STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

Ian Brown
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Email: clerk@sturmer-pc.gov.uk

72 St. Edmunds Fields
Dunmow, Essex, CM6 2AN
Tel: 01371 871641

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** of **STURMER PARISH COUNCIL** held at **STURMER VILLAGE HALL** on **TUESDAY 26 APRIL 2022** at **7:30 PM**

APA22/01	**WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN** Cllr Diana Garrod – Chairman – welcomed all those in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to attend; with home made sausage rolls, biscuits tea and coffee duly enjoyed residents were invited to sit back and enjoy the presentations.
APA22/02	**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY APRIL 2019** The minutes were duly signed with the CLERK agreeing to place them on the website.
APA22/03	**COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS FOR 2022** District Cllr Diana Garrod full report is at **APPENDIX A** County Cllr Peter Schwier full report is at **APPENDIX B**
APA22/04	**CLERKS REPORT** Ian Brown – Clerk, full report at **APPENDIX C**
APA22/05	**PRESENTATIONS FROM GUEST SPEAKERS**

Linda Bevan – Sturmer Flood Action Group –
SFAG report to APA 2022

Linda Bevan reported that the Sturmer Flood Action Group had been formed in 2014. She had brought the log of all issues dealt with by the group since it started in 2014, to display at the meeting.

Currently, step downs were to be installed in the ditch at the rear of Maltings Cottages. It was hoped these would hold back some of the water that poured off the fields into the main road during heavy rainfall.

Similar structures (woody dams) had been installed in the ravine across the golf course and along the ditch by The Baulk footpath. These had been seen to be working well and Essex Flood Team were pleased with them.

After many years Essex Highways had agreed to carry out an assessment of the bridge in Water Lane. It had failed and work on a new bridge was due to start in 2023/24. This would be designed to reduce flooding upstream without flooding any houses downstream.

Information on property protection for flooding was also provided. Two properties had taken advantage of a Essex County Council grant to have flood doors etc fitted. Some other properties had had surveys but were not of a suitable construction for the works i.e. made of clunch. It was believed there were two properties left which had been flooded internally and could apply for the grant which now stood at up to £8000 per property.

The Chairman of the Group was Mary Sale. Her telephone number was included in the Sturmer Village News. Mary and her partner had dealt with a number of flood queries as had Linda. If they did not know the answer to a flood question they could probably find someone who did.

****

DRAFT

Jo Porth – Sturmer Village Hall –

Sturmer Village Hall Charity Report for Annual Parish Assembly
26 April 2022

The Covid pandemic had a great influence on the Village Hall Charity, the trustees keeping abreast of the many regulations imposed, we hardly had time to take breath in between the government guidelines sent to us from ACRE via the Rural Community Council of Essex, before regulations changed. Finally we had reached guideline 15 with so many appendices each with its' own sections that we had reached appendix 'k'.

During the lockdowns the trustees had to complete a weekly inspection of the hall with a check list to be kept on file for insurance purposes.

Hand sanitising dispensers, hand sanitising liquid, both for the dispensers and pump dispensers for the toilets and kitchen, Covid first aid boxes, wipes, aprons, masks were purchased. Many posters were printed and laminated, a Covid safe area was created together with Covid first aid boxes.

We were required to take down all pictures and notices, other than the Covid notices, to prevent the use of the curtains, and the kitchen could not be used.

However, payments were still being received, utility bills and insurance cover amongst them.

We, along with other village halls, community centres, bowls and cricket pavilions, applied to Braintree District Council for a Government Grant in which we were successful, the grant was awarded to keep these centres running for their users.

We thoroughly looked into to purchasing an air purifier, but taking advice and reading the Department of Health and Safety advice, and given the height of the main hall vaulted roof, it was decided to purchase a CO2 reader. This has proved to be very successful a loud alarm sounding when the hall needs to be ventilated.

The hall was finally opened, still with many restrictions in place, in September 2021, with the trustees using grant money to provide free table space for local trade and craft people, together with a free raffle and refreshments for all those who attended, the event also included a litter pick organised by Sturmer and District WI. The whole afternoon being a great success.

