

MINUTES OF MUNDON ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

HELD ON TUESDAY 17 MAY 2022 AT 8.30PM IN THE VICTORY HALL

Email: mundonparishcouncil@yahoo.com

Website: mundon.org – Tel: 07789 342747

Present: Cllr Gavin Rowsell (Chair) Cllr Kerry-Jane Wylie (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Bennett and Cllr Leggett
In Attendance: Mrs Jackie Lines – Parish Clerk
Members of Public: 0
Meeting Commenced at: 8.30pm

1. Chairman's Welcome and introduction

I want to thank not just the councillors who give their time in making Mundon Parish Council work efficiently, but also the various people who work less publicly in keeping Mundon the special village it is.

Some notable names are Les Potts, Steve Wells, Christine McDonald, Diane Leggett, Barbara Roe, Marge Orris, Mr Paton and Lynda Townend... who picks bags full of litter village wide...

They all provide their time, on a regular basis, completely free, all with their own specific tasks, expecting no recognition. Yet without their work, the village WOULD recognise a difference, as the Furze would not be kept clear of fallen trees, paths would become un-walkable, the verges would not have flowers, the Church would become run-down, litter would be lying all around, and village as a whole would just look uncared for... so on behalf of everyone in the village, a massive thank you for what you all do.

2. Apologies

Received from Cllr Attfield.

Cllr Wendy Stamp and Cllr Mark Bassenger had previously expressed their apologies for any absence which will be due to a clash in meeting dates.

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly held on 18 May 2021

Approved by all and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

4. Maldon District Councillor Report and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Stamp provided an annual report for the meeting from ECC dated 25 April 2022 – see mundon.org website for full report or a copy may be requested from the Clerk.

Cllr Stamp had previously offered to hold a Saturday surgery in Mundon – a one off surgery, at a date to be agreed was felt would be of benefit and the Clerk is to liaise with relevant parties.

5. Mundon Parish Council Annual Chairman's Report

It is worth noting the colossal amount of work done by the Parish councillors.

We deal with well in excess of 300 emails a month, along with phone-calls, face-to-face conversations, messages and texts from residents.

That is allied to a multitude of other meetings that councillors attend depending on their role.

Councillors also deal with a myriad of consultations and questionnaires – often taking many hours of effort before a Parish response can be returned.

Recent important subjects have been on a major planning application at South Woodham, Bradwell B, Maldon Schools, Doctor Services, Planning Polices, Finance Policies, Public Standards, Policing and Flood Defence's.

We have dealt with a lot of unique and complex district and parish items in the last few years, but thankfully our Clerk, Jackie Lines, is very good at keeping on top of the regulatory bureaucracy, and still remains a pleasure for all of us to work with.

Mundon Parish Council now have a full allocation of councillors working hard for the good of the village as a whole. So a big thank you from me, to all of you.

All councillors do all their work for free because we are passionate about the village and want everyone to be proud of it... so any help, of any kind will generally be gratefully accepted.

6. Representatives Reports

Finance (Clerk)

The parish council kept within the small budget for 2021/22 and obtained a £500 grant from the EALC towards the printing of the updated Mundon Information Booklet. An annual reclaim of VAT was received during the year of £128.77. Capital items purchased were, 500 saplings planted on the main road verge, which in turn has slightly reduced the mowing costs for this year and a wood chipper to assist the wood wardens in the maintenance of paths within the Furze.

The internal audit for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 has already taken place with recognition from the auditor that the council now maintain more than adequate and effective internal control arrangements. Statutory reporting in relation to the audit will follow and information will shortly be displayed on the website.

The parish precept for the 2022/23 year is £5,500. Reserves at the end of the year were £750 for elections and £10,939.65 relating to the Church Room fund (allowed for capital projects only).

The budget for 2022/23 has already been set and will be closely monitored throughout the year with monthly reviews and reporting to councillors.

Neighbourhood Watch/Police and Village Information (Cllr Wylie)

In order to provide the information in my reports, I am on circulation lists from NHW and Essex Police, in both email and social media form.

The information I receive tells me crimes that have been reported in the area, scams that are doing the rounds and any campaigns that the ‘services’ i.e. Police, Fire are pushing for community awareness.

