



ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of The Annual Assembly of the Parish held on Monday 9 May 2022 at 7pm Ardleigh Village Hall

Present: Cllr Tim Barrott (Chair of Ardleigh Parish Council and chairing the meeting), Cllr Neil Stock (Tendring District Council Ward Councillor), Carlo Guglielmi (Essex County Council) Karen Thompson (Deputy Clerk- minutes) Rachel Fletcher (Clerk)

8 other members of Ardleigh Parish Council
Numerous voters and residents of the Parish of Ardleigh

Chair's Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced those at the table.

1. Minutes of the last Annual Assembly meeting 5 May 2021.

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly were accepted as a true and accurate record of the last meeting on 5 May 2021.

2. Written reports from groups and voluntary organisations operating in Ardleigh.

Written reports had been received from Ardleigh Pre-school, the Ardleigh Archivist, The Horticultural Society, Ardleigh Parochial Charities and our Essex County Councillor. These were noted and are attached as an Annex to these minutes.

Additionally, the Chair of the Millennium Green Trust spoke about the pond clearing, cleaned sundial, cutting back of brambles, and path clearing on the Millennium Green which will be used with the Recreation Ground for the Jubilee events.

A representative spoke about the success of the Community Speed Watch which is operating with only 4 volunteers. They had conducted two Watches most weeks. She reported that 10% of vehicles were exceeding a speed of 36mph.

The Ardleigh Parochial Charities a brief verbal report was made and the written report was received.

The Ardleigh Archivist gave a brief verbal report and the written report was received.

3. Informal discussion about issues affecting Ardleigh such as forthcoming Jubilee celebrations and/or National Grid consultation for East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) – implications for Ardleigh and next steps

A resident spoke about the Jubilee events planned which include the beacon lighting and party on Thursday 2nd June starting at 8pm. Footpath walks around the village would start from the Church at 10am on Saturday 4th June with coffee in the church at the end of the walk. Sunday 5th June is the Family Funday which includes bring your own picnic, cricket, various events including tug of war and wellie throwing, fancy dress, races, crown and coronet making, dancing, cribbage games. There will be a bar and coffee stall. The Wooden Fender has donated a meal for two as a prize. Tendring District Council have provided a grant to help cover costs.

Concerns were raised that the Ardleigh Cricket Club may be expected to pay for use of facilities at Ardleigh Recreation Ground. It was reported that the Recreation Ground had

been donated to the village for space for sport and recreation.

The most controversial topic discussed was the recently published consultation for a major infrastructure project to install overhead 400kV power cables from Norwich to Tilbury, including a 25 hectare substation in Ardleigh, which will bring offshore generated electricity to the Greater London area. Cllr Neil Stock confirmed that our MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin, is heading up a group of MPs in the constituencies affected. It will be MPs that have influence over Government Policy as this will be decided nationally. There is a Facebook group (Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylons) to provide information and coordinate objections to concerns about the environment, health and countryside protection. The general feeling is that cables should stay offshore until the closest point to Tilbury. The meeting felt that not enough people know or understand the implications of this project and communication is required. The meeting also suggested establishing a specific action group to cover the implications for Ardleigh – liaising with the wider objection campaign. People should make their views known to the project during this consultation stage (running to June 16th) but the feedback form was felt to be leading and that individual emails and letters to the project might be more effective. All people were encouraged to make their views known to Bernard Jenkin MP for this area and also Essex County Council. Tendring Council have been asked to present their views to the project and are also working with Suffolk Councils to provide a coordinated response.

The meeting decided to set up an Ardleigh Action Group and the Council would host an initial zoom meeting for concerned residents (see minutes of the Parish Council meeting 9th May for details).

4. Any Other Business

There was none and the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Annex to Minutes of the Ardleigh Annual Assembly 2022

Written Reports from local groups.