Unfortunately some of our regular hirers have not returned, Yoga and Pilates, the Pilates still being available via Zoom.

Positively, Sturmer and District WI, Sturmer Carpet Bowls and Sturmer Parish Council are regular users, together with Sturmer Home Education who use the hall twice a month.

Since the New Year the hall has had many private hirings, mainly for children's parties, family get-togethers and shortly a wedding reception. The hall is frequently used for craft days organised by Suffolk West Federation of Women's Institutes.

We used the time in lockdown 2020 to have the toilets and lobby area re-decorated, and again in winter 2021 to have the staircase, kitchen and main hall re-decorated.

We are looking at some means of covering an area of the rear courtyard to provide sheltered outside space.

We would like to thank Alan and David for keeping the rear courtyard and the front parking areas clean and tidy

We are grateful to Sturmer Parish Council for their generous grant of £850 towards the cost of the insurance.

The Sturmer Village News, which is collated and paid for by the Sturmer Village Hall Charity and delivered to every property in Sturmer, is also available on Mere Cottage Farm website, the cost of the News from June 2021 to March 2022 was £720, advertisements accrue £500, the Parish Council gave a grant of £150 the deficit of £70 comes from the charity's funds.

Over the two years since lockdown two trustees have retired from the charity, Barbara Collar and Sylvia Allworthy. We are delighted that Terry Notcutt has joined as a trustee representing Sturmer and District WI. We now have two elected members, one of whom is also a St. Mary's, Sturmer churchwarden, and representatives for Sturmer Carpet Bowls Club, Sturmer Parish Council and Sturmer and District WI.

We will be celebrating the Queen's Jubilee on Friday 3 June 2022 with a film show of the Coronation and refreshments, free to all, please just drop on between 2:30 and 4:30pm.

Jo Porth Secretary/Treasurer Sturmer Village Hall Charity April 2022

****

Ian Brown on behalf of Stephanie Power – St Mary's Church –

ST MARY'S CHURCH, STURMER – REPORT TO STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

As you all may know, in 2017 St Mary's Church, Sturmer, was found to be in need of a very large roof repair, following the 5 yearly visit of the architect. At that time the cost was estimated to be over £35,000. The PCC met to discuss the situation and all parishioners were consulted and given every opportunity to express their wishes as to whether or not they wished the parish church to remain open for worship or to close. As a result of the subsequent findings, it was felt that the church building was no longer needed by the majority of the parishioners, and thus the PCC felt that they had no option but to proceed with closure.

Once the closure process commenced, parishioners and anyone else with an interest in the church were given the opportunity to express their opinions about this and following the relevant period of consultation, the Church Commissioners were then expected to make their decision.

The Church Commissioners discussed the matter at a meeting they held in March 2022 and the Head of Service Delivery at the Diocese (who had been liaising between the parties and reporting to the PCC) subsequently heard that the Church Commissioners did not, as expected, make a decision to close the church immediately because they felt that there had been insufficient effort by the parish and the PCC to try and find an alternative use for the building. Their full report is still awaited at the time of writing this report but this is I understand their decision in a nutshell.

Whilst the PCC has not met since this news was received, it would be difficult to see to what use the building could be put, bearing in mind its location (along a private driveway not owned by the church) and lack of facilities (no running water) but if the Parish Council has any ideas, these can be discussed at our next PCC meeting to be held on 5th May.

With regard to the roof repair, because of the other financial burdens on the church, and the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020, to date it has not been possible to raise anything approaching the 50% level of this sum required to enable the PCC of the church to apply for a grant of any kind to repair the roof and this does, unfortunately, limit the number of bodies who might have been called upon to keep the church open.

Currently the church remains open for services whenever there is a 5th Sunday in the month (when all parishes in the benefice would be invited to attend), and for weddings, funerals and baptisms.

As and when St Mary's closes, the parish of Sturmer will be merged with that of Steeple Bumpstead and worship will continue there. The churchyard at Sturmer will remain open for burials and will continue to be maintained by volunteers.

Stephanie Power
Churchwarden
April 2022
****

Linda Bevan – Local History Group –
Annual Report 2022 – Sturmer Local History Group

We are really pleased to have passed our 10th anniversary as a history group. We have some highlights to look back on like the opening of the Heritage Trail and our Victorian Schoolroom re-enactments.