I would like to remind everyone to ensure that any crime or suspicious activity is reported to the Police as: *No Reporting = No Issue = No Police Presence*

Over the last year Mundon has had a few incidents of fly tipping, hare-coursing and a resident affected by unscrupulous tradesmen.

The Chelmsford and Maldon Group of Neighbourhood Watches Meetings started again since the pandemic (online) in Nov 2021. Coordinators from both Chelmsford and Maldon areas discuss various topics both rural and urban to help with crime prevention and crime reporting.

For Crimes and suspicious activity NOW phone	999
For other non-urgent contact and reporting a crime that has already happened	101
Alternatively you can report non-urgent incidents or suspicious activity and crimes online at	
https://www.essex.police.uk/ and click on the appropriate button	
Action Fraud is the UK’s national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime where you should report fraud if you have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber-crime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. If you have been defrauded i.e. lost money phone or report online at https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime If someone has tried to defraud you but you have <u>not</u> lost money, phone or report online at https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing	0300 123 2040
CRIMESTOPPERS To give information anonymously phone or report it online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org	0800 555 111
<i>The information you provide is very important to us, so please make sure that we can use it effectively, by reporting it correctly through the proper channels. Thank you.</i>	

Local Transport (Cllr Bennett)

Local service, Dengie Dart, cheaper than a taxi but more expensive than public transport. A link for information available on the parish council website.

Public transport bus details available on the parish council website and up to date time tables displayed in the village centre bus shelter.

Cllr Bennett had reviewed the TravelEssex App, provided free by Essex Highways and reported that it was a good tool to use when planning journeys by all methods of transport. A link has been placed on the website and Facebook.

Plume Educational Trust (Cllr Wylie)

The Plume Educational Trust is a charitable organisation which encompasses the Wills and Testaments of several benefactors – Ralph Breeder, Thomas Plume, Henrietta Sadd, Arnold Keeble and George Courtault. The Objectives of the Charity are to apply the income generated by the Trust Fund as scholarships to deserving Boys and Girls educated at the Plume School, Maldon in aid of their Further Education beyond compulsory school leaving age. The performance of the various funds is kept under regular review.

During 2021 scholarships totaling £11,400 were awarded to 7 Students.

On 16th March 2021 I was voted to be a Trustee on the Plume Educational Trust. I will remain on the trust until 14th June 2023 when I can be reappointed for a further 4 years.

Since covid all correspondence and the 2021 scholarships were approved via consultation by email. It is hoped that a face to face meetings will take place to approve accounts and discuss the 2022 applicants in the autumn.

Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils (Cllr Rowsell, Cllr Wylie and Clerk)

Following Covid-19 regulations and the sad passing of Miriam Holden, no further information on future meetings had been received to date. This group may evolve to be part of the United Dengie Councils.

Village/Parish Council Website (Cllr Rowsell)

The website remains under-used, but as a legal requirement is continually updated with agendas and minutes, as well as any other important messages or Highways projects.

Monthly usage reports show most visits tend to be via direct access (rather than from a search engine) and correlate with our Facebook posts.

Our Facebook page currently has 194 dedicated followers, with some recent posts now reaching over 700 users, which for a Parish of just over 300 is very impressive.

Sea Defences/Airports (Cllr Rowsell)

The Environment Agency continues to step back from actual physical works on most local sea defences, and to that end have increased their annual works grant to Essex Coast Organisation (ECO), who are the collective of most Essex landowners with sea defences. This enables ECO to fund and support landowners themselves in maintaining and improving sea defences and drainage systems against the increasing pressures created by new developments.

The maintenance project on Mundon Creek seawall embankment and drainage system to protect South Mundon, Latchingdon and the sewage works is slowly progressing.

As a director of ECO, I remain in regular contact with EA staff, and can be contacted for specific local issues.

Inland Flooding & Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Meetings with Essex County Council, Maldon District Council, Anglian Water and the Regional Flood & Coastal Committee are still difficult to achieve, but ECO keeps the pressure on for better engagement.

Essex County Council, as our Lead Local Flood Authority continue to make heavily questionable decisions in conjunction with Essex Highways... but again, ECO hold them to account where possible.