Ardleigh Archivist's Report 2022

I continue to act as Parish Archivist, filing historical material as it is found and helping to answer queries from near and far about family histories, the history of houses, street names or indeed anything to do with Ardleigh's long history. During lockdown, I have not had people turning up on the doorstep asking for help tracing their relatives or their house histories, but there has been an increase in telephone and online queries. I have also received bundles of old documents relating to the Girl Guides in Ardleigh; this was following the death of Alison Swinscoe. Similarly, I have also received and filed many items following the demise of such village worthies as Vera Mowles and Gwen Smith.

I am only too happy to help anyone as far as I can. I have contributed research to a Manningtree Museum project on the Harwich turnpike, the road from London to Harwich, which ran right through Ardleigh and hope that our council will adopt the replacement milepost to be erected at the edge of Ardleigh, completing the four milestones in the parish on this road. Looking forward, in June, a group from the U3A branch in Billericay is coming to visit the parish and I shall show them the church and the Wartime Ardleigh history board on the Millennium Green. Looking further forward, I hope that the Victoria County History Project will include work on the villages of the Tendring Hundred.

In this role as Parish Archivist, I have also contributed an historical article to each month's 'Ardleigh Advertiser'; there have been many appreciative comments about these, but I must thank Sarah, as editor and producer of the Advertiser, for all the hard work she puts into the Magazine. Old editions of Ardleigh parish magazines already prove an invaluable source of information.

I also continue as the Secretary of the Tendring Local History Recorders, recording events as they happen now, for they are tomorrow's history. This includes recording the measures that had to be taken in Ardleigh to tackle the covid pandemic. By now, the archives house quite a large collection of photographs as well as a plethora of written material. I do welcome additions to these modern archives. For instance, I have just received the latest set of photographs taken from the top of the church tower; there is now a series which records change in the village from that vantage point.

Historical work, both in researching the past and in recording the present, is an ongoing project in Ardleigh and I must thank the Parish Council for its continuing support which makes all this possible.

Jill Hamblin MA(Oxon)

REPORT FOR ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 9th MAY 2022

FROM ARDLEIGH & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The society has a small dedicated team of eight committee members and a membership of sixty individuals, 50% of whom live outside the parish of Ardleigh.

Members have free admission to the society's evening talks and the annual flower and produce show.

After a break of 2 years due to covid our meetings started again in October last year at a new venue, the village hall. The move to the village hall gave more space for social distancing and has enabled the society to now have a plant/produce stall at each meeting. Our monthly evening talks take place on

the second Thursday of the month from October to May (excluding January). The talks are mainly gardening or nature related with the occasional local interest subject, non-members are always welcome to come along.

In the autumn the society participates in a seed discount scheme with a local seed company and individual orders usually qualify for a saving of 50%.

The committee organises the popular annual flower and produce show which takes place at the village hall. This year's show is on Saturday 20th August. The last show in 2019 attracted over 675 exhibits, making it one of the largest horticultural shows in north east Essex. It is an open show, which means that anyone (not just members) can exhibit. Show schedules, giving details of the classes, are now available at craft nurseries, Ardleigh convenience store and from our website.

The society is most grateful to Percival Engineering, Endeavour Hyundai, Jubilee Restaurant, Debbie Millar School of Dance, Ardleigh Garden Maintenance and seven individual members of the society who provide sponsorship for the various classes at the show. Special thanks must go to our major sponsor craft nurseries for their continuing generous support.

To help encourage the next generation of gardeners, the society has recently provided St Marys primary school Ardleigh with beetroot plug plants, seed potatoes, pots and bags of compost. The beetroot plug plants were given to members of the school's gardening club who potted them up and took them home to see who can grow the best beetroot. The potatoes are for a new inter-class competition. Judging of the beetroot competition and the potato "weigh-in" will be carried out by committee members at the school at the end of the summer term. A trophy for the garden club winner of the beetroot competition will be awarded at the annual show.

Our annual plant and cake sale takes place on Saturday 21st May at the village hall from 9:30-11:30. Details of all our events and contact details can be found on our website and our Facebook page.

