

MINUTES OF MUNDON ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

HELD ON TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021 AT 8PM IN THE VICTORY HALL

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Present: Cllr Gavin Rowsell (Chair) Cllr Kerry-Jane Wylie (Vice-Chair), Cllr Lynne Attfield, Cllr John Bennett
In Attendance: Mrs Jackie Lines – Parish Clerk
Members of Public: 3
Meeting Commenced at: 8.28pm

- 1. Chairman's Welcome and introduction** – Firstly, apologies that most people will be reading this rather than being present at the first physical meeting for far too long, but due to ongoing Covid restrictions, numbers are restricted at the village hall.

I wish to thank just a few of the many people who work behind the scenes in keeping Mundon the special village it is. Some notable names are Les Potts and Steve Wells, as our wood wardens, and Diane Leggett who plants and tends flowers in the village and St. Mary's Church, where she is assisted by Barbara Roe and Marge Orris.

Also a great thanks to Lynda Townend, who picks litter village wide... so if you ever notice bags of rubbish, please pick them up, as it saves Lynda the job of going back later.

Another name the Parish Council wish to recognise, for their involvement in a massive range of village affairs, for many many decades is; Christine McDonald. Christine is responsible for the general care of St. Mary's Church (with help from Mr. Paton), has kept the village history archives up to date, served on the council and been involved in a host of other often unnoticed roles. The Parish Council would therefore like to permanently recognise Christine's unwavering support of Mundon, with a brass plaque to be mounted below the village sign-post and beacon.

- 2. Apologies** – Apologies received from Cllr Wendy Stamp.
- 3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 17 November 2020** - approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record - Agreed, proposed by Cllr Rowsell and seconded by Cllr Bennett.
- 4. Maldon District Councillor Report** – no reports received.

5. Mundon Parish Council Annual Chairman's Report – I wish to make everyone aware of the colossal amount of work done by the Parish councillors. The last count showed over 300 emails a month, along with face-to-face conversations, phone calls and texts from residents. That is allied to a multitude of other meetings, albeit in the last 12 months, most have been on-line virtual meetings. Councillors also deal with a myriad of consultations and questionnaires – often taking many hours of effort before a Parish response can be returned. Recent notable consultations have been on Bradwell B, Mapledean, Maldon High Street, COVID, Planning Policies, Finance Policies, Public Standards, Policing and Flood Defence's. We have seen a lot of change over the last 24 months, including our latest appointment of a new Clerk, Jackie Lines, who is expertly managing the huge task of bringing the regulatory bureaucracies up to date and is a thankfully a genuine pleasure for all of us to work with. Mundon Parish Council now have a genuinely cohesive team that is working hard for the good of the village as a whole. So a big thank you from me, to all of you.

Mundon Parish Cllrs. do all their work for free because we are so passionate about the village and want everyone else to be proud of it too... so any help, of any kind will generally be very gratefully accepted.

6. Representatives Reports:

Finance (Clerk)

I have been in my post as Clerk since 1 October 2020 and have reviewed and addressed, along with the councillors, many areas to bring matters up to date in relation to the regulatory and legislative requirements for councils. I am also studying the ILCA course provided by the SLCC to broaden my knowledge on the workings of local councils which has proved very useful so far.

The internal audit for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 has already taken place with recognition from the auditor of the improvements which have been made. Statutory reporting in relation to the audit will follow and information will be displayed on the website.

The budget v actual expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021 reflects minimal overspend of the Clerk's salary and expenses. This is due to a change in Clerk during the year and extra hours relating to the handover.

The parish precept for the 2021/22 year has remained the same as last year at £4,750. Reserves at the end of the 2020/21 year were £500 for elections, £12,516 relating to the Church Room fund (allowed for capital projects only) and £500 for the grant obtained from the EALC towards the printing costs for the updated Mundon Information booklet.

The budget for 2021/22 has already been set and will be closely monitored throughout the year with monthly reviews and reporting to councillors.

Wood Wardens (Les Potts and Steve Wells)

Steve Wells confirmed the footpaths have become bumpy with ruts following the long duration of wet weather.