Sadly, we have decided not to restart our Victorian event for local schoolchildren mainly for Covid reasons. However, we are going to offer something similar to adults for them to get a flavour of the Victorian Schoolroom in the village hall which started life that way. We are going to invite history groups and WIs to start with for a small fee to cover hall rental and refreshments. We also offer guided walks around the village.

Our annual outings had become WI events over the last few years we held them so we will offer those through our WI. This year we are planning a trip to Ashdon Museum.

We were asked to promise to maintain the heritage trail boards for 10 years when it opened in 2013. So far it has been fairly free of vandalism. We still have a good stock of leaflets to accompany the boards but when they run out we hope to update them and buy a new supply. We have £249 in the bank towards this.

Like other groups, local history has taken to Zoom during the Pandemic. We have been able to follow talks on WW1, dictators' lives, archaeology in Sudbury and many more topics.

We have used social media to spread information on interesting buildings in the village. We place items in the Sturmer Village News from time to time (including our Annual Report).

We have also dealt with enquiries on email when people find our website. One gentlemen in Devon is convinced that the Purkis family who owned much land in Sturmer at one time - is related to Sir Alf Ramsey – England Football Manager when they won the World Cup in 1966.

We shared some commemorative china with the current owner of the house concerned in the village and Haverhill Local History Group (which now has museum status). This was donated by a resident leaving the village and we also have examples at Mere Cottage.

We are still updating our archives and now have an extensive file of Covid ephemera which we will turn into a scrapbook to share with residents when things "get back to normal".

We produce a Recorders' Report at the start of each year and recently had enquiries from a nearby village which would like to follow our example. The report goes to the Recorders' of Uttlesford History and the Suffolk Local History Council. Eventually, it will make it's way to The Hold – the new records office in Ipswich.

DRAFT

Everyone is welcome to see our archives or accounts if they give us reasonable notice and we hope to continue for many years to come recording and sharing the history of Sturmer.

Linda Bevan

10 April 2022

****

Jo Porth – Women's Institute -

Sturmer and District WI Report - for Annual Parish Assembly 26 April 2022

What a delight it was to meet again in June 2021 in a member's garden, our previous meeting having been March 2020. Members had kept in touch by email and phone over the time of lockdown, sharing stories, news and photo's

Our first meeting at the village hall was supposed to be an outdoor courtyard strawberry cream tea to allow for social distancing, but the British weather prevailed, a severe thunderstorm sagged the gazebo's and soaked the tables a hurried retreat into the hall, fortunately some members did not venture out in the inclement weather so social distancing was maintained with all doors and windows open.

Still bearing Covid in mind our next meeting was a guided walk around the East Town Park, Haverhill, most of which lies within Sturmer.

The hall was allowed to open in September and toes were tapping to Pete and Barrie with the sounds of the 60's.

We have continued our meetings in the village hall enjoying speakers taking us along the Stour Valley Path and a scriptwriter who amongst many programmes was involved with Dad's Army, Hi-De-Hi, Blue Peter and even a stand-in tenor for Jonathan Miller's production of Cosi Fan Tutte.

The work of Rural Women in Action was explained at our April meeting, this is the only charity the WI can support, as the WI itself is a charity, Sturmer and District regularly fund raises for Rural Women in Action and on Thursday, 28 April we are walking the countryside of Sturmer as part of the fund raising, those walking will make a donation.

Rural Women in Action support women throughout the world, by education and development, climate and smart agriculture, helping women to help themselves, in Bangladesh, education and support was given to environmentally friendly vegetable growing, the surplus being sold and the monies help to fund further education and to purchase seeds etc for the following year. Other schemes have included the supply of fresh water in Uganda and sexual and reproductive health in India.

Sturmer and District WI is a part of the National WI movement which has had many successful campaigns for over 100 years. One of the first in 1918 was urging the government to "sufficient supply of convenient and sanitary houses, being of importance to women in the country"

Other successful campaigns have been "equal pay for equal work", and in 1954 "Keep Britain Tidy", another "Smoking in public places", "Plastic pollution" that resolution was in 1971, "HIV and AIDS", "modern slavery"," lack of NHS dentistry" that was 1996 !

