

BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Barham held on Monday 18th May 2026, 6.30pm, held in Barham Church Hall.

PRESENT: Chairman Casey Woollorton, Vice Chair Julie Gregory, Cllr Marilyn Lesley, Cllr T Carr, Cllr P Fenn, Cllr Graham Head & Cllr Bonnie Head, BMSDC Cllrs David Penny & John Whitehead the Clerk and 3 members of the public.

1. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th May 2025.

These were approved correct, proposed Cllr Lesley, seconded Cllr B Head, signed by the Chairman.

2. To receive the Annual Report of the Parish Council Chairman

Firstly I'd like to thank you all for all of your hard work this year and for your dedication to the roles of parish councillors and your continued dedication to our community. As we head into our third year as a parish council I feel that we have finally got our feet under the table and at long last we as a Parish council are able to start providing a better service for our community than we have been able to over the last few years. Our Meetings have become an enjoyable experience for every one that attends, with open and free democratic debate and I've been assured by visitors that ours is the most professional parish council that they have attended, I feel we should all be extremely proud of that sentiment

Finally I would like to thank Mel our Clerk. I know that this last few years have been challenging for her. She has guided us through our continued learning curve, especially me, with extreme competence and patience and I believe she is the main reason why we have been able to bring order where there was absolute chaos! She has been recognised in her own community in Snape for all the work she does there and the fact that she has been able to continue her work in such a professional manner considering that this year has thrown quite a few personal challenges her way, is nothing short of extraordinary!

Again I would like to thank you all for your hard work and look forward to working with you all for another year

3. To receive the Annual Finance report from the Parish Clerk for year ending 31st March 2026

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council precept needed to be increased to £56,120.00. This was mainly due to help re-coup the parish council reserves which had become depleted over the last couple of years. The accounts at the 31st March 2026;

Barclays Current Account £12,836.70

Business Account £46,064.40

The accounts now stand in good stead with its reserves, which is recommended by the auditors to be at least a year's precept.

The accounts hold ring fenced money of £6,983.70 Community Infrastructure Levy. Reserves of £13,019.34 (Brett Aggregates for grass cutting)

This ring fenced money cannot be used for the day to day running of the Parish Council Accounts.

£113,352.78 was received from the district council from the Community Infrastructure Levy, this money is to be spent within the village for the benefit of the community.

£3000 CIL money was given to Barham Picnic Site Charity as a grant towards maintenance of the site. Also £192,000 which had been ringfenced for the picnic site charity.

Donations were made to;

Claydon & Barham Good Neighbourhood Scheme - £200

Barham & Claydon PCC - £800

Wombles for Litter picking equipment - £45.00

Chairman initials.....

The end of year accounts have been audited by the internal auditors Heelis & Lodge and were all found to be in order. The Parish Council will approve the end of year accounts later on this evening at the AGM, before being sent off to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn. The accounts will be posted on the village notice boards and website.

Thank you to the Chairman and Councillors for your support in my work, in what has been a smooth running year.

4. To receive the report of the Suffolk County Councillor – No report.

5. To receive the reports of the District Councillors – David Penny and John Whitehead.

Report has been received and forward to all ahead of the meeting (appended to the minutes and available on the PC website).

Cllr Whitehead outlined Devolution and Local Government Reform. Changes to Warding is planned and it will be a smaller ward for district & county councillors. Once the new “Unitary Authority Council” there will be just one councillor per ward. Claydon & Barham to be together as one ward. Judicial review to take place, against Devolution.

New recycling waste changes for households, information and facts sheets have be distributed to all households.

6. To receive the following reports;

Claydon & Barham Village Hall, Claydon High School, Claydon Primary School, Claydon & Braham PCC and Claydon & Barham Recreation Ground. Chair of the Barham Picnic Site Community Project read out his report on behalf of the charity.

Treasurer of the Good Neighbourhood Scheme read out her report and chief Womble read out the report on behalf of the Wombles

Further written reports have been received from Barham Village Hall Committee, Claydon High School and The Wombles.

All of the village reports are appended to the minutes and are available to see on the PC website.

7. Any Other Business. Member of the public expressed disappointment that not all households in Barham receive a copy of thee In Touch magazine. Volunteers are needed by the company who produces the magazine and they are willing to pay. Port 1 has given a donation of money to the magazine, hopefully this may make a difference to deliveries of the magazine

Cllr B Head advised that bus times have changed, she has put the new bus timetable into the bus stop.

