

Ashfield cum Thorpe

Approved Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9 May 2018 at 7.30pm at the Community Hall, Ashfield

Attendees: Cllr Myles Hansen (Chair), Cllr Robert Grimsey, Cllr Geoff Hazlewood, Cllr Ann Langley and Cllr Paul Whayman (Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council), Cllr Matthew Hicks (Mid Suffolk District Council & Suffolk County Council), Malcolm Pease (Ashfield Community Council), Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk) and three Members of the Public

1. **Welcome by Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council's Representative**
Cllr Hansen welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that there would be opportunities to raise questions with the speakers of the relevant items.
2. **Agreement of Minutes of the Previous Annual Parish Meeting on 10 May 2017**
Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 10 May 2017 were received, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.
3. **Report by Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council's Representative**
Cllr Hansen delivered his report at the meeting and responded to several questions. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.
4. **Report by Mid Suffolk District Councillor & Suffolk County Councillor**
Cllr Hicks delivered his report at the meeting and responded to several questions. Discussion included the subject of the merger of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.
5. **Report by the Parish Council's Vehicle Activated Signs Representative**
The Parish Council's Vehicle Activated Signs Representative had sent her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting to present a report.
6. **Report by Suffolk Police's Eye Safer Neighbourhood Team's Representative**
A representative of Suffolk Police's Eye Safer Neighbourhood Team was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Hansen presented a summary of the report which had been shared in advance of the meeting and managed several questions. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.
7. **Report by the Parish Paths Representative**
Cllr Grimsey delivered his report at the meeting and responded to several questions. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

8. Report by Ashfield Community Council's Representative

Mr Pease delivered his report at the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

9. Report by Ashfield Ladies Group's Representative

A representative of Ashfield Ladies Group was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Hansen presented the report which had been shared in advance of the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

10. Report by Ashfield Welfare Trust's Representative

A representative of Ashfield Welfare Trust was unable to attend the meeting to present a report.

11. Report by Ashfield's Village Recorder's Representative

A representative of Ashfield's Village Recorder was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Hansen presented the report which had been shared in advance of the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

12. Report by Earl Soham Community Primary School's Representative

A representative of Earl Soham Community Primary School was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Hazlewood presented the report which had been shared in advance of the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

13. Public Forum

Cllr Grimsey reported the work in progress relating to the clearance of blocked drains which relied on gaining professional assistance and the ongoing concern of potholes in the village. The meeting finished at 8.30pm.

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk
Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council
actpc.clerk@gmail.com
8 May 2019

ASHFIELD CUM THORPE : ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9th MAY 2018

SUMMARY REPORT BY CHAIRMAN

1. In April 2017, Geoff Hazlewood stood down as Chairman after an '*above-and-beyond*' four years of service, compared with three years as is customary for the Parish Council. Grateful thanks are due to Geoff for dealing so competently and effectively with a number of difficult issues during his period of tenure. At the time of Geoff's standing down, no Councillor was prepared to take on the task.
2. At the subsequent meeting on 26th June, it became clear that without a Chairman, the PC would cease to exist. After debate, it was agreed that Myles Hansen would take on that formal role, provided that other Councillors took the lead on issues being dealt with by the PC. At the time, the following responsibilities were identified:-
 - Finance and planning - Simon Garrett
 - Safer Neighbourhoods and footpaths - Robert Grimsey
 - Defibrillator – Ruth Hart
 - Communications – Myles Hansen
 - Councillors currently without lead responsibility – Geoff Hazlewood, Ann Langley, Paul Whayman
3. The Parish Council is most appreciative of the professional guidance and active support of Simon Ashton as Clerk.
4. The provision and erection of a new Notice Board (a legal requirement for the PC) proved to be not as straightforward as had been hoped – a similarity with the story of Clochemerle was noted by some of the electorate. The matter has now been concluded to the satisfaction of all.
5. In response to requests from a few members of the electorate, a number of potential acquisitions have been debated : the provision of a defibrillator, vehicle activated signals and a dog refuse collection bin. All of these require funding, and grants have not been forthcoming; no effective progress has been made to date.
6. The PC is funded by a precept paid by householders on their Council Tax bill. For 2017/18 this was £1,700; for 2018/19 it will be £2,700. This money is predominantly spent on Clerk's salary and expenses, insurance and preparation for any upcoming election costs.
7. There have been instances in the village of thoughtless activities by local farmers. These have been dealt with residents most affected, but the PC is available to act on such matters if required.