ARDLEIGH PAROCHIAL CHARITIES REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2022

There have been considerable changes to the Trustee membership since our last report to the Assembly. Of course, as St Mary's church no longer has a priest, we no longer have that ex-officio member. Having read the Rules of Governance for the Charity and consulted the Charity Commission we are able to proceed without a substitute. Two long-standing and highly valued Trustees – Christopher Tootal and John Hardy have also decided to stand down from the Board of Trustees. Their contributions have been exceptional, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them both for their selfless and significant work for the people of Ardleigh.

Trustee elections. Karen Deed, Nicola Jones, Sue Doncaster and Francis Perera have all kindly offered their services as Trustees. Francis Perera will take over from John Hardy as Treasurer and will explore the financial status of the charity and attempt to update our banking practices to enable more functions to be carried out online.

Recent applications have been very small which is strange given the problems many are now facing financially. We are looking for suggestions to promote the work of the APC going forward. Contact with the school, surgery and church are being revisited. Social media such as the Ardleigh Village Facebook page and Neighbourhood Groups will be included in posts about our work that currently feature in alternate months in the Ardleigh Advertiser as will the church Friendship Group and other local organisations. Any further suggestions would be very welcome.

Occasionally applicants are referred to an alternative source of funding where it is more appropriate. Sue Doncaster is compiling a database of all such funds so that the APC can more readily focus our

financial support where there are no alternatives. The fund is there to be used and that is our primary goal. Please publicise our work to all local groups and associations. Thankyou

Mandy Pratt
(Chair Ardleigh Parochial Charities)

Report to Ardleigh Parish Council Annual Assembly Monday 9th May 2022 from Ardleigh Pre-School

After the last few challenging years due to the Covid outbreak and subsequent restrictions, with ongoing support from our pre-school families and the Parish Council, the pre-school is pleased to report that we are currently very busy, with sessions being either full or nearly full. We are very grateful that we could continue operating out of the hall even though it was closed to other users and thank the Parish Council for their support in keeping us open.

But who uses Ardleigh Pre-School? A third of our current pre-school families are from Ardleigh village, a further third from neighbouring villages and the final third from families coming from Colchester. This year approximately 50% of our summer leavers will be heading to Ardleigh Primary School in September.

The children spend a lot of time enjoying the pre-school garden especially as we have been developing our understanding of the world around us and using the changes in the seasons to help highlight this to the children. The outdoors is the best place to be to appreciate the changing seasons and if you see us all just lying on our backs staring at the sky we are either watching the clouds and seeing what shapes they make, or closing our eyes and listening to the sounds of cars, trains, birds etc. Or if we are standing still not moving then we are just seeing what we can see! We then have a group discussion to find out what the children can remember!

We have missed our trips to the Church and to the Primary School, as well as generally exploring the Millennium Green due to the restrictions imposed by Covid, and it's been a shame not to welcome our regular visitors into the pre-school such as the Reverend Antony who would come in to read to the children. We hope that with the relaxing of restrictions we can get back to being more involved in the community once again.

Fundraising has been a challenge over the past few years as we haven't been able to hold our usual annual events such as the Christmas Fair, Quiz Night, Summer Fete and of course selling the show programs at the Tendring Show which we receive commission for, but we've adapted and found new ways to raise funds such as having a stall at Ardleigh Car Boot and collecting at the gates afterwards as well as a sponsored "Look & Find" which families could do individually at home during the holidays.

With the summer leavers the pre-school will only be at 50% capacity in the autumn and with the current rising costs we know we have a tough year ahead but will, as always, do whatever we can to ensure that Ardleigh Pre-School can offer early years education at a high level that is an asset both to the village and to the families that attend.

We look forward to another year at the village hall. On behalf of Ardleigh Pre-School Committee
Jenny Scofield

ECC Annual report 2021/22

It's hard to believe that a whole year has almost past since the May 2021 elections with a new Administration in place, but a great deal of work has been done since.

