

## **Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish (APM) held 2 May 2025 in the PDCC hall.**

Present: Councillors Pudney (Chair), Collins, Cooper, Fausset, Hollowday, Prendergast and Wheele.

Also Present: The Clerk.

Electors: 9 Members of the public attended the meeting

### **05.02.1 APM Welcome**

Cllr Pudney introduced herself, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **05.02.2 APM Apologies**

Apologies were received and approved from County Cllr Fleming, District Cllr Weller, and apologies from various parishioners.

### **05.02.3 APM To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 April 2024**

Copies of the Minutes had been previously circulated. The minutes were agreed and accepted as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chair.

**05.02.4 APM Palgrave Parish Council:** Cllr Val Pudney, Chair – see attached report Appendix 1.

**05.02.5 APM County Council:** County Councillor Jessica Fleming – no report received.

**05.02.6 APM District Council:** District Cllr Tim Weller –report submitted and distributed post meeting.

### **05.02.7 APM Reports from Parish Organisations and Groups within the village**

Various reports were summarised by representatives at the meeting, where present. All reports issued prior to the meeting commencing were previously circulated and are appended to the minutes on the parish council website. *Due to lack of space they are not posted on the notice board.* These include St Peter's Church, the PDCC, Palgrave Primary School, Diss Art Group, Palgrave Photography Group, Extend Exercise, the Palgrave Players, Palgrave Walking Group, Yoga Flow East and Monterey Line Dance. A brief report was read out from the Palgrave Welfare Trust - information on the Trust can be viewed on our website: <https://palgrave.onesuffolk.net/palgrave/palgrave-welfare-trust>

**05.02.8 APM To receive comments / concerns from people present:** - It was noted that all the white lines had not yet been repainted - specifically the corner of Lion and Priory Roads at Corner Cottage. **Action:** Clerk to query  
It was noted that the entrance to Church Farm Close is often blocked by parents on the school run which often results in the bin lorries being unable to access the road, meaning the bins are left unemptied. Cllr Fausset explained to all present the work being done to try and alleviate problem parking.

**05.02.9 APM There were no other matters notified to the Chair.**

**Closing remarks;** The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance. The date for 2025 will be agreed in due course.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Report by the Chair of Palgrave Parish Council - Val Pudney**

1. The bollards have now been completed around The Green and this is now helping to keep it looking better. Although we have had some instances from vans ignoring our requests not to park, we hope we have now solved this problem although some people are still finding ways to block footpaths.
2. The village sign is looking better although we are waiting for the stand to be finished, which will be done this summer.
3. We've set up a liaison group for the Grange and Marsh Solar Farms which have both now received approved planning permission. The group hope to do a detailed photographic before and after completion study and document the flora and fauna within the area, giving us a clear picture of the biodiversity over both sites. Anyone wishing to help, please contact Michael Wheele on email: [mwheele.palgrave@gmail.com](mailto:mwheele.palgrave@gmail.com). Along with the solar farms, the National Grid Pylons have been another source of discussion within the Parish Council and is still ongoing. We have responded in all instances, trying to mitigate some of the problems we are facing along the proposed route so close to the village and we hope they take our comments on board.
4. We have been quoted for a 20mph scheme through the village along Priory Road from Lion Road to Denmark Hill on the condition that we pay for it. The cost will be in the region of £14K - £16K which will decimate our remaining CIL monies. We are trying to source funding to help with the cost. This is a scheme most of the village are in favour of so we hope to take this up.
5. I would like to thank all our volunteers who have helped us through the year including the litter pickers, defibrillator volunteers, VETS volunteers, Community Clean up volunteers and the Lows working party. Thanks to everyone for their ongoing support.
6. Lastly, our thanks to County Councillor Jessica Flemming and District Councillor Tim Weller for the help they give us throughout the year, both financially and general help and advice with various matters.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Report from Mid Suffolk Dist. Cllr Tim Weller (Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Annual Report 2024/25)**

- New devolution and local government reform affecting Mid Suffolk  
Following on from the election of the Labour government in July 2024, the new government has proposed widescale changes across the UK regarding devolution and council re-organisation. This includes two proposals affecting Suffolk as a whole, including Mid Suffolk District Council, which may lead to its eventual abolition.