Myles Hansen
Chairman

Cllr Matthew Hicks 2018 Annual Report for the Thredling Division

SCC Children's Services continue to improve following Ofsted pilot inspection

Suffolk County Council was a pilot for the new Ofsted inspection framework. All areas are now judged to be 'Good'. This puts SCC in the top 25% of all Local Authorities. Inspectors were positive about every part of Children's Services, the quality of work with children, and the passion and commitment of everyone they met. Their report highlights that: "The local authority's commitment to children and families is clear and unambiguous... Staff know children well and are passionate about changing their lives." Key points made by Ofsted in the report recognise the work of the authority in the following areas: **Early Help:** Early help is making a positive difference to the lives of children and families Children and families benefit from a good range of early help services. **Social Care & Safeguarding:** The children and adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is well established. It is appropriately resourced and well managed. Thresholds are applied consistently. Information is shared appropriately. Decision-making is timely. The way in which the local authority has rolled out its preferred social work model across all children and young people's services is extremely impressive. The model is encouraging social workers and other staff to work more effectively with families. **Children in Care:** The local authority makes good use of its legal powers and acts decisively to protect children who are unable to continue to live at home safely. Social workers clearly understand the importance of achieving permanence for children in care. The emphasis is always on finding the right long-term solution for each child. **Strong Leadership:** Senior managers lead by example. They want the best for children, young people and families. They set and expect high standards of themselves and others. They understand the importance of getting the basics right but are not afraid to innovate. **Partnership working:** Partnership working, particularly with the police and with health services, is strong. This is evident in the way in which the MASH has developed. It is also apparent in the role played by health partners in early help. Working closely with other agencies, the local authority has strengthened its response to missing children and child sexual exploitation.

Deborah Cadman leaves and Nicola Beach arrives

Suffolk County Council's Chief Executive, Deborah Cadman OBE left us last year to take up a new role as the first permanent Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). She joined Suffolk County Council in 2011 and since then has overseen a dramatic improvement in education attainment levels in Suffolk, improved staff morale and led the careful implementation of over £200million of savings made necessary by reductions in funding from government. In March 2018, Nicola Beach was appointed as Suffolk County Council's new Chief Executive. Nicola, who is currently Executive Director of Infrastructure and Environment at Essex County Council, will take up her new role this summer. She was appointed due to the wealth of experience she has in local government, having been Chief Executive at Braintree District Council before joining Essex County Council, and having held various other roles in authorities across the East of England.

Revised GCSE and A Level results reflect progress of Suffolk students

The Department for Education published revised GCSE and A Level results on 25 January 2018. The validated figures confirm that 3% more students in Suffolk are achieving the expected standards in English and Maths at GCSE compared with last year. 63.1% of students in the county are achieving the expected standard in English and Maths and Suffolk has closed the gap to national to less than 1%. Suffolk has also risen by 26 places in national league tables for this measure, to 83rd out of 151 authorities. The county has risen 5 places in national rankings for the percentage of students achieving the English Baccalaureate. The Revised A Level figures confirm that Suffolk pupils have once again performed well with the General Applied entry and Tech Level entries remaining above the national average figures. Since the launch of the council's Raising the Bar programme in 2012, Suffolk has risen 59 places in national rankings for GCSE attainment in English and Maths. 87% of schools in Suffolk are judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

Fully funded first-time central heating systems for Suffolk residents

Suffolk's local authorities are now able to provide fully funded central heating systems subject to survey to 514 fuel poor households across Suffolk over the next three years. Around 4 million UK households are in fuel poverty, unable to affordably heat their home to the temperature needed to stay warm and healthy. As well as being on low incomes many of these households are also faced with the additional burden of relying on heating systems that are inefficient and expensive to run. The local authorities in Suffolk have a long track record of securing funding to support our most vulnerable residents. This project will enable us to make a practical, long lasting difference to improve their living conditions and make their homes more affordable to heat. Anyone who does not have a central heating system and finds it a challenge to afford their energy bills should contact Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People on 03456 037686 quoting the Warm Homes Fund. It will fund the installation of affordable heating solutions in fuel poor households which don't use mains gas as their primary source of heat.