Les Potts had constructed a new bench within the Furze, Cllr Rowsell confirmed this had been noticed and thanked Les for making this contribution to the Parish.

Neighbourhood Watch/Police and Village Information (Cllr Wylie)

In order to provide the information in my reports, I am on circulation lists from NHW, Essex Police, Trading Standards and Dengie Farm Watch 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 are pushing for community awareness.

I would like to remind everyone to ensure you report any crime or suspicious activity as:

No Reporting = No Issue = No Police Presence

I am pleased to say there have been no crimes reported within Mundon since the last meeting.

NHW are beginning a Protect your car Campaign as car crime is a real problem in the UK with a car stolen every 10 minutes. The campaign is to remind car owners to remain vigilant about where and how they park their cars in order to keep them safe.

Remember - Leave your car: LOCKED – leave it in a LIT area – leave it EMPTY

Essex Police wish us all to be aware of scams currently around:

ROYAL MAIL SCAMS — UNDELIVERED PARCEL TEXT MESSAGE The public are being warned to stay alert to a new wave of scam text messages claiming to be from Royal Mail. Criminals are taking advantage of the new reliance on online shopping and deliveries to obtain personal and banking details. This follows on from a similar scam where people would receive an email telling them that their parcel could not be delivered and they would have to pay a fee for it to be released. The text messages come from a variety of different numbers but all will ask for a small payment which is accessed by clicking on a link in the message. Royal Mail have stated that this is not a text that they would send out, they will only send text messages to those who have opted in to their SMS service.

Remember: • Unexpected messages should be treated with caution • Phone numbers can be easily spoofed by criminals—don't trust a number just because it appears to come from a genuine organisation • Never click on links sent via email or SMS text message

SOLAR PANEL SCAMS Essex has recently seen an increase in residents falling victim to rogue traders mis-selling solar panels. Criminals target the vulnerable and those who already have solar panels to offer unnecessary maintenance contracts, extended warranties or battery replacements—all at a high price. One 'customer' in Rayleigh received forged paperwork, whereas most receive none. Following the payment, no service is provided. Residents have been contacted via the phone or by cold callers knocking at the door. Contact out of the blue should always be treated as suspicious—don't be rushed to make a decision there and then.

Remember to Take Five:

STOP - Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE - Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT - Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud

Local Transport (Cllr Bennett)

Nothing to add for general transport matters

Spoke with Arrow Taxis on 17th May to discuss the Dengie Dart coverage for Mundon. Apart from a noticeable uptake in the use of the service by Mundon residents during the most recent closure of Mundon Road, Arrows can only recall the service being used twice by Mundon residents since the road reopened, suggesting the bus is the preferred mode of transport for most residents.

I believe the link to the Arrows website and Dart page is on our website and social media (Check), Arrows confirmed that the current timetabling and information is up to date on their website -

<https://arrowtaxi.co.uk/dart99.html>

Arrows would be delighted to see more use of the service from Mundon residents and asked if there was anything they could do?

Plume Educational Trust (Cllr Wylie)

The Plume Education 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 2020 scholarships totaling £12,400 were awarded to 8 Students.

On 16th March 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.

I have yet to attend a meeting and understand that a face to face meeting will not take place until the autumn when grants for the next year will be discussed but emails will be exchanged to approve the accounts for the year in the meantime.

Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils (Clerk)

Following Covid-19 regulations and the sad passing of Miriam Holden, no further information on future meetings has been received to date. Clerk to follow this up via other possible avenues.

Village/Parish Council Website (Cllr Rowsell)

The website remains mainly a legal formality, with only about 1 visit a week spending any time on the site. Those visits, tend to be via direct access (rather than from a search engine) and correlate with our Facebook posts.

Agendas and minutes are kept up to date on the website, as well as any other important messages or Highways projects.

Our Facebook page posts now reach well over 200 followers and 'Likers'. We currently have 149 dedicated followers, which for a Parish of just over 300 is very impressive.