The first proposal is a strategic authority covering both Norfolk and Suffolk, which is likely to have a directly elected Mayor for both counties, and an increase in local powers for Suffolk. The election for this Mayor is currently scheduled to take place in May 2026.

The second is the re-organisation of the current two-tier system within Suffolk into either a single or multiple Unitary Authorities, where all of the council's general services are ran by one coherent entity. Should this proposal go ahead, it will likely result in the abolition of MSDC in the late 2020s. Suffolk has applied to be on the fast-track for this scheme, which has resulted in the postponement of the Suffolk CC elections that were due to take place in May 2025. The election for any new authorities is currently unclear, but is likely to be held after the Mayor election, in May 2027.

Talks for both are currently an ongoing matter, although new information will likely be updated frequently throughout the year.

- **Budget**

For 2024/25, net expenditure on services was budgeted at £18.5 million with a 2% increase in council tax. Council home rents increased by 7% and sheltered housing service charges also increased. This has been done to ensure the Council can afford the repairs and maintenance that are needed. All these increases are due to inflation, costs of energy and other cost increases.

The Council has reserves of over £28 million as at the end of the financial year plus an expected dividend from the Gateway 14 business park. Plans for this are on a variety of work including new foot/cycle paths, land for biodiversity and green spaces, regeneration of Stowmarket town centre, improved sports provision in the district and enabling community-led housing.

Approval was also given to increasing council tax on empty homes in 2024/25 and implementing increased council tax on second homes in 2025/26.

For the 2025/26 budget, recently agreed in the February council meeting, the administration committed to a capital programme of £36m for the district, which is partially funded by the council's reserves. This includes investment in health facilities, primarily including the ongoing SHELF project, investment into new skills and innovation within the district, and an increase in funding for the communities across Mid Suffolk's smaller towns and villages. In addition to these spending plans, there was also no planned increase in council tax, which was frozen at its current rate of £175.03 for a Band D property. Finally, the council is additionally estimated to have a surplus of £2.4m at the end of the financial year.

- **Thriving towns and villages**

As part of Mid Suffolk's Rural Transport Grant Scheme, two new community transport routes were launched, utilising the council's new Taxi Bus scheme, connecting Stowmarket with the surrounding villages and communities across Mid Suffolk. Initially, there were the two routes looping around villages of Mid Suffolk, beginning in Stowmarket, the first of these goes via Thurston, the second via Bacton, with further communities eventually being added, including Eye and Debenham. These have allowed for further connectivity between the villages across Mid Suffolk and Stowmarket in the heart of the District.

- **Environmental sustainability**

Mid Suffolk District Council previously launched their Cosy Homes scheme for Winter 2024, which included plans to improve insulation and energy efficiency within private homes across Mid Suffolk. This is a readily available scheme for residents, and has made great progress in improving energy efficiency and sustainability across homes.

- **Planning and Housing**

Over the last year, Part 1 of Mid Suffolk and Babergh's Joint Local Plan (JLP), which was first created back in November 2023, had its first year of full operation. The purpose of the plan was to provide essential clarity for communities about how the district was to develop until 2037, and assisted in allowing for a structured response to housing and planning targets, of which Mid Suffolk had always excelled at, and delivered Mid Suffolk's aim of 535 new houses annually. In January 2025, the plan has since come under review, as a result of new housing targets set out by national government. Whilst MSDC have previously exceeded with housebuilding targets, there is a possibility that the new national housebuilding guidelines take priority over the JLP if the council cannot prove there is a 5-year land supply for housing. The Council has published an updated Local Development Scheme to accommodate the increased housing targets announced by government back in November. These new targets will present a challenge, but it is one we will endeavour to overcome, if we are to continue to maintain our control over where development takes place. This year saw another Gypsy and Traveller application at appeal: The appeal clearly laid out that Biodiversity and flooding had to be taken seriously, but that the need for more sites for travellers is still an area that needs to be addressed.