Reminder to check white good

People in Suffolk are being urged to check their white goods and to not use them unattended in an attempt to reduce the risk of fires starting in the home. Fire services up and down the country are recommending people register their appliances in case of recalls, but to also be aware that incidents can occur when a product isn't on a recall list. Damage and severity of a fire, should one occur, is dramatically reduced if they are not left running while everyone is asleep or out of the house. People are also being urged to check their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and making sure they know how they will exit their home if a fire does occur. In 2015/16, more than 15,000 accidental fires in the home were caused by cookers and white goods across the UK. In 2016/17 in Suffolk, there were 29 incidents caused by white goods – to date in 2017/18, there have been 11. Suffolk Trading Standards are also informing people of the campaign, reminding them to regularly check the recalled list of domestic appliances, and to follow their weekly product recall campaign, #CheckItTuesday on Twitter. We would urge people to register their appliances at www.registermyappliance.org.uk This online safety initiative, which is supported by fire services and government represents nearly 90% of white goods brands and allows people to register appliances new and up to 12 years old so if there's a safety recall they can be contacted.

Suffolk Highways goes to war on potholes

Suffolk Highways has declared war on the potholes which are opening on the county's roads, following one of the worst winters in recent years. Since the start of 2018, Suffolk Highways has received in excess of 11,000 customer reports, which compares with approximately 6,000 reports in the same period last year. This demonstrates the impact the bad weather Suffolk has experienced since November has had on the county's road surface. Suffolk Highways has put in place the following measures with immediate effect to help cope with the demand:

- Deploying additional gangs to undertake pothole and road repairs across the county.
- Switching to a different temporary material to repair emergency potholes which, although slightly more expensive, provides a longer-lasting repair in damp conditions.
- Considering for large areas of intervention-level pothole defects whether 'making safe' (through organising traffic management and temporary road closures) is required in advance of making extensive repairs.
- Bringing in extra resource to undertake larger-scale patching works as part of a planned programme for dealing with sites on which traffic management or road closures have been arranged or areas where small-scale repairs will not sufficiently address the road deterioration.
- Moving internal resources from other teams to support the inspection of customer reports, particularly from staff with previous experience of dealing with customer reports and inspections.

This extra push to repair the high volume of potholes in the county is being assisted by the extra £21 million funding which has been borrowed to resurface a quarter of all roads managed by Suffolk Highways, by 2021.

Suffolk to use drone technology to help manage blue light service incidents

15 February 2018 marked the official launch of the use of two Small Unmanned Surveillance Aircrafts in Suffolk. The technology, commonly referred to as drones have been developed and funded by Suffolk Resilience Forum for use across the county. As part of a multi-agency Air Support Unit, the drones will be used by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue and Norfolk & Suffolk 4x4 Response. The drones will provide a range of aerial surveillance options to support emergency services and voluntary organisations across a wide range of incidents. They will also help to reduce risks to the public and emergency service workers. The drones and camera equipment cost around £42,500 and they are based at Woodbridge Fire and Police station, have 24/7 emergency response capability and can be used by 17 specially trained remote pilots. The drones will provide important visual information which will be used alongside experienced operational commanders to complete the decision-making picture and help resolve incidents as quickly and safely as possible. The drones have already been used a number of times, most recently at the fire at Saxmundham train station to not only provide pictures of fire spreading and possible collapse in areas that may not have been possible for firefighters to access or see.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

SaferNeighbourhoods

Eye SNT, The Lodge, Castleton Way, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7BH

Tel: 101 Email: eye.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

www.suffolk.police.uk Twitter: @HaleswrthPolice

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ASHFIELD-CUM-THORPE PARISH COUNCIL 2018

Reported Crimes

Between 1st April 2017 and 1st April 2018 there has been 0 recorded investigations in the locality. In the ward of Worlingworth there has been 79 recorded investigations.

The investigations are classified as follows;

- 5 x Assaults (including domestic related offences)
- 4 x Criminal Damage (including Arson)
- 11 x Thefts (including attempted offences)
- 2 x Public Order Offences
- 17 x Non-Dwelling Burglaries (including attempted offences)
- 2 x Dwelling Burglaries (including attempted offences)
- 23 x Other Crimes
- 15 x Non-Crime & Historic Investigations (including safeguarding & ASB)

Over the same period in the 12 months prior there were 69 recorded crimes. This shows an increase of 14%. Some of this increase can be explained by changes in the recording of Non-Crime investigations and Vulnerable Person referrals.

Local Interest

Crime – The most significant crimes to have taken place include the theft of several items of silver from Brundish Church. The items were all later recovered after being found in a ditch in Fressingfield.

Staff – September 2017 a new Constable was appointed into the SNT. PC 1856 Peck replaced PC Andrews-Pearce as the Eye SNT PC.

November 2017 saw the PCSO Long leave Eye SNT after 10 years of service in the locality. PCSO Long has joined Norfolk Constabulary as a PC.