A bold and ambitious 100 Day Plan document was unveiled by the Conservative Administration which set out the pathway for the way Essex would govern during the next four years. Following a great deal of work by a very talented Policy Team Officers, the Inner and Outer Cabinet, the Scrutiny process and each of the Council's members, this document became Everyone's Essex, [Plans and strategies: Everyone's Essex - Essex County Council](#) which represents its Corporate Plan, and it is very much based on the core principles of Renewal, Equality and Ambition.

Since having taken office, we came out of the Pandemic with lasting effects of COVID still being felt throughout the Council. It is therefore vital and proper that besides running day-to-day services as effectively and efficiently as possible ECC should look to the future and the legacy of this administration.

Everyone's Essex has two main themes which are the Essex version of Levelling Up and how we tackle Climate Change. These aren't just restricted to two individual Cabinet members responsibilities, but resonate in everything the Council does, where people have equal opportunity, given the tools for them to succeed while at the same time ensuring the most vulnerable in our society are cared for, as a society is judged by the way it cares for older people and vulnerable people.

The Levelling-Up Agenda is being led by the Deputy Leader Cllr Louise McKinley, who did not wait for the Government to publish this but launched her own 'Essex Levelling Up White Paper' on 6th January at an event attended by the Rt Hon Justine Greening, designed to focus on both people and places. This work was recognised by the Rt Hon, who now fronts the Social Mobility Pledge across the country and described it as "nationally ground-breaking".

So far, Local Levelling Up launches have taken place in Harlow, Clacton / Jaywick, Basildon and Canvey Island. More to follow later in the summer with Harwich being the next inclusion.

Under the Levelling-Up Heading the Administration has also launched:

- The Community Challenge fund, designed to provide funding to empower local communities.
- The Family Friendly Employers' Charter
- £10m for economic growth and skills
- £4.8m digital skills programme
- The free Laptop Scheme which went beyond the government's initiative of supporting digital infrastructure provision during pandemic, and it's now looking at support that can be given to Ukrainian refugees.
- New Plan consulted upon for the future of Libraries, adopted at Cabinet on Tuesday 19th April, with the main headline that all our Libraries are to remain open!
- Safety Advisory Group: Plan launched in December with new initiatives underway.
- School based education programme – language and perception of women and girls and workshops on positive behaviour.
- Open spaces / Safer streets review underway leading to a pilot "Safe space" initiative being developed.
- A Youth Services review to be carried out over the coming weeks.

Above all this Cllr McKinley delivers regular speeches at Conferences and in the House of Commons and is rapidly becoming a leading light in the Local Government Association.

Our second big theme is **Climate Change** led superbly by Cllr Peter Schwier out Climate change Czar, the only politician in the country to have such a title and one in which he excels; in one short year he has led our ambition for Essex to become carbon-neutral in the future and this was confirmed in November, when the council declared its support for the Essex Climate Action Commission's report and recommendations – in the process unveiling a £200m climate action plan.

The commission had made over 100 recommendations on what organisations, communities and residents needed to do to tackle the climate crisis – covering all environmental issues, such as waste, transport, the built environment, and land-use.

The council now has a clear action plan in how it will play its part to implement the recommendations. In the process, ECC will also now track progress, producing annual reports on greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilience measures for both the county council and Essex as a whole.

The Administration has also

- campaigned to promote Sustainable Warmth funding for energy efficiency improvements which has seen 82 Essex homes benefit from £800k to date with over £20m funding still available;
- awarded over £100k to groups from the Climate Action Challenge Fund;
- developed three climate action toolkits, for residents, schools and businesses;
- delivered a series of events to promote Essex's climate achievements e.g. Electric Road to COP26, Carbon Battle Bus event.

Infrastructure is obviously a critical area – it needs clear thought, guidance, persuasion, and policy. Cllr. Lesley Wagland, Cabinet member for Planning and Housing, has been leading on this by continually working with all district and borough councils, universities, and business groups and in conjunction with all our Essex portfolios, has delivers facilities from schools to independent living homes and connections from digital to a new station at Beaulieu Park.