This year's resolution to be discussed at the NFWI Annual Meeting in Liverpool is:-

"Women and Girls with ASD & ADHD-under-identified, under-diagnosed, misdiagnosed, under-supported"

Not all campaigns are targeted at the government a recent campaign was urging members to be aware of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer, a cancer which sadly affects over 7000 women in the UK each year and even more sadly over 4ooo deaths.
Back to Sturmer and District, we are delighted that all members pre-pandemic have returned.

We recently turned the village hall into the library at the Ravenswick Hotel on Shetland when we held a most successful murder/mystery evening.

Other fundraising evenings include Bingo and Circle Dancing.

Our bursary this year will be a yoga course, one evening a week over 4 weeks in June our tutor tailoring for everyone's different needs, most of this course will be funded by Sturmer and District WI.

We have a reputation, and rightly so, of being a friendly and welcoming WI, visitors can attend free for the first meeting and £4 for the second visit and then we hope we have impressed enough to welcome them as full members on the second Monday of the month in Sturmer Village Hall 7:15 for 7:30pm

Jo Porth Secretary Sturmer and District WI

****

APA22/06	**DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** To be confirmed in 2023
APA22/07	**CHAIRMAN TO CLOSE THE MEETING** Cllr Diana Garrod thanked everyone for joining the Assembly and a special thanks to those who spoke and produced the various displays and exhibitions. The meeting closed at 8:46pm

Sign……Date……

APPENDIX A

District Councillor's Annual Report to Parish Councils - April 2022
Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward - Braintree District Council

As your District Councillor for the Bumpstead Ward, I have pleasure in providing this report for the past year.

I have undertaken my duties at Braintree District Council attending Full Council meetings, also as Chairman of the Community Development Scrutiny Committee, the Climate Change Working Group, a member of the Appeals Committee, also BDC's outside representative for the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Advisory Committee and more recently as one of two Mental Health Champions for the Council.

I have a Councillor's Community Grant which I can allocate to support a range of projects to benefit residents. In the last year I have been able to assist Helions Bumpstead Sports Pavilion Club with a replacement specialised pavilion clock, Birdbrook Ladies Group with a new microwave and kettle for their kitchen and Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society Ltd for the installation of bike racks to encourage exercise and wellbeing. I have facilitated an application for Sturmer Parish Council for LED footway lights which is in the pipeline and contributions have recently been offered to Birdbrook, Steeple and Helions to assist with their Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Overall, BDC's councillor grant scheme has provided approximately £64,000 of an available allocation of £73,000 allowing some vital support to our town, parish and rural groups to respond on the easing of Covid.

Climate Change

The Councils Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, to make the District Carbon Neutral as far as practical by 2030, was unanimously approved by Council in September 2021. Since then the Climate Change Working Group continues to meet to work on the implementation of the Action Plan. As part of the Climate Change Strategy and to celebrate Her Majesty the Queens Platinum Jubilee 13,000 native British tree whips and 73,000 bulbs were made available to groups throughout the District for planting. The uptake was very good and groups were asked to add them to the data base for H.M.'s Jubilee Green Canopy. The trees and bulbs that were left over were planted on Council owned land. In addition, special trees with a plaque to celebrate the jubilee were planted in Weavers Park Braintree, Halstead Public Gardens and Witham Town Park.

A Letter of Concern has been sent to Rt Hon Grant Shapps and Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng in relation to the cessation of the EV Homecharge scheme and the Council will soon be embarking on its procurement process as part of the Air Quality Monitoring Methodology Review

Throughout the pandemic Environmental Services and Enforcement Officers were an integral part of working to keep our citizens safe.