December 2017 saw the return of PCSO Kane Martin to Eye SNT as a direct replacement for PCSO Long. PCSO Martin has previously worked in the Eye area.

County Wide Crime Trends

There has been a force wide increase in acquisitive crime. Published figures show a total of 689 burglary & vehicle related theft offences for February 2018 and increase of 165 incidents on the same period in 2017.

**IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION OR ARE SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING
REPORT IT ON 101 and IF YOU THINK A CRIME IS BEING COMMITTED
ALWAYS DIAL 999.**

General

In response to the increase in theft from motor vehicle and residential non-dwelling burglaries (shed/garage break-ins) Suffolk Police would like to promote our TOOL SMART Campaign; S-secure, M-Mark And R-Register T-Tools.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team have held a number of community engagements to promote the advice and more engagements are planned for the summer.

Photograph and record valuable items on nationally recognised website, such as www.immobilise.com
Consider the use of tracking devices and marking property with “traceable solutions” like SmartWater®.



Police Connect

Police Connect is a messaging service connecting you to the very latest policing news for your area via e-mail, text or phone.

There is no charge for this service - all messages you receive are free.

You can register to receive information about the issues that most matter to you and be among the first to be alerted by police in the case of an emergency affecting your area.

There is the option to receive information about a range of specific interest areas – such as ‘rural’ or ‘rivers and coastal’ – as well as updates for business owners and news from your Police and Crime Commissioner.

You can register for Police Connect [here](#).

Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council

From: "Robert Grimsey" <robert@rwgrimsey.co.uk>
Date: 08 May 2018 08:51
To: "actpc clerk" <actpc.clerk@gmail.com>; "MYLES HANSEN" <m.leyspring@gmail.com>
Subject: FOOTPATHS REPORT FOR TOMORROW'S MEETING.

Ashfield benefits from an extensive network of footpaths the majority of which are well used by both parishioners and visitors from far and wide.

Ashfield Footpaths Group work throughout the year to ensure that the routes are kept in a serviceable condition, this includes trimming vegetation, replacement of waymark posts and inspecting bridges. Where necessary we liaise with landowners to overcome difficulties. A full annual inspection is carried out to identify where repairs are required.

We have recently met with Debbie Adams from SCC to address specific issues on land towards the west of the parish, hopefully this intervention will overcome the problems this landowner appears to have with 'trespassers' [because paths on their land are obstructed!].

A big frustration at present is that there are two bridges across the River Deben that are closed which much restricts access to Framsdon and beyond. Because these are 'big' bridges they fall into the responsibility of the 'bridges team' at SCC and are taking longer to get fixed, it is hoped at least one will be re-opened this year.

Following the very wet winter there still a few cross field paths that need to be sprayed out, now that the weather has improved we are reminding the farmers of the need to get this done.

My thanks are due to Malcolm for all of his support during the year.

Should you encounter any problems on the network please let either Malcolm Pease or myself know and we can get things put right.

Robert Grimsey.

for Ashfield Footpaths Group.

Ashfield cum Thorpe Community Council

Chairmans Report 2017/18

2017/18 has been a fairly quiet year in Community council activities.

Following the AGM last May we have welcomed onto the Committee Mike Harrison and Brian Towler.

In terms of events we have had two quiz nights, one in May and another in August, which always seem popular, and also two social evenings which also seem popular. We continue to provide refreshment stops for two cyclist clubs which help our income to cover our costs, and my thanks go to the Ladies in the village who provide the cakes and help on the days.

In respect of Hall bookings this last year we have had a local Girl Guide camp over one weekend, two birthday parties for Ashfield residents, two wakes for former Ashfield residents, two Election days, the harvest supper and the village ladies group who have monthly meetings.

Other activities this year have seen two windows replaced, a new village notice board installed and repairs to drain covers which were kindly done by Robert Grimsey. We enquired as to the cost of repairing the floor but the quotes we received were far too high for the Committee to justify spending that sort of money on an old hall. The gardens and hedges have been maintained by committee and non committee members and the grass area at the rear very kindly kept mowed by Chris Wilton who I wish to thank. Also to Ali for providing excellent posters to advertise our events.

I would also like to thank my fellow committee members for their help and support through the year as we would not be able to continue without everyone doing their bit.

Malcolm Pease. Chairman April 2018

Ashfield Ladies Group

Report to Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council AGM - May 2018

Ashfield Ladies Group was started in January 1983 and has now been running for 35 years (*not that many of us can run very fast*). Our membership has increased in the past twelve months to 30. Our annual subscription has remained at £25 for the past four years.