So far, Lesley has led work for us in Rescuing 3700 homes across Essex for digital connections that would have been excluded without our Superfast broadband team.

- Hargrove House approved for a fully carbon neutral redevelopment.
- Junction 7A almost completed and will improve connections and ease congestion for Harlow and beyond
- A new improved purpose-built library redevelopment underway at Shenfield by Essex Housing.
- Major investment in a Commercial Workspace project jointly with TDC at Jaywick Sands.
- Retrieving Shire Hall from the Aquilla agreement and seeking a better scheme and uses in keeping with its importance to Chelmsford town centre.
- A successful Essex High Streets' summit and support for our districts and boroughs to mount their own.
- Approval of the hamburger roundabout design for the Army and Navy Roundabout and from DFT for the strategic outline business case.
- Approval of the Freeport East outline business case and formation of the shadow Board.
- Master Planning underway for Colchester Town Centre with special reference to the St Botolph's area.
- Business support and mentoring linking business support and investors with entrepreneurs through initiatives such as Backing Essex Business, Group2grow, Angels@Essex, and the £5m Essex Business Adaptation Grants.

Adult Social Care is one of the biggest areas that we look after and this immensely complicated world has some of the most dedicated people working in it and this also includes Cllr John Spence, a first-

class Cabinet Member also responsible for Public Health, and let us not forget his amazing contribution during COVID. His leadership through this period along with Dr Mike Gogarty, Essex Director of Public Health, was exemplary to us all and the whole local government family.

It is a fact that almost two thirds of our £1 billion council tax raising budget is spent in this area on around 17,000 people, and rightly so – a society is judged by the way it cares for older people and vulnerable people. This is a message that isn't often explained to the public, so it is very pertinent to understand where the money goes and can feel, I hope, a sense of community and pride in the way we care for others.

John is now looking to innovation to help with rising costs and bring an even better level of care as we look to the future decades.

Children's Services under the expert care of Cllr Beverley Egan who is certainly no amateur in this area and knows as much as most of our staff through her previous roles in life, and it has been a very busy year in Children Services and Early Years. The impact of the pandemic is now showing and bringing many pressures to the fore particularly around emotional wellbeing. Our staff continue to work in this ever-changing landscape with passion and commitment.

We have launched the very ambitious Early Years and Childcare Strategy, and this will be followed by a refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy shortly. Member's involvement in this extremely sensitive area has been greatly appreciated, whether in Fostering and Adoption panels, PAF Scrutiny or the Corporate Parenting panel.

Not much of this can be done without **Finance and Resources** and our Chancellor of Essex, Cllr Chris Whitbread has been keeping us on the straight and narrow, in continuing to maintain the Council's strong financial position by being prepared to take the tough decisions in the face of increasing challenges with inflation reaching 7% and increasing cost pressures. We have been able to support our ambitious Everyone's Essex agenda by creating a £45 million reserve from within existing finances. We must think creatively to deliver our new Corporate Plan "Everyone's Essex". One way this is being done is through more intelligent use of our property. The new way of working post-pandemic has created a great opportunity for us to think about colocation with our district, borough, and city councils and to future-proof our remaining estate with better technology to enable hybrid working.

Waste Disposal is never the spiciest of subjects, but it is vital and Cllr Malcolm Buckley, Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling, brings all his professional expertise in the building and health and safety world to this arena; he has had a challenging time especially with TOVI Eco Park in Basildon, who with his predecessor Cllr Simon Walsh, have rendered sterling work in resolving this issue with legal proceedings now progressing well despite a few delays. Notices to vary the contract have now been published which will enable the proceedings to be brought to a conclusion in the interests of Essex taxpayers. A further announcement is anticipated shortly but legal privilege prevents any more comment at this time.

