, our tree warden who gives us valuable advice as to how we should look after trees within the parish and you may have seen some of the new trees around the Reade Field.

I must also thank the unsung heroes of the village who quietly work to make Holbrook such a nice village to live in, providing help and support over the last year through Holbrook Helpers.

Finally looking forward, we plan to have a fun day on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July on the Reade Field to officially open the new play equipment, to have the end of what has been an annus horribilis and celebrate living in Holbrook”

## **7. To receive a statement of the accounts of Holbrook Parish Council for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**

“As Parish Clerk I also have the role of Responsible Finance Officer and will provide a brief summary of the accounts as they stand as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The Parish started the year with an opening balance of £51,603.13

And have closed on £55,157.42

The biggest expenditure during the year was the purchase of the new surfacing, fitness and play equipment on the Reade Field. The Council has been saving towards this for some time and were fortunate enough to receive a substantial grant from Babergh District Council towards the final cost.

Additional income has been received throughout the year, including the sale of a small parcel of land, an increased VAT repayment, a substantial grant from Babergh District Council towards the Reade Field Playground as mentioned above, the Emerging Needs Grant for Holbrook Helpers and £1,500 Locality Funding from County Councillor David Wood towards the speed camera purchased in 2019.

The Parish Council applied for an Emerging Needs Grant at the beginning of COVID 19 and set up Holbrook Helpers to aid local residents who were self-isolating. Holbrook Helpers later became independent and the Council has transferred the funds to the new Holbrook Helpers organisation, with the final transfer to be made in 2021.

A proportion of end of year balance is held on reserve for various projects including:

- Repairs and renewals of assets
- Election costs
- Bus shelters

- Eco lighting system
- The replacement/refurbishment of the Pavilion on the Reade Road

The Council continues to invite applications for grants during the year, up to a maximum amount of £400, from local charitable organisations who provide facilities and services for the benefit of the local community. Applications should be made in writing, or by email, to the Clerk. Applications will be considered in the late Autumn when the Council sets its budget and approved grants will be paid during the following financial year.

If anyone has any questions or wants a copy of the accounts, please contact: holbrookparishclerk@outlook.com”

**8. To invite Cllr Mary McLaren, Babergh District Council to address the meeting:**

Cllr McLaren said she had looked through all her previous reports to capture key points covered over the last year and the current proposals approved by the Council: Councillor McLaren’s full report is on the website, but she highlighted the following: She encouraged Councils to be creative in devising a project that would benefit the parish and the community. The next bidding round will open on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and will run until 31<sup>st</sup> May, with successful bids receiving funding in Autumn 2021. When a developer applies for housing development, any request for over 10 properties attracts CIL payment and requires that 35% of the total is earmarked for affordable housing. Although the affordable housing element of the development does not attract CIL money, the Council is paid £370 per property as an incentive to increase affordable housing. This is currently under review.

An independent review panel has been set up to review Councillors Allowances. Following the past year of business challenges, new initiatives are being unveiled for business in Babergh.

Councillor McLaren said they were very grateful to East Bergholt surgery and Trinity Park for their massive effort in ensuring our residents continue to receive their vaccinations. Latest figures show Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Services were in Joint No. 1 position in the country for the strength of its vaccine roll out.

The moratorium on council activity due to County Council elections began on 25<sup>th</sup> March and continues until after the May elections. The last day to register for a postal vote was 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

All three of Councillor McLaren’s villages were successful in getting an Emerging Needs Grant. Councillor McLaren was also very pleased to be able to give Holbrook Helpers, Holbrook 1<sup>st</sup> Scout Group and Holbrook District Pre-School Playgroup a grant from her locality funding. She thanked all the volunteers, good neighbours and churches who continue to support the elderly and vulnerable residents as everyone begins to work towards a more normal life.

**9. To invite Cllr David Wood, Suffolk County Council, to address the meeting.**

A full report from Cllr David Wood is on the website.

County Councillor David Wood said it had been the strangest year he had ever experienced in the 21 years of his political life. He believed the greatest achievement was to finally get the extension to our area of the AONB. He felt many people had benefited from this and had been, and continue to be, very appreciative. He added that he was still frustrated by certain things which have not been completed during his many years as County Councillor, like the Freston Crossroads and the Ganges development. He highlighted that his group had publicly opposed EDF re Sizewell C

and they had developed a new strategy for biodiversity. Cllr Wood added that when everything gets back towards normality, he hopes people will continue to cycle and make full use of the cycle paths and quiet lanes, etc. He went on to thank the numerous Clerks, Councillors and Chairs he had worked with over the years, having attended over 2000 Council Meetings, and said he had found everyone shared the same dedication to their work and the area they serve. He wished everyone the very best for the future and hoped Councils will make the next County Councillor as welcome as they had made him over the last 21 years.