The committee aims to have as varied a programme as possible throughout the year. In August 2017 we visited Aldeburgh theatre instead of the usual meal in a local tavern. This was very well attended and we hope to repeat the experience again this year. .

We are a friendly group and welcome members and visitors not just from Ashfield but from the surrounding villages.

Susan Hansen
Group Organiser

I have pleasure in providing a copy of my Village Recorder's Report for 2017. This is the second year in which I've produced a report as the Village Recorder for Ashfield.

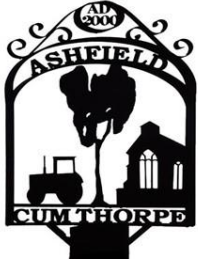
As a reminder, Village Recording is a scheme whereby events and occurrences in the village, are documented for the benefit of future generations. To help me with this role, I welcome contributions of information and documents.

This year's report is more extensive and includes pictures. The main headings include Social, Other Events, Church Activities, Village Business, Property/House Sales and lettings, The Elements, Footpaths, Elections and News of Former Residents.

Copies of the Report will be distributed shortly via the village email list.

Anita Sharpe

May 2018



Ashfield Cum Thorpe 2017 Recorder's Report

Social

Community Council Events

Ramble to Earl Soham - Sunday April 30th

Malcolm and Sue Pease organised a walk of roughly 7 miles. Walkers assembled at the village hall, where £1 each was collected towards Hall funds. The route was down Grove Lane, and Waddlegoose Lane, over the road and down the side of what is now The Willows, (which was being built), eventually arriving at Earl Soham, where lunch was taken at the Victoria pub. Some participants were given lifts home for various reasons and the remaining ramblers returned to Ashfield following a route roughly adjacent to Low Road; up past Sloper House and the previous site of Ashfield's windmill; then back to the Village Street and home. The weather was dry and sometimes sunny, although a bit windy.



Quiz Night at the village hall - Friday May 26th

Quiz Night at the village hall - Sunday August 20th

Christmas Social - Saturday 9th December

A well-attended evening with present and past occupants and friends and a nice way to start Christmas. Dick Knight prepared a Christmas Quiz, and there was a slideshow of photographs of Ashfield in the snow (there was no snow on this evening, although the weather had been very cold, and the hall didn't properly warm up all night!)

Most of the photographs had been collected for the Life in Ashfield Exhibition of 1996, with the earliest photographs dating back to the 1930's. They included photographs of the deep snowfall in 1986/7, when the Street was blocked at Whitepost Corner and numerous villagers helped dig out the road, before a tractor arrived and finished off the job. Photographs were also shown of the village pantomime of 1987; some of the participants still live in the village, and four were present at the social.



Cyclists Visits - The village continued to provide refreshments for two cycling clubs. The visits are a major source of income for the hall funds and an enjoyable occasion for both cyclists and residents

Working Parties - The village hall committee is responsible for caring for the building and grounds. Working party activities were arranged.

Ashfield Ladies Group

ALG had another well supported and successful year. The meetings included the following talks and activities: -

- Tuesday 17th January, the Realm of the Polar Bear, a talk by Chris Parfitt.
- Tuesday 21st February, the Great Train Robbery and me, a talk by Myles Hansen.
- Tuesday 21st March, Alzheimer Research, a talk by Jessica Hiscock.
- Tuesday 18th April, Notes from a Head's Study, a talk by Steve Wright.
- Tuesday 20th June, Annual General Meeting, with a two-course dinner, wine and soft drinks.
- Tuesday 18th July, Visit to Christchurch Mansion.
- Tuesday 15 August, outing to Aldeburgh Summer Theatre.
- Tuesday 19 September, Running a B & B in Turkey by Jenny Gibbs.
- Tuesday 17 October, the Suffolk Punch Trust.
- Tuesday 21 November, Cherrie Christmas, Cherrie Wilson.
- Tuesday 12 December, Christmas Meal, Dennington Queen.



Due to the double booking of the hall on the 18th April, the meeting was moved to Leyspring, where the ladies of Ashfield were spoilt by meeting in a warm and cosy living room.