- **Supporting the community**

We support local events and community groups where we can and particularly link local groups with external fundraising via the Mid Suffolk community team. Almost £550,000 was allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council Direct to communities across the district from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Mid Suffolk District Council information is available via [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk) or by phone 0300 123 4000

**Other reports from Clubs and Groups within Palgrave are as follows:**

## **ST PETER'S CHURCH, PALGRAVE**

The main event in the life of the local Churches this year has been the arrival of our new Rector (technically 'Priest in Charge') Rev Helen Grover. Helen and her husband now live at The Rectory in Rickinghall, because another big change underway is for North Hartismere Benefice to be combined with Redgrave, Botesdale and Rickinghall. Nine or ten parishes altogether; a lot of work for one person. However, Helen's husband Paul is also ordained, and with Ginny and a small ministry team (including Palgrave parishioners Adrian and Hilary Mitchell licensed as Lay Elders) we can consider ourselves well-served in the local Church. We have a Church service in Palgrave every Sunday at the same hour. This is increasingly uncommon in rural parishes with stretched resources and small congregations. Our Community Worship service is informal and friendly; a blend of traditional and contemporary content. Visitors will find a warm welcome.

Of course, we are obliged to keep our ancient building in good repair, and we also have on-going ambitions to build a toilet – both of which aims would benefit the village as a whole. We are always very grateful, therefore, for the response to fund-raising efforts. A great crowd enjoyed the Afternoon Tea in the garden of The Swan last summer. Something similar might be repeated. We will also be having a Gift Day appeal in September.

There has been an administrative reorganisation of the Friends of Palgrave Church, as members will be aware. The Friends has voted to direct their fund-raising activities towards the new toilet project.

St Peter's actively maintains its connection with the CofE primary school and provides two of the governors, as appointed by the Diocese. There is a weekly collective worship and – when the temperature allows – the School is able to make use of the church space for various activities.

The Church runs a well-attended monthly coffee morning in the Community Centre under the title of 'Help for Hope' at which funds are raised for various charitable causes. In the past year, donations have included to Foodbank, Gaza emergency, Beyond the Wall, Homestart, ICANHO and St John's Ambulance.

The Benefice Choir is developing a good sound and have added strength to the singing at local weddings and funerals and, of course, Rev Helen's licensing service. A particular highlight last year was the singing of Choral Evensong at Norwich Cathedral.

Weddings and, occasionally, funerals can also be enhanced by the sound of the church bells. We recently rang half-muffled at the thanksgiving service of a long-time ringer and Church member of Palgrave. We have tried to keep up a once-monthly practise evening on the eight bells at St Peter's.

As usual, we have to thank our many volunteers who keep the church looking inviting by such as flower arranging and cleaning, as well as the Parish Council for maintaining the churchyard, walls and gates.

*Hugh Bunbury, Churchwarden, April 2025*

## **Palgrave Church of England Primary School**

**Hannah Cooke, Chair of School Governance Committee (SGC), 2nd May 2025**



At the heart of our village, Palgrave Church of England Primary School is full of creativity, eager learners, and a strong sense of community. Our school is built on the values of respect, perseverance, honesty and kindness, which guide everything we do and shine through in school life. Congratulations and thank you to our dedicated and inspiring school team.

We're pleased to share the outcome from our recent Ofsted Inspection (4th March 2025), that: Palgrave Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection:

- *Quality of education: Good*
- *Behaviour and attitudes: Outstanding*
- *Personal development: Outstanding*
- *Leadership and management: Good*
- *Early years provision: Good*

To quote directly from Ofsted:

### **What is it like to attend this school?**

'Pupils thrive in this welcoming and inclusive school. They live out the four school values, including 'perseverance' and 'honesty'. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils are rightly proud of their school, which they describe as 'small but mighty'. The school forms strong relationships with pupils and their families. As a result, pupils feel safe... pupils achieve well...pupils behave extremely well. Older pupils foster close connections with their younger peers. They act as positive role models and ensure that everyone feels welcome.'

'The school's focus on enrichment and personal development ensures that pupils grow not only in knowledge, but also in character. Despite the school's small size, pupils are offered many leadership opportunities...these encourage and develop responsibility. Pupils leave well prepared for their next steps...'

'The school provides an ambitious curriculum. It is reviewed and adapted to ensure it meets the needs of the mixed-age classes...in all subjects'.

Palgrave School benefits from a local governing committee that includes parents, staff, church and community representatives and uses its knowledge effectively to provide appropriate support and challenge. We are also grateful for the continued support of St Peter's Church, the Palgrave Community Centre, and our parish community.

Forest School remains a special part of life at Palgrave. All year groups take part in outdoor learning thanks to the generous provision of woodland space by Jane and Ian McClintock. This enriching experience helps children build independence, confidence, and a connection with nature.

