

Minutes of Holbrook's Annual Parish Meeting

held on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 7.30 p.m. at the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr John Ambrose (Chairman) Cllr Robert Allinson, Cllr Sally Ingleton, Cllr Denise Martin, Cllr Alec Wright, District Councillor Mary McLaren and representatives from Holbrook Helpers, Holbrook Events Team, Holbrook Society, Holbrook Village Hall Committee, The PC's Climate Action Working Group (Greener Holbrook Greener World), the Parish Recorder, the Community Self Help Group, and members of the Parish (38 attendees in total)

In attendance: Jo Hazlewood (Parish Clerk)

- 1. Apologies** were received from 2 residents and County Cllr Simon Harley
- 2. Introduction and welcome:** John Ambrose, Chairman of Holbrook Parish Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting was a meeting for the Parish to come together and share news about their organisations as well as an opportunity for people to raise any matters for consideration, but as this was not a Parish Council meeting, no decisions would be made at the meeting.
- 3. Payment of Peppercorn Rent:** To make the payment of the peppercorn rent for the Reade Field, to representatives of the Royal Hospital School. Cllr Ambrose explained that the first presentation of the reed for the Reade Field was made in July 1968 in the presence of the Queen Mother at the opening of the Fire Station. The lease started on 15th July 1968 and runs for 99 years. The Head Boy and Head Girl of the Royal Hospital School received the Holbrook reed on behalf of the RHS . This annual tradition was preceded by an amazing performance by the Corps of Drums from the School, who entertained members of the meeting, and bystanders, to an incredible display of their skills.
- 4. To receive a report from the Royal Hospital School** Irfan Latif, headmaster of RHS said he had been made very welcome at the school and in Holbrook since he took up his post in September 2024. He said the RHS were delighted to be part of the Holbrook community and had good relationships with local schools. Many local people attended events like Notes and Nibbles held regularly at the school and he invited residents to visit the school to find out more. Mr. Latif said he was very proud to be the headmaster of the RHS and looked forward to a continuing relationship with the local community.
- 5. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2024.** Copies of the minutes had been circulated to organisations and were tabled at the meeting as well as being posted on the website. Approval was proposed by Cllr Allinson and seconded by Cllr Martin and was agreed by all. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.
- 6. To receive the Annual report of the Parish Council from the Chairman, Cllr John Ambrose.**

Cllr Ambrose thanked his fellow councillors for their support over the year and for the experience they bring to the council. He also thanked the clerk for supporting the council throughout the year and himself in his role as chairman.

He said Issues are often raised by residents at council meetings and the Council encourages residents to come along to the regular monthly meetings to do this. Last month residents came to hear from a developer about a proposal to build on the field by Five Acres with a community park to the south of Hyams Lane, this is something that the Council will continue to monitor and make recommendations to any planning applications submitted.

Sometimes, there are issues that are common with other parishes on the peninsula. The Shotley Peninsula Parish Council Alliance has now met with the Chief Executive, the Acting Head of Planning and others from BMSDC to discuss mutual concerns for the Shotley Peninsula and look forward to work collectively together to look after the interests of the residents of the peninsula.

He thanked both District Councillor Mary McLaren and County Councillor Simon Harley who attend the Parish Council monthly meetings

He continued by thanking the Community Caretaker, the Village Hall Management Committee (who now have Wi-Fi in the hall), Holbrook Helpers, Holbrook Society, Holbrook Events Team, the P3 group, Greener Holbrook Greener World, the Community Self Help Group, the Community Speedwatch Team (thanks to Ian Bowell who has now stood down as the co-ordinator), the team behind the Parish Papers and the many other people who quietly work to make Holbrook such a nice place to live in. He added that Holbrook is thriving with monthly film nights, the village meals, Holbrook Society events and the annual village fete. In December Santa visited on his sledge delivering presents around the village on Christmas Day and plans are being made for this year.

Next month, the village meal will be on Monday 5th May and will be part of the nationwide events to celebrate VE80 and at 9.15pm on Thursday 8th May everyone is invited to come to the village hall green for the lighting of the beacon to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Finally, looking forward, there is still plenty of work for the Council to do. No doubt we will see planning applications to build more homes in our village to meet the government's target for 1.5 million more homes, the Council is exploring how they can work with the Academy to have the sport centre available for community use and the replacement of the pavilion of the Reade Field. Cllr Ambrose concluded by saying that if anyone would like to be a part of future plans, there is still a vacancy on the Parish Council and he invited interested parties to talk to him about becoming a councillor.