Planning (All Councillors)

Cllr Rowsell reported - This last year, Mundon has again seen a wide range of planning applications, which are all considered in depth by councillors before decisions are made.

If decision deadlines come between meetings, then the clerk invites private voting from councillors via email. If all councillors concur, the clerk has delegated powers to respond directly to Maldon Planning Department. However, a single opposing view triggers an immediate interim meeting to publicly discuss and vote for a majority decision.

MPC's general position has always been, and shall continue to be, to support long term residents and businesses in the village, whilst equally being open to supporting new residents or businesses, but always whilst attempting to ensure common sense prevails over any potentially strong individual view.

It is often the case that just a single aspect of an application is problematic, but as applications have to be viewed and responded to in their entirety, we often struggle to express our general support within an overall refusal.

On this point, we strongly encourage applicants to engage with us at the earliest opportunity.

Highways and Public Rights of Way (Cllr Rowsell)

Essex Highways handling of road closures in the Maldon area still continues to be very poorly handled, with no constructive communication with Parish Councils prior to it happening. Mundon Parish Council has made formal approaches on this issue via Maldon District and Essex County Cllr Wendy Stamp.

We continue to explore ways of controlling fast and large traffic through Mundon, but with all villages suffering the same issues, there is no obvious answer.

Mundon Parish Council pays for TruCam speed traps at two separate locations and at random times throughout each month. Each session acts as a visual deterrent and with over 30 speeding tickets being sent in the last 2 months, the message should slowly get out.

However, a recent accident on Stud Hill does prove, that regardless of the speed limits, multiple signs, village entrances and regular speed traps, we will never be able to account for every driver... and those that do speed excessively, are most unlikely going to be stopped by further local restrictions, which could ironically make other issues worse.

If or when the Bradwell B plans start again, we will concentrate our efforts on transit routes to ensure Farnbridge Road is suitably upgraded, whilst the Mundon Road is downgraded, ideally to a 7.5 ton limit.

We sought and gained support from Purleigh Parish Council for this proposal, which will hopefully strengthen our position.

7. Victory Hall Management Committee Report (Marita Ponting)

An annual report was requested from the committee by the Clerk for the parish assembly meeting. The feedback received questioned the need to provide a report and objections to doing so. No report was provided by the Victory Hall Management Committee.

8. Representatives:

- a) Finance - **(Cllr Attfield, Cllr Rowsell and Clerk)**
- b) Risk Assessment – **(All Councillors and Clerk)**
- c) Health & Safety – **(All Councillors and Clerk)**
- d) Wood Wardens – **(Les Potts and Steve Wells)**
- e) Neighbourhood Watch/Police/Village Information – **(Cllr Wylie)**
- f) Local Transport – **(Cllr Bennett)**
- g) Plume Educational Trust – **(Cllr Wylie)**
- h) Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils – **(Cllr Rowsell, Cllr Wylie and Clerk**
if group remains – may evolve to be United Dengie Councils)
- i) Village Hall – **(Marita Ponting)**
- j) Community Events – **(All Councillors)**
- k) Village/Parish Council Website – **(Cllr Rowsell)**
- l) Sea Defences/Airports – **(Cllr Rowsell)**
- m) Planning – **(All Councillors)**
- n) Highways & PROW (Public Rights of Way) – **(All Councillors)**

9. Report on Moat Housing (Woodside)

Negotiations still underway with Moat Housing for the parish to adopt the Woodside green land. Quotes being obtained and other options being explored in relation to the upgrading of the paths in the first instance.

10. St Mary's Church – Friends of Friendless Churches (Director - Rachel Morley)

Introduction

St Mary's has been suffering from structural movement for years. Hundreds of years, in fact. The oak framed skirt that wraps around the weather-boarded bell tower was erected in the 1500s to steady the structure against the shifting earth. In the 1700s, the medieval chancel collapsed and was rebuilt by the Georgians.

St Mary's was rescued by our charity, Friends of Friendless Churches (FoFC), in 1975. It is designated a Grade I listed building, meaning it is preserved for its "exceptional interest". There are 400,000 listed buildings in England - just 2.5% are Grade I listed, so St Mary's is very special indeed.