Following the successful conclusion of the Litter Signs Trial, Essex County Council and National Highways have agreed to the signs becoming a permanent feature along the strategic and link roads throughout the District and Officers are currently preparing a programme of site locations for the coming year. District and County Councillors, along with Parish and Town Councils have been invited to identify suitable locations for inclusion in the programme and it is proposed to re-launch the initiative as part of the Great British Spring Clean (25 March – 10 April 2022). In the continuous effort to keep the district clean and tidy, and tackle the impact of litter on the environment, 57 brand new bins have been purchased and installed across the district. New yellow bins have been installed on the strategic network (A12, A120 and A131) funded from a Government grant. In accordance with WRAP guidelines, the Council opted for a brighter colour as the more visible the bins are, the more people are likely to see them and use them. In a new innovative approach 7 customised bins are being trialled that have a large single opening, which will allow people to dispose of their litter without having to leave their vehicle, helping to increase bin usage and decrease bags of rubbish being dumped.

Planning

The examination of BDC's draft Local Plan Section 2 , conducted by two Inspectors, took place in July 2021 and then went out to public consultation on the proposed modifications. The Inspectors are now considering the responses to that consultation, and we await their decision on whether the Council can find the Plan 'sound'.

The Planning Committee has continued to be extremely busy throughout the year with meetings continuing to be held fortnightly, rather than monthly, to determine the large numbers of applications being submitted. During the latter part of 2021 several major applications went to Appeal, with their developers hoping to overturn BDC's refusal to grant permission. Although the refusals were upheld, frustratingly, each Inspector also gave different interpretations of BDC's 5 year land supply, which is crucial to determining applications. Finally, it was declared by one Inspector that our land supply stands at 5.1 years. Good news, but it is a slender safety margin.

A successful review of the Enforcement process, undertaken by a cross-party group of District Councillors over the summer months, resulted in a number of recommendations to improve the service; these proposals were presented to Full Council in February this year and were unanimously approved. There will be a staffing increase of five new officers for the team and improvements to the way Enforcement complaints are reported and monitored.

Health & Wellbeing

Rising levels of childhood obesity, reduced fitness levels, social isolation and loneliness all featured strongly during the pandemic. However, with the support of the voluntary sectors, parish and town councils and many individuals, we were able to recognise and help minimise some of the effects. By using our assets, including the leisure centres, swimming pools, community transport, council officers and elected members and operational workforce ; together with our strong links with the County Council and NHS, many examples of

individual support and community activities have been created which will leave a lasting, positive legacy from the devastating effects of the coronavirus outbreak.

Economic Development & Business Support

As part of the changes required to meet the Covid-19 restrictions, early in 2021 BDC acquired the technology to enable hybrid meetings to be held in the committee area and webcast to the public making it possible and for some attendees to be physically present in the committee area and others to attend remotely and contributing virtually. This has allowed the public to speak in person at meetings when Public Question time is on the agenda and maintain an open and democratic authority. During the last two years BDC staff in the Economic Development and Finance Departments have been actively supporting residents and businesses through financial support where needed and acting as rapidly as possible to minimise the damage that the pandemic caused to the local economy. BDC has paid the following grants:

Exceptional Hardship Fund: 2020/2021 £3,302 9 awards; 2021/2022 £8,687 17 awards

Discretionary Housing Payments: 2020/2021 £291,592 277 awards; 2021/2022 £249,649 257 awards

Government grant of £150 per LCTS claimant: 2020/2021 £846,445 5,643 awards; No 2021/22 grant

Test & Trace Support Payments (Isolation Payments): 2020/2021 £217,500 435 Claims; 2021/2022 £869,000 1,738 Claims

Business Grants – Various schemes: 2020/2021 £47,308,844 paid, 9615 claims; 2021/2022 £8,637,458, paid, 1617 claims

A key priority remains supporting our businesses through this period of adaptation and recovery. We continue to dispatch government grants and support. In addition, we continue to offer local support packages including the recent £30,000 opportunity, consisting of small grants for High Street shops and businesses to improve the look and feel of their frontages. Due to the unprecedented impact on our local business community, we are in the process of refreshing our economic plan to ensure BDC continues to play its part in supporting the needs of our businesses both urban and rural. This is building on our strong record of engagement with business over the years and our desire to help turbo charge new sectors that will create well paid jobs, post pandemic and attract new businesses to the area.

