

## **Tuddenham St Martin Parish Council**

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 commencing at 7pm at the village hall.

Present: Mr W Pipe, Mr D Lugo, Mr J Bird, Mrs K Lindsay, Mr H Brightwell and Mrs Frost (Clerk). There were 15 members of public.

1. **Chairman's Welcome and Apologies** Apologies were received from Ms Procter (Parish Councillor). These were approved. Apologies were received from Mr Frost (Chair of the Village Hall Committee), Mrs Pipe (St Martins PCC) and Cllr Bryce (County Councillor). Apologies were also received from Cllr Hedgley (District Councillor) who would arrive later in the evening as he was also attending other Annual Parish meetings on the same evening. Mr Pipe welcomed everyone present to the meeting.
2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023** These were approved and signed.
3. **Matters arising** There were none.
4. **Chairman's Report** Mr Pipe read his report. There were no questions following the report. The report was as follows:

The one item that has involved the Parish Council more than anything else this year has to be the planning application relating to the proposed development on the remains of the field left after the then District Council compulsorily purchased the land to develop the Keightley Way council housing and playing field. As the landowner I have a vested interest and have not been involved in the Parish Council deliberations and therefore will make no comment.

Highways matters as usual come under the spotlight at every meeting, however we have been successful in meeting with our local Highways engineer and Councillor Elaine Bryce to discuss possible minor improvements within the village and these will be coming forward at the AGM following this meeting.

Unfortunately, parking issues are a continuing headache, and I fear always will be due to the geography of the village and the proliferation of car ownership over the decades. SAVID and Speedwatch are ongoing thanks to Pauline Procter, but with more volunteers always needed to man the speed monitoring device. The 'Quiet Lanes' initiative for Westerfield Lane is now in place and hopefully over time will result in a reduction of traffic speeds.

Following the introduction of new play equipment and the raised garden in the playground, further work has continued thanks to fellow Councillors David Lugo and Jim Bird assisted by various other members of the community including Jean Elinor, Sandy Burn and Cathy Watson. Thanks to their efforts the playing field and childrens' play area are looking good. Some of the old wooden equipment is getting to the point of needing replacement, despite the best efforts of David and Jim. This is a good example of community involvement benefitting the village.

We continue to support the village hall committee with a contribution towards ongoing upkeep and maintenance of this valuable community facility. We also continue to provide funding to the church as a contribution to the maintenance of the churchyard, and in addition make small donations to the Air Ambulance and Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

I would like to thank Holly Hollier who, although no longer a Parish Councillor, continued as our contact with the police until recently, and this has now been taken on by Harry Brightwell.

After careful consideration, we have agreed the precept at £6,230 for the 2024/25 year. This had remained unaltered for several years and the £30 increase will in fact mean no increase in householder payments.

The role of Parish Councillor is completely voluntary and carries with it responsibility to the community at large. There is one individual who has served on this council for quite a few years, namely Jean Elinor, who has decided to step down but continue with her other village activities. Thank you Jean for your tremendous contribution to the Parish Council. I for one have greatly appreciated your support over the years and I am sure my fellow councillors feel likewise.

Sadly, I have to report that our long suffering Parish Clerk, Carol Frost, is retiring after near enough fourteen years in post. I am struggling to find suitable words to express just how much Carol has contributed not only to her role as Parish Clerk, but also to the wellbeing of the village. Those of us who have worked with her over the years will I am quite sure want to thank her and wish her a well deserved rest, unburdened at last. I will be proposing her successor for appointment at the AGM following this meeting.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our District Councillor Colin Hedgley, and County Councillor Elaine Bryce. And finally, to my fellow Councillors, thank you for your continuing support and your contribution to the life of this village.

**5. Report of County Council and District Council Representatives** There was no report from the County Councillor. The reports from the District Councillors had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting and were noted as being presented to the Parish Council. They are available to view on the Parish Council website [www.tuddenhamstmartin.onesuffolk.net](http://www.tuddenhamstmartin.onesuffolk.net)

**6. Presentation of Accounts to 31st March 2024** The Clerk presented the Accounts for the year ending March 2024. They were unanimously approved and would go forward to the Parish Council meeting.

**7. Report from Village Hall Committee** The report had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting and was read by Mr Pipe. It was as follows:

The hall continues to run well and we have regular bookings on most weekdays, plus plenty of parties and events at weekends.

Despite the healthy bookings, our costs continue to rise and the donation of £500 from the Parish Council is most welcome. We are currently looking into replacing the old electric wall heaters in the hall. It is becoming difficult to source spare elements for these heaters, and we've had complaints in the past that they can be uncomfortable, scorching the head, but leaving the feet cold. We've investigated replacing them with Low Surface Temperature Heating panels, which will provide a more even source of heat, and we intend to configure them so that a push of a single button will provide an hour's worth of heat. We're currently in the process of getting competitive quotes. The likely cost will be around £6,000, but we feel that the heaters will modernise the hall and help keep it an attractive proposition for hirers.

Sadly, our caretaker, has stepped down from his role this year, but I'm pleased that he has agreed that he will remain a Trustee. I've thanked him for his many years of service looking after the hall infrastructure, and we will miss him. Other members of the committee have offered to help with maintenance tasks as they arise.

I'm pleased to say we've had no anti-social behaviour incidents on the hall grounds in the last 12 months.

The village hall remains a key asset for the parish, and all the support that the Council, the committee and other villagers give is much appreciated.

The latest financial report was submitted to the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

**8. Report from Parochial Church Council**      The report had been emailed to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting and was as follows:

St. Martin's has continued with its regular pattern of weekly services at 9.30am on a Sunday. There is also a half hour slot on a Thursday morning at 9.30am for readings, discussion and prayer. We are fortunate in having an excellent priest, Rev Charlotte Cook. St. Martin's continues to hold outdoor services on Church Hill on Remembrance Sunday and around Christmas as these are very popular. The lit Christmas tree and crib on Church Hill have equally been enjoyed. The Church is open at the weekends between 10am and 4pm.

Floodlighting the church on a regular basis continues, and has proven to be a beacon of hope for those experiencing difficult times. An opportunity for published sponsorship by villagers has helped offset the higher electricity costs of doing this. The floodlit church is much admired by those driving through the village on dark evenings as well as those out and about on foot.

The fabric of the building and the churchyard are in generally good order. Andrew Offord continues to cut the grass and hedges, and volunteers undertake additional tasks which help maintain the appearance of the churchyard. The ongoing financial support given by the Parish Council for this maintenance work continues to be very helpful and much appreciated. Our churchyard is very much alive, especially at festival times, where it is a delight to see it enjoyed by relatives tending graves and also the many walkers who pass through.

We are still hoping that the swift boxes in the belfry will welcome visitors at some point!

The bell ringing group continues to flourish and their efforts are much enjoyed by village residents.

The Electoral Roll currently stands at 26 members. We were sad to lose two of our long-standing members, Sue Punton and Sue Mann, last year. Sue Punton had worshipped here for over 40 years and Sue Mann for even longer. They had both contributed a huge amount to the life of the church and will be much missed.

Our normal fund-raising and social events were held as usual last year and we are all so grateful for all the support we receive from the village. Particularly special are the stalls on Church Hill which provide an opportunity for contact and community spirit which are such a key part to life here in Tuddenham St. Martin.

**9. Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting**      6<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

Mrs C Frost  
Parish Clerk. Tuddenham St Martin.