**10. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan:** Marek Pawlewski explained that the plan has been going for 3 years and it was almost finished. They had completed a final draft of 100 pages covering policies, plans, etc. and everything required by a Neighbourhood Plan. Babergh have had the plan since January and he was hoping it would be returned to them in the very near future. Once back, there were 6 stages to go through. The first thing will be to respond to any comments from Babergh and update the plan accordingly. Regulation 14 requires a 6-week public consultation, which gives everyone an opportunity to comment. The plan then has to be updated in response to the comments received. There follows a consultation period and then a basic condition statement to show how it meets the national planning policy framework and Babergh's planning framework. Then the same document has to be submitted to the independent examiner for their comments. It finally has to go to a referendum within the village and if the referendum is positive, the plan would be adopted. Marek expressed thanks to the small team of people who had worked so hard on the plan: Terence Gray, John Williams, Mike Braybrooke and Sarah Pawlewski.

**11. To receive reports from representatives of other village organisations.**

- (i) **Pre-School Playgroup**, Peter Rogers, Chair of Trustees introduced himself and said he was relatively new to his role. The Pre-School Playgroup had a new administrator and new play leader in post. They stayed open as much as possible during lockdown and are hoping to open more in the holidays. They are looking to extend their services to babies too in the future.
- (ii) **Holbrook Society**, Maggie Good speaking on behalf of the committee of HS gave her report: "For Holbrook Society it was - as for everyone else - a very different year. We regretfully had to cancel all our speakers and outings as well as the Open Gardens. We were not daunted, however, and replaced the Open Gardens with a very successful Scarecrow Competition on 25th and 26th July. This made over £1200 for St Elizabeth Hospice which was a fantastic result. Of equal significance, perhaps, was the warmth, creativity and sheer pleasure it generated in all those who took part and the many, many villagers who toured the trail over the weekend. We also produced a 2021 Calendar of old Holbrook photographs called 'Once upon a time in Holbrook.' This was kindly sold for us in the Coop and made a profit of £250 which we donated to East Anglian Air Ambulance. It is also important to mention the part Holbrook Society played in instigating and supporting the Parish Council's initiative in founding Holbrook Helpers. This is a fantastic step forward for the village and we are proud to have helped with it. Looking forward, we decided, in the light of present uncertainty, to postpone yet again the Open Gardens event planned for 2021 and are planning to run in its place a Holbrook Safari Trail along the same lines as the Scarecrow

Competition. This will take place on the weekend of 3rd and 4th July 2021 alongside the Parish Council's Reade Field celebration. All profits from the Safari Trail will go to St Elizabeth's Hospice.

A calendar is planned again, this time featuring the photographs of local places and life and entitled, provisionally, 'A Year in Holbrook'. The profits from this are destined for EACH.

And we have taken the momentous step of booking our first speaker in the refurbished Village Hall! Charlie Haylock will speak about his experiences coaching the actors on the set of 'The Dig' in May 2022!

We look forward to gradually resuming normal business over the next year"

- (iii) **Fran Williams, Parish Recorder – Holbrook Past and Present.** "The pandemic has allowed me time to catalogue the majority of Marion Leeson's collection but I still have a lot of photos to reference. Once Covid restrictions are relaxed and I can visit Marion again, and will be able to complete the job. I have also sorted the archives into headings such as "Landscaping and Buildings" and "Village Groups" etc. At the moment Marion is still hosting the majority of the collection. It would be good to have a more central place to store all of this in the future. I have sent two reports to the Suffolk Local History Council; an initial report and the annual report for 2020.

The Facebook page "Holbrook, Suffolk, Past and Present" has been very successful, thanks partly to people having more time on their hands in Lockdown. We have well over 700 members now. Trying to pull together threads of topics is difficult but probably worthwhile. I am frightened of losing all this valuable information into the ether. To try and avoid this happening, I have started an enormous spreadsheet into which I have pasted comments from the Facebook site under a variety of headings. I can't pretend that it is anywhere near complete yet.

The Parish Papers has been a useful place to advertise my role. I am very conscious that I need to get hold of more contemporary accounts of living in the village; particularly during the last year. However, people are very shy. I am very grateful to Sam Lanier for continuing to write about the history of the village for the Papers. I am also grateful to her for sharing the burden of Facebook administration.

My goal for next year is to make better links with the various groups within the village so that my annual report can be more comprehensively written. I am hoping that events in the Village Hall will start to run again. In particular I hope that the Church Bring and Buy sales will resume so that I can set up a table there to display some of the archive material. In the meantime, I have commandeered part of the village noticeboard opposite the surgery to put up a small piece of information or photo that might be of interest to those who do not have access to social media."

- (iv) **John Williams, Community Self Help Group:** John Williams said it seems obvious that the community aren't really aware of the group and what it does. It was originally set up by Suffolk Highways to carry out tasks that Highways don't have the resources to do. 17 people have volunteered so far. A number of areas have been identified as needing some work but some areas are not covered by the scheme. Risk Assessments and method statements have to be approved and the advice has been to work within the COVID restrictions. Suffolk Highways have provided some appropriate PPE, - there is now a need to find somewhere to store the equipment. Actions to ensure the safety of the public and the disposal of waste has to be done by an authorised system,

which has to be approved. With regard to the future, he would like to try and get some more volunteers. He suggested that the Parish Council publish a list of areas which the scheme cannot cover. He added that he had some concerns about the aftermath of contractors working on the infrastructure of the village and felt this needed some consideration.