The meeting closed at 7.08pm.

Chairman.....

Date:.....

Appendix 1

MID Suffolk District Council Annual Report

Devolution and local government reform - The government has decided that there will be 3 unitary authorities in Suffolk. While details are still being finalised, including names and numbers of Councillors, the three unitary councils, West Suffolk, Central and East Suffolk, and South Suffolk and Ipswich are planned to be in place from May 2028. Elections for the new shadow authorities will take place in May 2027, with the new councils formally taking over responsibilities from May 2028. The idea of the transition period is to enable detailed work for reorganisation to take place, and services will be delivered as usual throughout the process.

Funding for Neighbourhood Plans - Government funding for Neighbourhood plans has been withdrawn although there is no change in weight for planning considerations. MSDC has now introduced funding to support Parish Councils in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans / Reviews, which seek to allocate sites for housing development that make an agreed contribution to meeting the district-wide housing needs. There is a limit of £20,000 for any specific Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Housing -The council held a briefing session for parishes following the government requirement to increase the number of dwellings in Mid Suffolk. The increase is from the previous 535 dwellings per year up to 734. As a result Mid Suffolk has embarked on a new Joint Local plan to keep policies up to date, this has involved a "call for sites" to help identify any land that may be required for future development as our plans progress. <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites> This is massively oversubscribed and most submissions will not be required. No planning status is granted by including a site on this list. Rather, sites will now be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria. Further assessment will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in Spring 2026. It is important to note that we are carrying out this work to ensure any future development is plan lead and not developer lead and to be transparent with residents.

Solar energy - As a Council our strong preference is roofs first. However, National Planning policy does not allow us to compel developers to put solar panels on new homes, barns and warehouses. The National Policy Planning Framework guides our planning decisions on solar farms below 50MW capacity, but currently does not adequately protect the best and most versatile farmland nor our landscapes. The Council always encourages developers to maximise community and biodiversity benefits when having to approve such developments while recognising the need for government to provide a better coordinated approach to delivering the renewable energy our country needs to become more self-sufficient in food production as well as energy.

Norfolk to Tilbury pylons -The council has also urged the government to provide a more strategic offshore approach, minimising and mitigating harm to Suffolk's communities and environment.

Stowmarket Innovation Gateway - The construction of this state of the art innovation hub is all but complete and will shortly be opening to provide skills and training necessary to build the future economy of the East of England.

Budget The District Council's share of Council Tax is to be raised by 2.99%. For context, for a Band D property annual charge attributable to Mid Suffolk is £180.26, an increase of £5.23 per year or 10p per week. The previous years rise was 0% (Of the overall Council Tax, about 8% goes to Mid Suffolk District Council.)

This rise is unavoidable as the government has now linked future grant monies to the assumption that the share of council tax has risen, so if we had not taken a small increase this year we would be facing a “cliff edge” of funding in the near future.

In addition to the day-to-day provision of council services and activities, the 2026/27 budget includes funding for a wide range of programmes, including:

- Implementation of the new food waste collection scheme
- Enhancements to our current waste depot in readiness for this, plus further support for recycling education
- Cost of living support
- Council Tax Support scheme
- Grants programmes for towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket
- Investment in leisure centre maintenance
- Stowmarket sports facilities delivered through the SHELF Project, plus support for wider Stowmarket regeneration
- Support for the Cosy Homes insulation scheme which has been expanded to help residents obtain solar panels
- Grant funding for nature recovery and community biodiversity groups
- Support for new footpaths and cycle ways
- Completing the build of the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway
- Expansion of the area’s temporary accommodation (which avoids homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation and saves on costs going to private providers.)

Litter - We are grateful to volunteers who have been picking litter and all the community and parish litter picks organised but we continue to urge people to only do this where it is safe and not on fast roads. Hopefully you have noticed that several areas of the A14 have been cleared up recently. This will be ongoing during planned overnight road closures.