We've recently upgraded the Early Years outdoor area and installed new fencing. Plans to improve the playground are progressing well. The land is part of the Village Green and owned by the Council, which poses a number of issues and we are working closely with the Council to find solutions. We've met with three specialist companies and shared their proposals with the community at the school, church, and community centre Open Day. Feedback has been very positive. We've recently met with a local company and look forward to reviewing their ideas before deciding next steps.

On a final note, we're proud to share that in November 2024, the SIAMS Inspection recognised the strength of Palgrave School's Christian ethos and inclusive community, celebrating how our values underpin school life and support both children and staff to flourish. Our thanks to our committed and dedicated staff, engaged and supportive families, local community partners and all of our wonderful pupils.

### **P D C C report**

**Governance:** We have recorded no changes to our governance arrangements over the year. Work has been carried out to ensure the requirements of the Fire Risk Assessment and the Playground Inspection Report were met or exceeded.

**Personnel:** Following a request, a Parish Council Representative was appointed in order to strengthen the link between the two organisations. The original person appointed had to resign shortly after being appointed and subsequent to the PDCC AGM Susan Hollowday was appointed

The work that the Trustees carry out, and the hours of effort they devote voluntarily was also recognised

**Bookings and Events:** The Community Centre continues to build on the successes of previous years. Unfortunately, the membership total decreased, and we are open to all suggestions on how to address this.

Once again, we had an increase in the number of hirers (regular and private) over last year. We spent time last year looking at ways to improve the standard of the premises to make it a safer environment for visitors and enhance the user experience. These will be discussed later.

In June 2024 Palgrave's second Mini Music Festival was held at the Community Centre playing field and was once again a success. Unfortunately Red Heart have disbanded and we have been unable to get replacements to arrange and contribute to the Festival. Regrettably we will not be able to stage the Music Festival this year. We will, however, be having a fete with live music in 2025.

Improvements to the carpark and the toilets have worked to the benefit of both hirers and event attendees.

Attendance at the Cinema evenings improved during the year and continues to improve during 2025.

Open Gardens proved very popular during the 2024 and is an event we run every other year. The annual Garage Sale once again proved very popular during the year and will be held again on 17h May.

The Quiz and Bingo nights continued to prove popular and we have several scheduled in for 2025.



**The Community Centre:** Following a fire risk assessment, the electrical cabinet was replaced and blinds installed over the fire doors to replace the curtains during 2024.

The car park was resurfaced during the year, and although we received a grant, we still had to make a significant contribution. We have received positive feedback on this and it has improved entry, exit and parking for cars, and helped with visitors safety.

We also had work carried out on the playground to improve safety and we are also looking at further work during 2025 including safety surfaces.

A remote assessment of the sums insured took place for insurance purposes and these have been increased to ensure we are adequately protected

Operationally the Centre generates a profit. Although we had high capital expenditure this year we were able to make a small profit.

As in previous years, the bar has made a generous donation to the Community Centre and this is a welcome source of income. The bar is open for all members on a Friday night, and it would be good if more people were aware of it and attended.

A grant approved for CCTV on the outside of the building in 2025 and has been installed. This was in response to incidents that have happened recently and will help safeguard visitors and the Centre.

We are in the process of applying for further grants which will update the Centre for users, including; additional lighting around the building and the car park bollards, replacement kitchen cabinets and appliances, improving the surfaces around various items of play equipment, improving the lounge / bar area, and extending the patio at the back of the building and pathways around the building.

Whilst we do not expect to win all of these grants and we may have to compromise in some areas, we believe that doing just some of the changes will benefit the user experience.

**The Field and Play Area::** The annual cost of maintaining the field is high, and it is there for the benefit of the community and is enjoyed by many. We also hire it out for groups. Unfortunately we have experienced a couple of incidents involving dogs off leads, and have now had to implement the rule that dogs should be kept on leads when being walked on the field.

**Thanks:** A list of groups of people is set out in the Chairs Annual review.

**Financial Review:** The Treasurers Report detailed the financial position and is available .

**Conclusion:** There is little that I need to alter to last years conclusion. The Community Centre continues to provide services to the local community that are being utilised. Demand for the centre continues to grow and the events are well attended. There is no room for complacency however, and the Trustees continue to look for ways to maintain and improve the current position. The Trustees are aware that the repairs and improvements to the Centre are consuming our funds and that the need to adhere to new regulations will continue. We are actively working on ways to improve the facility and seek.