Sea Defences/Airports (Cllr Rowsell)

Sea Defence's & Environment Agency (EA)

After the project to use clay dug from the new South Maldon Garden Suburb housing estate, to reinforce the seawalls that defend most of Mundon failed to materialise, the Environment Agency and landowners are exploring other sources, as the sea levels are still forecast to rise, and the houses and land will need continued and improved protection.

The smaller maintenance project on Mundon Creek seawall embankment to protect South Mundon, Latchingdon and the sewage works is still on the agenda, but still has no start date confirmed.

I still remain in regular contact with EA staff, with quarterly meetings due to restart again very soon.

Inland Flooding & Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Meetings with Essex County Council, Maldon District Council, Anglian Water and the Regional Flood & Coastal Committee have not yet started again, but inland drainage and flooding is becoming ever more important due to all the new housing.

Essex County Council, as our Lead Local Flood Authority continue to make heavily questionable decisions in conjunction with Essex Highways... but still with no obvious recourse.

With our newly elected County Councillor, Wendy Stamp, being an independent, we hope that the regular issue with 'conflict of interests' with Essex County Council and Essex Highways decisions, may be questioned and potentially addressed.

Planning (Cllr Rowsell)

In the last year, Mundon has seen quite an increase in a wide range of planning applications, which are all considered in depth by councillors before decisions are made.

MPC's general position has always been, and will continue to be, to support long term residents and businesses in the village, but to equally be open to supporting new residents or businesses.

It is often awkward when just one aspect of an application is contentious, as applications have to be viewed in their entirety. To this end, we sometimes have to express caveats to ensure the integrity of the village and its residents.

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.

When we do become aware of impacts for Mundon, we initiate contact and attempt to advise, but common sense rarely prevails.

We continue to assess ways of controlling fast and large traffic through Mundon, but with all villages chasing the same goal, the ultimate solution remains elusive.

Mundon Parish Council now pays for regular TruCam speed traps, and is currently seeking authority for another site to be used. Most TruCam sessions are successful, with the last 2 30 minute sessions in April catching 7 motorists.

Once the consultation reopens for Bradwell B, we will continue our efforts on transit routes to ensure Fambridge 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)

The hall is very well used by groups and clubs booking on a regular basis, and there is little availability during the week. The hall was closed until April 12th

during the Covid-19 lockdown, when D. L. Payne's dance classes were allowed to resume. Further restrictions are being lifted on May 17th and all other hall users will be permitted to return - with special conditions and limitations. Some are still taking a cautious approach and are yet to confirm dates for recommencing their sessions. All, however, have responded positively to the hall reopening and looking forward to returning in the near future.

A new cleaner was successfully employed last year and maintenance of the driveway, car parks and grassy areas is currently under review.

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 post lockdown**
- i) Village Hall – **Marita Ponting and Shaun Livermore**
- j) Village/Parish Council Website – **Cllr Rowsell**
- k) Sea Defences/Airports – **Cllr Rowsell**
- l) Planning – **All Councillors**
- m) Highways & PROW (Public Rights of Way) – **All Councillors**

9. Report from Moat Housing (Clerk)

Moat have continued to be very slow with the outstanding matters. An update is requested each month via email and the last update confirmed the Executive Director of Development and New Business will be chased on this again and an update will follow as soon as they can. Moat do apologise for the time this is taking but confirm that they are working towards the same goal and appreciate Mundon Parish Council's patience. It would appear that the matters of fencing and land have rolled into one at the moment as there has been no separate response regarding the inadequate repair of the fencing either.

10. St Mary's Church – Friends of the Friendless Churches (Christine McDondald)

It has been a busy year with a new Directorate of The Friendless Churches who has encompassed Mundon within her role.

Mundon receives most of the funding it applies for to conserve the church in its various ages.

The roof repair, carried out a few years ago, is not adequate and damp is rising from ground level.

There has been £40K of funding received since Christmas 2020 and more has been applied for to protect the Church now it is open again.

We would be grateful for more volunteers, in addition to the regulars, to help with the TLC of the church. If interested, please get in touch.

11. 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 8.55pm.**