18th April meeting at Leyspring - Front Row L to R, Mavis Kerridge, Janet Ravenscroft, Anita Sharpe, Jacky Brame, Barbara Wilton, Cherrie Wilson, Sandra Measham, Margaret Whayman, Lyn Williamson, Penny Clark, Kath Burton, Dorothy Brenton, Jan Gouda, Jane Davidson, Doreen Baxter, Liz Wiggins. (photograph taken by Susan Hansen)

The Brenton Bash (Gentlemen's Evening)

On Friday 13th May, Chris Sharpe organised this annual outing for the gentlemen of Ashfield and friends. The gentlemen were not supposed to have had advanced knowledge of the venue; participants were however asked to make their choice of food for the evening, and the more alert/suspicious individuals worked out the location from the naming of the dishes! Nevertheless, the bus journey from Ashfield was designed to disorientate the sleuths, and a circuitous route was taken to The Badingham White Horse. The attendees reported back that they had had a most pleasant evening.

Mystery Meal (and "Finnish Lunch")

On 28th October the 30th Ashfield Mystery Meal took place. The first Mystery Meal was organised by Susan Hansen, who worked out the complicated formula to feed at least 16 couples with a 4-course meal at 4 different venues. This year's event was organised by Dick Knight, assisted by his neighbour Mike Harrison, who will take over from Dick next year. A record 24 couples took part, including friends, former residents and new residents. During the evening Dick announced that he and Gill were planning to downsize and move away from Ashfield in the spring.

This year, for the first time, a follow up event dubbed the "Finnish Lunch", was held at the Village Hall to finish the leftovers.



Diners at the Mystery Meal "Finnish Lunch".



Some of the past and present organisers of the Ashfield Mystery Meal, L to R, Chris Sharpe, Dorothy Brenton, Susan Hansen and Dick Knight

Other Events

Aesculus Viewing at Corner View



On 27th May Robert Grimsey of Ashfield held a well-attended private viewing of his arboretum for Ashfield residents. The organisation Plant Heritage, formerly known as the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG), promotes a number of "national plant collections" and Robert owns a national collection of Aesculus trees, with more than 80 types planted in meadowland of 2 – 3 acres, adjacent to his garden and vegetable patch. Light refreshments were served and there was a retiring collection for the Church, which raised over £350. The weather was warm and sunny, and a steady stream of villagers wandered

down to view the trees, which were mostly in flower.

Church activities

St Mary's Church, Ashfield is in the Mid Loes Benefice, together with Charsfield with Debach, Cretingham, Dallinghoo, Earl Soham, Hoo, Letheringham and Monewden. The Rector is the Revd Dr. Stephen Brian and the Churchwarden for Ashfield is Robert Grimsey.

Church Services

Two services have been held in most months - Evening Prayers and Communion - including services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and a Communion service for the whole Benefice took place on March 5th.

Harvest Supper

On Saturday 7th October the Church organised a meal with entertainment from the folk group Bristol Fashion, at a cost of £8. The Harvest Supper clashed with other events held outside the village and consequently, attendance was low.



Village Business

Community Council AGM

This took place on Tuesday 2nd May in the village hall. Prior to the meeting, concerns had been raised about the level of support for community events - "We are always looking for new ideas and would very much like to hear your views and suggestions. We are a friendly group of people keen to carry on the "Village Hall tradition but need more active support from people in the village."

Mike Harrison subsequently joined the committee.

Ashfield Welfare Trust

On 10th May, the trustees reported to the village and to the parish Council AGM, that they had "continued their recent practice of distributing the interest on its investments to households that supported a qualifying pensioner and this year 11 households received a cheque for £35". All three of the trustees, Simon Wilson, Dick Knight and Eric Brown indicated that they would be retiring from the Trust for personal reasons and they hoped that volunteers could be found within the village to replace them.

(Note: The Ashfield Welfare Trust is a registered charity that exists to relieve persons resident in the parish who are in condition of need, hardship or distress)

Parish Council AGM

The meeting on Wednesday 10th May was attended by the Parish Councillors (Geoff Hazlewood, Simon Garrett, Ann Langley, Myles Hansen, Robert Grimsey, Ruth Hart); the Parish Clerk Simon Ashton; County Councillor Matthew Hicks; and other Ashfield residents.

Reports were given by and on behalf of the County Councillor, the Ladies Group, the Footpaths Group, Ashfield Welfare Trust, Earl Soham School Governors and the Village Recorder. Items mentioned included Vehicle Activated Speed signs and the new village noticeboard.

The Great Village Noticeboard Controversy

In order to fulfil its obligation to display official notices, the Parish Council had decided to acquire a new noticeboard to replace the old one attached to the village hall. In March, a message was circulated on behalf of the Parish and Community Councils, advising that a noticeboard had been acquired, and that the plan was to install it at the entrance to the village hall car park near to the phone box where it could be more easily seen. Volunteers were sought to put in the poles.