Recycling and Waste - Better Recycling collections are coming to Suffolk in June. The national scheme seeks to standardise weekly food waste collections across the country. In addition, across Suffolk plastic film will also be collected. Like many authorities across the country this will mean increased collections in Mid-Suffolk to maximise recycling in an efficient cost-effective manner. Every home across Mid Suffolk that should have them has now received a new blue-lidded bin and a smaller food-waste bin and food waste caddy. Households that require special considerations or have communal collections will have their solutions in place by the beginning of June when new collections start. As always, we want Collections to work for everyone so do contact the team on 0300 1234 000 (option 4) if you have any issues. Further information packs will be sent out with more detail on Better Recycling after the moratorium on potentially political communications from May 8th. The blue-lidded bin will be for glass bottles, jars, tetra pak, plastic bags, cans and plastic bottles. Paper and card will go in the existing green-lidded bin. www.suffolkrecycles.org.uk

Nature Recovery - This new grant launched in January offers small grants up to 2K and larger grants up to £50k for projects that protect and expand wildlife corridors and habitats within the district – including tree planting, wildflower meadow creation, or other environmental initiatives to safeguard natural spaces for future generations. Organisations such as environmental groups, schools and town and parish councils can apply. One application can be made per project, per year. MSDC has also announced a new £525,000 fund to support ambitious nature recovery, flood mitigation and water management projects across Mid Suffolk. The Catchment and Landscape Nature Recovery Grant promotes larger-scale, collaborative initiatives which could span multiple sites and landowners. With a focus on river catchments, it will support projects that benefit communities as they address biodiversity loss, with a particular emphasis on priority habitats and species. It will also support natural flood management, as well as projects to improve water quality and security Funding opportunities and support - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk Mid Suffolk District Council has purchased almost eight acres of land in the heart of Stowmarket to preserve it as a future riverside haven for nature and wildlife for future generations. The land, between Takers Lane and the River Rat, adjoins the council's existing open space at Pikes Meadow – unlocking potential for a new riverside walk, connecting Combs Ford and Gipping Way. The council's investment is a further step as part of work to enhance biodiversity and nature – protecting and strengthening the district's wildlife and habitat diversity – and providing public green space, as well as safeguarding the land from future development.

CIL funding and Locality grants In the Claydon and Barham ward funding has been given to:

- Play equipment renewal
- Internal upgrades to a Community Club
- Allotment land
- A Speed awareness device
- Support towards maintaining and improving River Gipping footpath access
- Website development
- Solar panels and battery storage for a village hall
- Support for setting up a new football team
- Support for drop-in sessions

Appendix 2

Claydon & Barham Parochial Church Council report to the Barham Parish Council 2026

As members will be aware, the Church in Barham serves both Claydon and Barham apart from Barham Green which is served by Henley Church. The Church is one of 3 Churches which together with Henley and Gt Blakenham form the Claydon Benefice and we share a single Rector. Sadly, our current Rector, Rev Tracey Caswell, will be leaving us at the end of this month after just over 2 years' service to take up a post in Norfolk where her husband is employed. We are very sad to lose her and she is very sad to leave so soon but a married life living apart is not good for anyone so we do understand. Whilst we have a vacancy for a Rector the Church will continue to operate as usual through the dedication of retired priests, other volunteer ministers, and our Churchwardens. We pray that a new Rector will be called to serve here before too long.

During the past year we have continued regular Sunday and Midweek services in the Church which are quite well attended. We have also held a number of fundraising events to raise funds for the maintenance of this 800+ year old building. Our principle has been for many years that those who support the Church's Christian ministry should finance the day to day running of the Church and the cost of providing a Rector whereas it is reasonable to look to the wider community to help fund the maintenance of this ancient grade 1 listed building and the burial grounds around it and the burial grounds at Claydon which are part of our community's heritage. We have also run events to raise funds for other charities. Our annual Summer Fete, Open Air Band Concert at Barham Hall and Christmas Experience are all very much part of the life of the community and have been very well supported.

Barham Churchyard is reputed to be the largest rural Churchyard in the county – it certainly seems like it when it needs cutting! We are grateful for grants from both parish councils as well as many, many hours of voluntary work which keep our Churchyards in good repair as a community asset. As well as the voluntary work we employ our local Community Interest Company – Realise Futures – to help with the workload.

Members will be aware that, as part of the planning consent for Barham Meadows, a large area of land between the Church and the development was transferred to the ownership of the Church together with £60k to develop it for the "benefit of the Church". The funds are held by MSDC who will only release them as appropriate proposals are approved for work on this land. The aim being that we would construct an additional car park together with a new access drive to the Church from the new estate road. However, since the arrangement was put in place by the original outline planning process, archaeological surveys of the land have resulted in the levels needing to be raised and a no-dig restriction being put in place to protect the archaeology. Despite these setbacks, we proceeded with the land transfer which was completed in December 2025. We are now seeking discussions with the Planning, Archaeology and Highways departments of Local Government to establish what we can do within the restrictions placed on the land.

