

## **Minutes of Holbrook's Annual Parish Meeting**

held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7.00 p.m. at the Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllr John Ambrose (Chairman) Cllr Robert Allinson, Cllr Ed Basham, Cllr John Reid, District Councillor Mary McLaren, Mary Wombwell, Derek Harper, Monica Adlem, Steven Dixon, Pat Johnson, George Josselyn, Gill and Gerald Laws, John Allinson, and representatives from Holbrook Helpers, Holbrook Events Team, Holbrook Society, Holbrook Village Hall Committee, The Bowls Club, the Parish Recorder, the Community Self Help Group, and members of the Parish (28 attendees in total)

In attendance: Jo Hazlewood (Parish Clerk)

- 1. Apologies** were received from Cllr Wright. Cllr Halligan and County Councillor Simon Harley. Apologies were also received from Mel Holmes and Simon Hooton from the Climate Action Group.
- 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. Reeds for the peppercorn rent for the Reade Field are being held safely in case they are requested by Greenwich
- 3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025.** Copies of the minutes were tabled at the meeting and had been posted on the website. Approval was proposed by Cllr Allinson and seconded by Cllr Basham and was agreed by all. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.
- 4. 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 that issues are often raised by residents at Council meetings and the Council encourages people to come along to the regular monthly meetings to do this. Cllr Ambrose thanked District Councillor Mary McLaren and County Councillor Simon Harley. He went on to thank the Community Caretaker, the Village Hall Management Committee, Holbrook and Harkstead Helpers, Holbrook Society, Holbrook Events Team, the P3 Group, Greener Holbrook Greener World, The Community Self Help Group, the Community Speedwatch, the team behind the Parish Papers and the many other people who quietly work to make Holbrook such a nice place to live in. Holbrook continues to be a thriving village with regular events with film nights, village meals, Holbrook Society events and the annual village fete. In December, Santa returned on his sleigh made by members of the community and went around the village on two nights, raising money for local organisations. He thanked Santa and his elves and everyone involved in the project and looked forward to them returning to Holbrook this year.

Finally, looking forward, Cllr Ambrose said there is still plenty of work to do in the year ahead as your Parish Council. The creation of three unitary authorities for Suffolk will see changes and your Parish Council will be there to protect Holbrook's voice in future local government. The Shotley Peninsula Parish Councils Alliance continues to meet with the Chief Executive and other officers from BMSDC to discuss concerns for the Shotley Peninsula and look forward to work collectively together to look after the interests of the residents on the peninsula.

Cllr Ambrose added that if anyone wanted to be part of the challenges ahead, we have vacancies on the Parish Council and invited people to talk to him if they were interested.

**5. To receive the financial report from the Responsible Finance Officer:**

The Parish Council started the year on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 with an opening balance of £75,361.37 and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 with a balance of £96,335.33. She reported that the largest expenditure items for the year (apart from the annual cost of waste and dog bin emptying and street lighting), were the new basketball surface and court markings on the Reade Field. Funds carried forward to the new financial year include earmarked reserves of £39,000 towards the new pavilion, a grant of £4000, to continue fitness classes at the Peninsula Sports Centre, replacement of assets (£11,800) contributions to election costs (£1,000) and some unspent Neighbourhood CIL funds (£9,121). These CIL funds are received as a result of local building projects and have to be earmarked to be spent on infrastructure. 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 2025-2026 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.

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

Cllr McLaren thanked the Parish Council and residents for their support. Cllr McLaren outlined several items on her report. The full report can be read on the website.

**7. 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.

**8. To receive a report from the Royal Hospital School: The Acting head of RHS,**

said that the RHS have become part of Inspire Learning Group, which includes schools mainly in south east England. He added that it was a difficult time for small independent schools and being part of ILG is a huge benefit to the RHS. International pupils are key to the financial sustainability and the RHS will benefit from the ability of ILG to attract international student. In September, the structure of

the school was changed, they no longer have lessons on Saturday mornings. Instead, there is a programme of super Saturdays which is optional for pupils. There is a new sailing hub Alton water, a new Sixth Form and a new Assembly Hall. There will also be a nursery on site opening in June. The swimming pool being refurbished. RHS has hosted many events to which they have invited other local schools, including a Football Festival, World Book Day, Singing Workshops and a COP event. An RHS pupil broke a world record in foil speed sailing at 41 knots. The Royal Marine Band is coming to perform in a concert soon. The flagpole at the front of the school is now flying the union flag, instead of the ensign displayed before due the fact that they are no longer owned by Greenwich. He confirmed, in answer to a question that Greenwich Hospital still provide bursaries for children from naval families. He confirmed that ILG did not purchase the houses or land, which still belong to Greenwich Hospital. This includes the Reade Field.

9. **To receive a report from Holbrook Academy:** no-one was available from HA, but Cllr Ambrose reported on the newly established Youth Parish Council which involved pupils from Holbrook Academy, Holbrook Primary School and the RHS.
10. **To receive a report from Holbrook & Shotley Medical Practice:** Jane Murray, Practice Manager gave an update of developments at H & S Medical Practice. Her full report and statistics are on the website.
11. **To receive reports from representatives of other village organisations.** The following reports were made by representatives of other village organisations: the full reports can be found on the website <https://holbrookparishcouncil.gov.uk>
  - (a) **Holbrook & Harkstead Helpers:** Kate Saulter reported on the activities of H & H Helpers over the year. She said that the demand for help has diminished since Covid – most requests are for transport to medical appointments. Additional drivers are always welcomed. Kate was standing down as Chairman of the following 6 years in the role and welcomed offers to take over. She pointed out that if a new Chairman could not be found, the group might have to fold.
  - (b) **Holbrook Society:** Suzanne Steer reported that this was the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Holbrook Society and went on to list a wide range of events hosted and organised by Holbrook Society.
  - (c) **Parish recorder:** Fran Williams reported on the activities during the year, Including the very successful Archive Day.
  - (d) **Bowls Club** Derek Harper gave a verbal report: the hedge has been removed, as it was damaging the Green. This makes the green very visible. They held a taster day when they welcomed 35 people and 17 new members.. They had visits from RHS students, Ipswich High School and Suffolk Young Farmers and have invited Holbrook Primary and Holbrook Academy. They are working with .Active Suffolk and the Club now has a qualified coach.

- (e) **Churches together**, Jenny Seggar and Steve Mann said that they have 5 and 6 churches respectively. There are very active members of the church in the village. All Saints and the Methodist Church are working together and putting on a lot more events together. Members of the Church usually staff the wonderful Community Café. Messy Church for 30 plus children is very popular. They would like to work with the community to promote youth work. For 20 years the churches have been praying for the village and they invited people to let them know if there is anything particular which they would like included in their prayers. The roof of All Saints is desperately in need of replacement and £700,000 needs to be raised. They are fund raising and recently had a wonderful Rik Wakeman concert which raised £11,500 for the primary school and the Church.
- (f) **Village Hall**: John Ambrose reported that there had been a change of Governance and it has now become a Charitable Incorporated organisation. It was a complicated and expensive process, but they have still managed to maintain the hire costs at current levels. The floor has just been stripped and varnished. New members have joined the Village Hall Committee. The Parish Council and Holbrook Society and a locality grant from the County Council have funded a new projector for the hall. The Village Fete this year will have a young people's music session and will be followed by a family Disco

1. **Members of the Public**: there were no further questions from members of the public.

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

The meeting closed at 8.05p.m.