By May the new notice board had been erected, but its appearance and siting caused much comment - mostly negative. Two grey plastic posts supported a large black plastic noticeboard with Ashfield Cum Thorpe written in white at the top, very visible from the road and partially blocking out the view of the old telephone box. One resident thought that it "looked like a big television".

The location of the board was subsequently discussed at the AGMs of both the Community Council and the Parish Council. At the Parish Council AGM, it was acknowledged that the Community Council was responsible for the upkeep of the village hall and hence the location of the board.

Within days of the Parish Council's AGM, the board was taken down and was eventually relocated next to the village hall, to the right of the entrance.



The previous position of the new notice board, and the notice board after relocation.

Broadband problems

In Summer, a number of people in the centre of the village found that their broadband connection had become highly erratic, occasionally dropping out completely especially on a Sunday. Visits from BT engineers had provided no lasting benefit. In July it was noted that broadband speeds available via the BT network in Ashfield were typically pretty low, and the Parish Council asked village residents about their broadband experiences to determine what course of action was necessary.

On August 2nd, the Parish Council noted that: -

- 16% of respondents experienced no problems with their broadband service
- 29% reported significant problems
- 55% reported very serious problems

Which meant that only 1 in 6 of respondents were happy with their broadband service.

It was noted that the prospect of any improvement from the "copper wire" infrastructure to fibre did not appear to be imminent, the latest information being that areas such as Ashfield "are under consideration for upgrade between 2017 and 2021". County Councillor Matthew Hicks investigated and was informed that fibre connection to roadside cabinets serving Ashfield was expected to be implemented by the end of 2017; however, this did not materialise.

Footpaths

Once again this year, the Footpath Committee walked the entire path network in order to inspect the paths, signs and bridges and to ensure that everything was in good order. The Committee reported after its annual audit that no route was impassable, although some places needed attention and some of the signposts would need to be replaced. It was also noted that the river crossings along Cretingham Lane should be replaced and re-opened during the current financial year.

Elections

The Village Hall became the Polling Station for two elections: -

- Thursday 4th May, Suffolk County Council Elections, (Thredling Area): Matthew Hicks, Conservative, was re-elected with 2,066 votes. The other candidates were Stan Robinson, Labour (431 votes), David Payne, Liberal Democrat (455 votes).

- Thursday 8th June, General Elections, (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich Constituency): Daniel Poulter, Conservative, was re-elected with a majority of 17,185. The other candidates were Regan Scot, Green Party, Elizabeth Hughes Labour, Aidan Van de Weyer, Liberal Democrat, Stephen Searle, UKIP.

In November, our MP Daniel Poulter was referred to a disciplinary committee for investigation, after allegations were made against him of inappropriate behaviour towards female MPs. The allegations were vigorously denied by Dr. Poulter. The investigation had not been concluded by the end of the year. During this time, Dr. Poulter was absent from Parliament due to health problems.

Property / House Sales and Lettings

The year saw the following changes: -

Ashfield Place Farm: In March, the letting of Ashfield Place Farm was advertised by Clarke and Simpson of Framlingham. The incumbent tenant, had been in place for 10 years. A total of 800 acres (324 hectares), of arable land was available of which 380 acres (155 hectares) was in Ashfield. Letting agent Oliver Holloway, Clarke and Simpson, said: "It is a highly productive commercial arable farm and is one of the largest blocks of land to come on to the market to let within this area for some time". Viewing mornings were held in April and the new tenant took over on 1st October.

2 Roll & Pork Cottage was re-let to new tenants In April.

White Railings was advertised for sale in April (although the property had not been sold by the end of the year).

Glebe House was sold by the Church of England and new owners moved in in May.

Thatch End was sold in October, and Tony and Elaine Elliot moved away from Ashfield. Before their move to Thatch End, Tony and Elaine had lived at Acresfield, Ashfield, moving in to the village in the 1980's

The Willows a new house at the Northern end of the village on the road to Kenton, was completed and the house was occupied.

High Row Farm - Towards the end of the year, building work started on a plot of land that had once been the farm's vegetable patch. Vehicular access was constructed a number of years ago, but no building work started until 2017.