Skills

The Council continue to build on our work with local businesses and education providers to enhance the skills offering within the District. This is as important as ever as part of our bouncing back together plan, as we come out of the pandemic. We are reviewing the work we have been proud of in recent years with the Braintree District Education and Skills Board, and look to revitalise vital skills relationships for the benefit of residents of the District.

Housing

The Council has continued its very good record on affordable housing delivery from the previous two years, and this year the affordable housing delivery programme will comfortably exceed the annual plan target of 250 and the number of completions for the year will be the highest annual delivery of affordable housing ever achieved in the District.

Operations

Braintree Local Highways Panel is contributing some of its annual funding to the initial research stages of the proposed Earls Colne-Coggeshall cycle route. An officer and Member Working Group has carried out a review of the BDC Taxi Licensing policies, to ensure that best-practice is followed in the taxi and public hire vehicle provision in the District. The relatively new bring-bank recycling collections of textiles, and of food and drink cartons, have proved popular and are being more and more used by residents. 19 tonnes of textiles, and 7 of cartons, were collected during 2021, plus an additional 7 tonnes of small electrical material - all these collections provide a revenue to the Council.

Ukraine

At a Full Council meeting on Monday, 28 March, all four political Group Leaders at our council expressed their support for the people of Ukraine and are working with partner agencies to provide support to those affected by the war. BDC is working with Essex County Council to provide support to those arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a scheme that invites residents to apply to sponsor a named Ukrainian and their immediate family to come over to the UK, as long as they can provide accommodation for at least six months. BDC is supporting the home check process through home visits, which will work alongside the DBS and safeguarding checks to provide assurance for sponsors and guests. Local welcome packs have been put together for sponsors and their guests, highlighting the wide range of support available in the Braintree district and across Essex, including mental health support, help with finances and benefits, applying for school places and accessing NHS services. Updates are provided via the Essex County Council website and BDC's Facebook page and dedicated web page at www.braintree.gov.uk/ukraine.

Assuring you of my attention at all times.

Cllr. Diana Garrod
Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward
****

APPENDIX B

Essex County Council - Hedingham Division

Cllr Peter Schwier – 2021/22 Annual Report

The last 12 months have been exceptionally busy and demanding. They have also been productive, and the new administration at Essex County Council has lost no time in setting out its clear aims and priorities for the four-year term.

While too many to list in full, below is a small sample of the landmarks and achievements of the last 12 months at the county council.

- **Launch of Everyone's Essex Strategy** – the council's ambitious plan for the four years ahead. It set out our levelling up plan for the county, and 20 commitments under the key areas of "economy", "environment", "health" and "family". The strategy set out how renewal, equality and ambition run through everything we do. Crucially, from my perspective, it established our aim to reach net-zero in Essex.

- **A budget for Essex -** In February this year, the council set its budget for the 2022/23 financial year. To help achieve ECC's vision of a county where everyone can thrive, it was announced that several areas would receive significant additional investment, including:
    - a £1.3 billion capital programme across the next four years
    - £200million over the next four years to support our climate action and net zero ambitions
    - an additional £10million in skills and economic growth
    - a further £2million for infrastructure and a new pothole fund
    - a £1.5million fund for the heritage and culture sector
    - an additional £1million for Levelling Up across Essex
    - continuation of the £750,000 localities fund to support district-based Levelling Up priorities
    - a continuation of the £500,000 investment in the work being done to protect Essex children from being targeted by gangs

  A £20million investment has already been made available to help families. This includes directly supporting financial wellbeing and helping them with summer childcare. ECC will also commit an extra £700,000 to the Essential Living Fund to help families and individuals with food, fuel, clothing and furniture bills.

- **Council Tax** – At the same meeting, ECC took the difficult decision to increase its share of council tax by 4.49%.

As an administration, we are very clear that the only money the council has to spend is the money of our residents. It is therefore right that we raise taxes reluctantly and only once every alternative has been explored. In this instance, the main part of the increase was a 2.5% increase in the social care precept – money that goes towards supporting vulnerable residents, including frail, elderly, adults with disabilities, and vulnerable children in need. While we always seek to avoid council tax increases, the pressures on the social care market are such that an increase this year was deemed the only way to stave off serious problems in provision of social care, with providers struggling to stay in business.