In 2009, we undertook a campaign of underpinning along the south north elevation. However, by 2018, it was clear that other parts of the building were moving - dramatically. In 2020, we installed a series of six monitors throughout the building. These digital devices are highly sensitive and enabled us to record precisely what was happening in the building over a period of 18 months. These devices were connected to an app, so we could see things in real time.

In July of 2021, Friends of Friendless Churches were invited to apply to the Treasury's Culture Recovery Fund for Major Repairs to deal with the structural movement.

We were that our application had been successful, and St Mary's was awarded £291,260.05. In total, the repairs will cost over £400,000. Friends of Friendless Churches need to fundraise the deficit.

Repair Summary

The repairs comprise the design and installation of reinforced concrete underpinning with piled foundations and concrete ground beams.

In addition to structural repairs, we are undertaking internal plaster repairs, conserving the wall paintings where needed, re-rendering external walls where old render has failed, installing new rainwater goods, and other minor repairs like brick replacement, repointing and window repairs.

Work Completed To Date

To date, we have completed the piling and underpinning. This enabled us to erect scaffolding internally and externally. Internally, cracks in the ceiling are currently being filled and loose areas pinned back. This will be lime washed.

As the underpinning required substantial excavation, we had an archaeologist keeping a watching brief. Dave Andrews, the archaeologist, reported two significant finds: -

During excavation of the chancel, a grave slab with indents for brasses was revealed. The brasses are long lost, but the indents show a vertical human figure, with a horizontal band below it which would have had an inscription. This is likely to date from the 15th-century. - Dave Andrews has been Mundon's archaeologist for many years. Previously, he only found evidence to date the nave to the 14th century.

However, upon removing the loose render on the south wall we found that the door is formed in Roman brick. A fragmentary window above the door was built of reused Roman tufa blocks. This workmanship points to the 12th century or an even earlier date.

Completion Date

In line with the requirements of the funder, all works must achieve certified practical completion by 30 June 2022. We expect the site will be cleared and the church open again by mid-July.

In reality, without this huge grant from the Culture Recovery Fund, we would not have been able to afford this work. It would have taken years for our tiny charity to fundraise such a large amount. We probably would not have been able to undertake the works in such a comprehensive manner.

However, the grant was not without stress. Designing the structural intervention, specifying the works, obtaining listed building consent, obtaining building regulation approval, competitively tendering the contract, completing these complicated repairs in just ten months (we learned our application was successful in August 2021), whilst meeting the Treasury's routine monitoring and reporting requirements was challenging. My sincere thanks to the project team – especially John Minimas of Roger Mears Architects; Claudio Corallo of Clancy Consulting Engineers and Bakers of Danbury, our excellent contractors. Bakers have worked on St Mary's for decades, and their care for the church and pride in their work is plain to see.

FoFC and St Mary's

St Mary's is one of our best loved churches, and holds an important place in our charity's history. It is the second most visited English church we own. FoFC is a tiny charity of just one full-time and one part-time member of staff. We currently own 60 redundant churches, and take on more closed and threatened places of worship every year. Whilst we have had success with the short-lived Culture Recover Fund, we do not receive any regular funding, and we run our charity on membership subscriptions (£30pa), donations, legacies and minor grants from trusts and foundations. We rely on people visiting the places we've rescued and feeling inspired to become a member.

We are so grateful for the local support for St Mary's – in particular, my thanks to Christine McDonald, who has been St Mary's friend through thick and thin.

**11. Queen's Jubilee and Fundraising Committee Report
Community Events (All Councillors)**

Cllr Leggett reported - once Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted and with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations taking place in June 2022, a committee was formed and fundraising events restarted for the parish. The first being a Quiz which took place on 9 April and had been successful.

The next planned event is the Queen's Jubilee celebration to be held on 2 June and posters will be displayed around the village, on Facebook and the Parish Council website. The 2 June celebrations will take place on the village green and in the village hall. The beacon will be lit in readiness for 9.45pm, to coincide with the rest of the country.

Next committee meeting to be held on Wednesday 25 May at 4pm to finalise arrangements.

Any funds raised via fundraising events throughout the year will be held by and reported separately by the Parish Council.

12. Public Participation and matters raised that require a decision or further investigation to be placed on the next Parish Council Agenda for action.

No matters were raised at this time.

Cllr Rowsell thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9pm.