The Elements

Wednesday 4th October Sonic Boom

A loud noise like an explosion was heard at 8.40 am. There was much discussion on Radio Suffolk about the mystery noise, with reports coming in from across Suffolk Norfolk and North Essex. The radio station later reported that the noise was caused by a sonic boom. Following a security incident on a Ryanair flight from Lithuania to Luton, two Typhoon aircraft had been scrambled from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire and cleared to go supersonic over land. The plane was diverted from Luton to Stanstead with the military escort. The security alert was later reported to have been a hoax.

October 16 Red Sky in Ashfield following hurricane Ophelia.

The remnants of hurricane Ophelia did not cause any major damage in the area but did produce an unusual red sky, as seen in the pictures below, taken in Ashfield by residents Simon Garrett and Dick Knight.



News of Former Ashfield Residents

Carol Garrett

In December former resident Carol Garrett was included in the New Year's Honours list. Carol was awarded an OBE for her work with Suffolk County Council Trading Standards. Carol had lived at Winterfold Ashfield for many years.

Revd. Canon David Boyes.

Revd Boyes was the Priest in Charge of Earl Soham, Cretingham and Ashfield between 1985 and 1996. He died in intensive care shortly after major heart surgery and his funeral took place at St John's Church in Woodbridge on Friday 26th May.

Dick Spalding

The funeral of Dick Spalding was held on Monday 25th September at Seven Hills Crematorium, Ipswich. Dick & his wife Kitty moved away from Ashfield some time ago, having previously lived in Sunnyside Corner. They had both been active in village life for many years.

Edward Bowman

Edward was staying with his son Max and former wife Alison in Ashfield over the Christmas period. He became ill on Boxing Day and was taken by ambulance to Ipswich Hospital. He suffered a brain haemorrhage and died on 30th December, without recovering consciousness.

Edward was a former resident of Church Farm House and lately of Debenham. He was well known in the village, a character who played his part in community activities and who continued to support Ashfield after he moved away to Debenham.

Anita Sharpe

Village Recorder

Merryvale House, Ashfield-cum-Thorpe

Earl Soham Community Primary School

Head Teacher's report for Parish Councils: April 2018

1) Number on Role

There are currently 58 pupils on roll at the school.

2) Educational Visits

We have continued to develop our creative curriculum where we focus on a particular theme each term. In the spring term our theme was 'Under Attack' and this gave us the opportunity to study both the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. The whole school (including some governors) went to West Stow to visit the museum and see the reconstructed Anglo Saxon Village. It was a fascinating visit which really sparked the children's imaginations and made everyone focus on how archaeological clues can be interpreted. It led to a great deal of follow up work in the classroom. This included trying our own carving, making shields, further research and associated report writing.

At the end of the autumn term the children in years 2 to 6 enjoyed a visit to the pantomime whilst the younger pupils went to the Wolsey studio theatre to see a festive show.

3) Closure due to snow

For the first time in many years the exceptional weather resulted in the school being closed for 3 days. This is not a decision that is taken lightly and it may not happen again for a long time. For many of the children this was their first experience of such disruption.

4) World Book Day

Although delayed by the snow pupils enjoyed coming to school dressed as their favourite hero or villain from a book. More importantly we were fortunate that a number of parents gave up their time to come into school and share their favourite childhood books with the children. It was good for the children to hear just how much adults enjoy reading and to realise that reading is a lifelong pleasure.

5) School Council and Sport Relief

The school council organised a week of additional lunchtime activities and competitions with a small donation being requested for participation. This was very much organised by the children themselves with adults giving advice and support only when needed. Their efforts raised a little over £60 for Sport Relief. The children were determined to make it a healthy event and they provided rewards and prizes of various types of fruit.

6) Tractor in School

We were yet again fortunate to have a tractor in school and all children enjoyed examining it and discovering how their food is produced. On Thursday (19th April)

children in years 3 and 4 will visit the food and farming event organised by the Suffolk Agricultural Association which will build upon their tractor experience.

7) Pi Day

March 14th (3.14 if you use MM/DD) gave the children an additional opportunity to focus on maths. Pupils were put into teams and had to run around the site to find hidden maths questions. They then had to return with each answer before running as quickly as possible to finding the next one. It was a fun afternoon which combined maths and PE.

8) Car Park

The first stages of enlarging the car park have been started. The school remains very thankful to Mr & Mrs Hinton for organising this.

9) PTFA

The PTFA remain very active and, as always, the school is very grateful for their fund raising efforts. The next events are a jumble sale (April 28th) and a build your own hanging basket afternoon on Thursday May 24th. Please contact the school for further details.

Peter Lambillion-Jameson
Head Teacher