As from 1st April all Essex Recycling Centres have now been taken back in-house; the transfer from Veolia has gone well and staff morale has improved as a result. New bins and skips have also been ordered as well as leasing new plant, still diesel but the less polluting "Euro 6" compliant. All this has resulted in a substantial budget saving compared to outsourcing.

A van booking system for centres that take household waste has been introduced and this appears to have deterred many of the traders' vehicles and reduced queuing.

Waste Transfer Stations have also been taken back in house as part of budget savings.

A new Waste Strategy is being worked on with waste collection authorities to develop a new system to enable the commitments Everyone's Essex aims of zero waste to landfill and encouraging collection authorities to coordinate their services to reduce costs of collection and disposal.

The incoming Environment Act will impact on the service, but the regulations we are still being awaited to be published. The principle of producer pays is likely to impact on the mix of materials in the waste stream.

A new Arts & Culture Fund has been established to help and encourage all forms of artistic and cultural activity across the County. The double act of Cllr Graham Butland, Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage, Culture and Devolution, and his Deputy Cllr Mark Durham – known as the Ant and Dec of Essex Arts, have well publicised and supported this sector which has badly suffered from the effects of the pandemic.

The initial response to the Fund has been overwhelming with nearly 200 applications being received. Graham and Mark are currently assessing every application and expect to make our first grants shortly. The links with the Arts Council are being re-established and are actively supporting local organisations in their quest for external funding, and as part of the Levelling Up agenda we are encouraging Arts and Cultural organisations to work with disadvantaged communities. We are particularly delighted with the work being done to help those with dementia and supporting their careers.

This is a recognition to the significant contribution that the Performing and Creative Arts make to the County's economy, its tourism offers, and support to Social Care, and in addition, the Portfolio has maintained the upkeep of all Essex Country Parks, continued the expansion of the Essex Forest Initiative, and is developing a new Rural Strategy working with partners such as the Rural Community Council of Essex.

And then there's Education, Skills, and Training under the great direction of Cllr Tony Ball who has been ensuring that this area is a major building block in Everyone's Essex, making lifelong learning a reality for many, so they have equal access to learning and training opportunities throughout their life. It means that ECC is setting the agenda for education and skills, enabling schools, skills providers and businesses to understand skills priorities and translate them into relevant and joined-up provision. Skills is a critical area for Renewal, Equality and Ambition. Tony convened businesses and skills providers to start a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Essex, even though Chambers wouldn't bid for us to be a Govt pilot area. And we lobbied Govt to ensure Greater Essex has its own plan in the national roll-out rather than being done at SELEP level.

Pleased to say this was absolutely the right call, we're now ahead of the curve and Government has recognised a Greater Essex LSIP is the right geography. We're now conveying the Skills Roundtable into an Essex Skills Board.

And we are delighted that last week the Government announced funding of nearly £8m over 3 years to support adult numeracy; the Education team are working up options on how to best spend this, so more details to follow shortly.

The Essex Education Taskforce is 11 months old and has successfully focused on supporting vulnerable pupils, mental health needs and the successful launch of the Essex Year of Reading

Although 88.5% of our schools judged good and outstanding by Ofsted out of 556 schools in total, Tony knows this figure must and will increase and he works tirelessly to improve the aspiration for the thousands of young and older students – Everyone's Essex means Everyone.

And finally, Highways, who could forget Highways. Cllr Lee Scott does the most amazing job and over the last year he has visited as many of all Essex Divisions as possible, to help sort out any local issues, within resources; the feedback from ALL members is that they have found this very helpful.

We have also tackled issues around the Green agenda, we are trying to encourage more people to use public transport and walking and cycling, through the Active Travel Fund, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and Bus Service Improvement Plans.

We're also looking hard at flooding: as we see our climate change this is becoming a major issue and we will look to set up a taskforce to address this.

In May last year this Administration set out with a very different agenda to that of its predecessors, and indeed many Councils around the UK.

It can't all be done in 12 months or even 4 years but we have embarked on a positive journey that will change and improve the lives of thousands of residents for better.