- **Highways -** The council will be spending £135m on highways maintenance over the coming year and, as ever, will prioritise the areas by severity of need.

  In the Braintree district council area, over the last six months, this spending has led to repairs to 184 county-grade roads, 160 local roads, 187 pavements, 3,711 drains cleared and 2,240 street lights fixed.

- **Climate Action** - In November, ECC's cabinet approved a Climate Action Plan which agreed a £200m commitment to help address all areas of climate-related activity in Essex. The county council's ambition is to ensure we are building a coalition of support across the county for the move to net-zero carbon emissions in our county by 2050. Detailing how we will implement the recommendations of the Essex Climate Action Commission's report Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral, it included plans across areas such as housing, infrastructure, transport, waste and the natural environment.

- **Within the first 100 days -** the following was achieved

  - repairing over one million square metres of roads and 40,000 square metres of footpaths and cycleways
  - creating over 600 new roles for unemployed young people aged 18-24 as part of the Government's Kickstart scheme
  - delivering four BT broadband contracts under Superfast Essex programme for a further 12,000 premises
  - starting construction of the West Mersea temporary defence barrier scheme
  - launching a new £500,000 fund to support community action on climate change
  - working with the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) to develop and publish the 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral' report
  - launching the Active Essex 'Find your Active campaign, supported by a £1.25 million fund
  - launching Essex Pedal Power, a £2.7million community-based project being piloted in Clacton and Jaywick Sands
  - launching the new Essex Care Technology Service to support people with care needs access and use the latest technology to help them to live as independently as possible
  - announcing the Essex Education Task Force which will invest £1million in reading over the next 18 months, to support children and young people affected by the loss of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic
  - piloting construction methods designed to deliver net-zero, future proof, inclusive school buildings

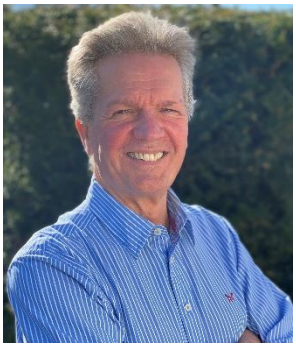
It has been a pleasure to assist the following communities with My Locality Fund -
Sturmer, Ashen, Pebmarsh, CastleHedingham, Lt Maplestead, Gestinghtorpe and Belchamp St Paul.

I hope the above gives you an idea of the work that has gone in over the last year to develop our plans and deliver on them for the people of Essex.

For my part, my appointment as Climate Czar was a great privilege. It is a role that speaks volumes for our commitment in this space, but the work has only just started and there is much still to do.

Most of all, it has been my pleasure and privilege to serve the residents of all the villages, both large and small, within the Hedingham division. I look forward to continuing to do so in the next year and beyond.

Best wishes,



****

APPENDIX C

Clerks Report for year ending 2022

BUDGET PERFORMANCE - £833 over budget, however due to grants and other income council actually finished the year with a healthier bank balance compared to this time last year and finished up with just under £1,000 more in the bank compared to last year.

Main areas of overspend included – ADMIN - £423, SUBSCRIPTIONS - £23, PARISH MAINTENANCE - £851 and LIGHTING - £1,031, where some lamps were upgrade to efficient LED type.

Council under spent on Office and PAYE costs by £346, a £100 on H&S but that is primarily due to the late play area inspection being completed for free, the 2022 inspection is due next month.

Council also budgeted £900 on all matters grass cutting but have not spent on that budget item thus far but do expect to this financial year; an adjustment in the accounts to that cost code allocation will better reflect the works undertaken and the actual spend.

So the outcome has been that between the various but few sources of income, including a late but generous contribution towards the Defibrillator installation, and between certain overspend and underspend that whilst the budget was over spent the actual funds in the bank did improve ever so slightly.

As ever there is no room for sitting back on the proverbial laurels when it comes to squeezing every penny out of the council funds which your council continues to work hard to achieve and does so very well. Although it does rely on the generous donation of council members time and energy to complete certain works to ensure the limited resources do stretch to cover costs.

The councils Governance and Accounting practices are now under the close scrutiny of the Internal Auditor so we await that report.

****

DRAFT