Copies of the full Chair Statement and The Treasurers Report are available on request

*Nick Duncomb, Chair of PDCC*

## **Palgrave Players**

**Highlights:** The last 12 months have been very progressive for the Palgrave Players, with 2 further performances since, both of which have been a great success with each throwing their own challenges.

Serving as the Chair for the past year has been both a joy and a challenge and I look forward to seeing the group move from strength to strength as we establish further as a group, and looking towards the inclusion of youth members.

**Carnival:** (Community Participation) Once again the Palgrave Players joined the Carnival Procession in Diss with a Wild West Theme.

**Once:** Performance - The dedication of the entire production team and performers made "Once" a roaring success enjoyed by cast and audiences alike. It challenged us in many ways but you all rose to the challenges to create something wonderful we could all be very proud of.

**Award Nomination:** The hard work and dedication have been recognised with an award nomination for "Best Musical in the East of England" from NODA. What an achievement within 2 years of our formation. Whether we succeed in winning or not, the nomination itself is a huge honour.

**Cabaret:** November saw us put on a fundraiser for St Peter's Church, Palgrave. Our rehearsal home!! As a thank you for their support in housing us for rehearsals this evening was great fun for a great cause and was well received by the 100 guests

**Country Nights:** Our final offering for this year and what a success this was. Enjoyed by the local community by blending live music and singing with audience participation, what a way to end this year and move into new ventures.

**The Future of Palgrave Players:** I don't think anyone can deny that this group has gone from strength to strength in a very short space of time. We are really looking forward to the outcome of the award nomination and also to beginning work on our next production "Made in Dagenham"

I feel the sky is the limit for the group and we strive to never lose sight of our original ethos to provide community spirit, fun and friendship whilst working towards producing high quality productions for our local community to enjoy.

*Nicola Diggins*

### **Palgrave Walking Group**

It has been another good year for the walking group which continues to expand, with various members taking turns to lead well researched walks.

We recognise the importance of the group not just for exercise but for the social interaction it brings creating new friendships.

We are currently getting between 15 and 20 walkers for each walk and meet on the mornings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays each month with the details of planned walks going out to all registered group members and published each month in the Palgrave Star.

Car sharing is a priority when not walking locally. We also try to use open pubs or cafes on most walks for our refreshments and to support their hospitality.

*Andy Matheson*

### **Diss Art Group**

The Group continues growing with a large waiting list. Having been established in Palgrave for over 3 years, after moving from Diss, we continue to enjoy the facilities offered.

Since last year we have held a summer exhibition in Diss and a small Christmas exhibition at No 18 in Diss.

We are planning our Annual Summer Exhibition at No 18 in Diss in June of this year.

*Phil Dyer*

### **Palgrave Photography Group**

The group was founded in 2016 to support amateur photographers in the village and surrounding areas. After a short winter break, we're pleased to be back to our regular monthly meetings in the lounge.

Membership continues to grow steadily, and we now have nearly 20 members on our books, who enjoy regular tuition, workshops and set assignments to help improve all aspects of their photography.

*Phil Dyer*

### **Monterey Line Dance**

This well-established class continues, and we love the space and floor at Palgrave.

*Melissa Hawkes*

### **Yoga Flow East**

I would just like to say how welcomed I have been by Jane and Lee, since beginning my Yoga classes. I am so delighted with the space and my class members have also commented and what a lovely space it is. The facilities are ideal for a yoga class, both with the heating, lighting options and the size of the space. It's in such a lovely peaceful location and so far the classes have been really well attended. Thanks again to the PDCC for their kindness & support.

*Susie*

### **Exercise With Polly**

Every Wednesday at 11 - 12.15. Cost £6 still.

This exercise class for older people or less able people of any age, continues with growing numbers, including 2 wheelchair users, someone with Parkinsons and several people over 90! The extra 15 minutes now allows for lots of chatting and catching up with friends before or after the hours gentle activity to music .As we age it is ever more vital to keep as fit and agile as we possibly can .As always participants can be as energetic or less so ,according on how they feel on the day . There is always room for new people to join us the emphasis being on having a LOT of fun!

*Polly Lavender*