- (v) **The Bowls Club:** Derek Harper representing the Bowls Club said they were hoping to start league games on 17<sup>th</sup> May. The green was going to open on 24<sup>th</sup> April at 2.00 p.m. and he invited people to let him know if they were interested to observe.
- (vi) **Karen Dukes representing Brownies and Guides.** The Brownies and Guides in Holbrook are both looking for volunteers at the moment. Brownies currently have 2 volunteers, but the Guides finish at the end of July, so would like volunteers from September. The guides are meeting at Ipswich High School, as there is no venue in Holbrook. Karen was invited to supply some text for the Holbrook Parish Council Facebook page to try and recruit volunteers.
- (vii) **Holbrook Helpers** Holbrook Helpers was set up just over a year ago when the Parish Council responded very promptly to the needs generated by the pandemic. Five coordinators and a starting team of 25 volunteers (soon expanding to 65) quickly started helping all those in the village that needed assistance; predominantly with shopping and prescription collection. Thanks to the cooperation between the Parish Council, Holbrook Society, the Surgery and Holbrook Churches, the scheme was a success from the start and earned the gratitude of many people. Although a frightening and very worrying time for many, it was also a time for a fantastic renewal of community spirit which has continued to thrive all year. Later in 2020, the scheme became formalised by convening a committee and becoming part of the Good Neighbourhood Scheme. It is well financed, thanks to the Emerging Needs grant, the Locality grant from Mary McLaren and a very generous private donation. We have used some of this money to set up two Little Free Pantries. These are being used regularly and have a good circulation of stock, thanks to the generosity of Holbrook inhabitants.  
There are many people that should be thanked for all their efforts in this initiative; the coordinators, the volunteers, the prescription coordinators, the Safeguarding lead and the data cruncher. However, special thanks should go to Roy Fisk for his drive in setting everything up and to Kate Saulter for taking on the responsibility of committee chairman.  
As of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Holbrook Helpers has assisted people in the village on 1206 different occasions.
- (viii) **Village Hall Committee** (Chair, David Rose). Hall has been closed since last March, but has been redecorated and the kitchen has been refurbished with new equipment. Some groups will be allowed to go back soon. Thanks to BDC for grants from the community infrastructure levy and Dave Wood for the locality budget donation. Cllr Ambrose asked whether they might be space for storage at the Village Hall, for Holbrook Past and Present and the Village Hall Chair said he would discuss this. Cllr Ingleton mentioned that she was constantly being asked by villagers about the bottle banks and asked if the Village Hall Committee could discuss the matter again. The Chair of the VHC said they were worried about broken glass in a car park, but he would raise it again with his committee.

- (ix) **The Community Police Engagement Officer**, Mike Small's report: I am the Community Engagement Officer for the Hadleigh Policing Safer Neighbourhood Team. It has clearly been a year like no other for everyone and policing has been no different. Our focus over the last twelve months has been focussing on keeping our communities safe both from a COVID regulations perspective and from a reducing crime perspective. I have reviewed the crime statistics for the Holbrook area for the last twelve months. Recorded crime is low. When reviewing theft and burglary offences, the most common reported are break-ins to sheds and outbuildings. As we come out of lockdown, I would urge everyone to remain extra vigilant and report any suspicious circumstances to us and ,if it is safe to do so, record any registration numbers of vehicles and report incidents to us through our website under 'Report Now'. Please review your home security- we have crime prevention advice also on our website under the 'First Principle' pages. The other crimes reported in Holbrook mainly relate to incidents occurring within homes such as 'on-line' fraud and harassment.
- I am aware that speeding through the parish is a concern and our Camera Partnership Team has sites in the village and surrounding areas. We are promoting 'Community Speed Watch' as an effective means of tackling excess speed in our rural communities. If anyone is interested in setting up a community speed watch, I would be happy to discuss this. My email address for any personal enquiries or to pass on any concerns is [CEOipwesthadleigh@suffolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CEOipwesthadleigh@suffolk.pnn.police.uk) .
- From an Engagement perspective, we are starting to plan some events over the summer. We have started visiting our schools again and if you have any community events planned, please pass the details on to myself if you would like a police presence. If I am able to attend, I will do so. As well as our social media platforms, we also provide regular policing updates through our Bi-monthly Newsletter found on our website under the title 'Constables County'

**12. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest.** No further matters were raised.

Councillor Ambrose concluded by saying that the Council were looking at speeding and road safety issues and drafting a Holbrook Plan which, he emphasised, was separate from the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Council were also purchasing more grit bins and finding key locations for these. He hoped as many village organisations as possible would join in the Fun Day planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

Finally, Cllr Ambrose thanked everyone attending and said that the next Parish Council Meeting would now be on 26<sup>th</sup> April and the public were welcome to attend. The meeting finished at 8.45 p.m.

*(All written reports submitted to the Clerk will be published on the website, alongside a copy of the minutes)*