7. To receive the financial report from the Responsible Finance Officer:

The following report was tabled: The Parish Council started the year on 1st April 2024 with an opening balance of £71,951.56 and closed on 31st March 2025 with a balance of £75,361.37. She reported that The largest expenditure items for the year were the new slide and log traverse on the Reade Field. Within the total funds carried forward are earmarked reserves of £34,000 towards the new pavilion. Other

reserves are held for replacing essential equipment and the last remaining funds from a grant from Babergh DC to continue the Fitness classes to the end of the financial year. The basketball court surface has now been replaced and we are still waiting for some lines to be painted on it. The re-surfacing will be part funded by a grant from Babergh.

The Council continues to invite applications for grants during the year, up to a maximum amount of £500, from local charitable or non-profit making organisations who provide facilities and services for the benefit of the local community.

Applications should be made in writing, or by email, to the Clerk. Applications will be considered in the late Autumn when the Council sets its budget and approved grants will be paid during the following financial year. Copies of the Receipts and Payments statement for financial year 2024-2025 were also tabled at the meeting and were on the website. As soon as the accounts had been audited, the auditors' report will be published on the website, together with a copy of the audited accounts.

8. To invite Cllr Mary McLaren, Babergh District Council to address the meeting.

Cllr McLaren's full report is on the Website. Cllr McLaren thanked the Parish Council and residents for their support. She highlighted the new recycling plans from 2026 and explained to the meeting the various new bins which would be in place. She had a leaflet which she offered to share with anyone who wanted a copy. A member of the public asked if Cllr McLaren could ask the council to consider ways of recycling textiles, as some of the components of textiles cause concerns and Cllr McLaren agreed to follow this up.

9. To invite Cllr Simon Harley, Suffolk County Council, to address the meeting.

Cllr Simon Harley was unable to be present but his full report is on the website.

10. To receive reports from representatives of other village organisations.

(a) Mel Holmes **Greener Holbrook, Greener World**, gave a brief report about the activities over the previous year – the full report is on the website. There was also a display at the back of the hall, showing some of the activities of GHGW.

(b) John Makin from **Village Hall Committee** paid tribute to David Rose the former chairman of the Village Hall Committee for many years.. He reported that the hall had Wi-Fi fitted this year and thanked Cllr McLaren for the contribution from her locality funding. He added that suggestions for further improvements were always welcome. He said that as the building was now over 90 years old, there were elements which needed ongoing repairs. The VH Committee had become a CIO to remove any liabilities from the Trustees. Plans for an EV charging point were underway. In response to a question about solar panels for the roof, Mr Makin confirmed that there were no current plans to install solar panels.

(c) Trevor Gibbs, **Community Self Help Group**, explained what the group has been doing over the past year. His report is on the website. He added that if anyone had any spare bulbs, he would be delighted to receive them so that more bulbs could be planted in the future..

(d) Joy Squirrell **from Holbrook Society** reported on a very full programme from Holbrook Society over the year. She added that the Village Trail had now been handed over to Holbrook Preschool to organise. A balance sheet and receipts and payments account for Holbrook Society was available at the meeting. The full report is on the website. Holbrook Society welcome any suggestions for future talks and activities.

(e) Kate Saulter – **Holbrook & Harkstead Helpers** – Kate explained that the calls for help had changed over the past year and there were now more calls now for transport to medical appointments. She encouraged anyone who might be able to help with transport to contact HH. The full report is on the website.

(f) Fran Williams – **Parish Recorder**. The full report on the website. She encouraged people to send in photographs of current activities as well as historical activities. She said there would be an Interactive archive day run by Holbrook Society and there would be free access to genealogy research.

11. **Members of the Public** were invited to raise any matters of interest or concerns. A member of the public asked where the Community Orchard would be which had been referred to by GHGW. It was explained that this was currently an aspiration and included the desire to provide more allotments. However, it needed a donation of suitable land in order to progress further.

A concern was expressed about the current planning legislation and a worry that nature is being ignored and the people should be alerted to this. The Chairman confirmed that the protection contained in Holbrook Neighbourhood Plan will continue for the present time. He added that it will be a challenging few years with planning – there was an extra 300 predicted additional houses for Holbrook over the next few years.

Cllr McLaren added that the Mayoral elections would be held next year in May 2026 and Unitaries will be reorganised. Currently Suffolk County Council were in favour of one Council, whilst the District Councils favoured 2 or more. There is a great deal of information on devolution and Local Government Reorganisation on the website of Babergh & MidSuffolk District Council website.

- 12 Cllr Ambrose concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and invited them to stay for light refreshments.

The meeting closed at 20.23 p.m.