Councillors will be aware how desperately the bridleway access to the Church needs building up and somehow resurfacing. This has been acknowledged by the County Council Byways department and we are awaiting their suggestions/proposals.

The Church does consider it very important to be part of and to serve our local community. In addition to pastoral care, we continue, with others, to run the Sunday evening Soup Kitchen in Ipswich; house a branch of the Bacon Road Free Library in the Church; and to run a free Friday Morning Drop-in in the Church Hall. We support both the Stowmarket and Families-in-need Foodbanks with donations of food and finance. We are grateful to our County Councillor, Chris Chambers, for supporting our Friday heating costs through his locality budget.

Roger Colthorpe - On behalf of Claydon and Barham PCC

Appendix 3

Barham Picnic Site Charity

This year has seen some amazing steps being taken by the BPSCP charity in furthering our goal of re-opening the Barham Picnic site . Having received full planning permission early last year , we have been working with our architect and MSDC planning control to agree on how exactly our plans for the site , specifically the café , can be realised and are hoping that building work will begin within the next few months .

General Maintenance work on the site has continued with a further 200 hedge plants being place around the perimeter and over a ton of grass seed being sown to bring the previously overgrown areas back to a usable space .

We are extremely disappointed that our bid for CIL funding through MSDC seems to have been completely ignored this year , Monies that we were hoping to use for a play area , but we will continue to look at other funding sources , and will continue to push MSDC into releasing some funds for our community !

We are hopeful , that should all building work go ahead as planned that we will be able to open the site to the public , next spring , at which point we will invite the Barham Parish Council to visit us so that we can show our full appreciation .

Finally I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the BPC for all the support you've shown over the last few years , without you all our project would still be no more than a communal dream !

Appendix 4

Claydon High School

Remain a very popular school, it is the 7th year in a row that we have had over 300 applications for 149 spaces in year 7. We have numerous applications for students wanting to move in year to us.

We continue to work with Claydon Primary School to move to an all through school. This is an incredibly exciting and groundbreaking piece of work in Suffolk.

We were one of the first schools to be inspected under the new OFSTED framework and were incredibly proud to be at the expected standard in all areas except for Personal Development and Wellbeing where we were graded as strong. This is testament to the work that goes on by all stakeholders day in, day out.

After a year's hiatus we held our musical Newsies Jr earlier in the year, this was a roaring success, with students from year 7 - 11 represented.

In school we continue to support our students through excellent teaching and learning, we have focussed on adaptive teaching in the classroom through valuable formative assessment.

A huge focus for us has also been on reading, we know how much of an impact reading can have on a student's whole experience of school.

We have taken students on an array of trips and visits. The whole of year 7 are off to Norwich castle before half term.

As always if anyone would like to learn more then please contact my PA to book a meeting or a tour.

Appendix 5

Claydon Primary School report

Pupils at Claydon Primary School have been enjoying a wide range of enriching experiences both inside and outside the classroom this School year.

Our Year 6 pupils kicked off with a three Night Residential Adventure to Hilltop, Norfolk. Throughout the visit, the children embraced a wide range of challenges, from high-ropes and archery to team-building missions and coastal walks. Their confidence, resilience and camaraderie shone brightly, and staff were immensely proud of how they represented the school with maturity and enthusiasm.

Black History Month was a joy to celebrate here in school with an incredible 'Hidden Figures' Workshop and also a fun Divali and Hindu dancing session. We welcomed Bigfoot Arts Education, who delivered their impactful 'Hidden Figures' workshop - Pupils learned about remarkable individuals whose contributions have influenced history but are often under-recognised. The engaging sessions sparked thoughtful conversations, encouraged critical thinking and inspired pupils to reflect on the importance of equality, representation and cultural understanding. Our KS1 and lower KS2 children had a wonderful time taking part in a vibrant Hindu and Diwali dance workshop. Led by an experienced instructor, the pupils learned traditional movements, discovered the cultural significance behind the festival, and enjoyed expressing themselves through rhythm and dance. The session was full of energy, colour and excitement, giving the children a memorable and enriching experience.

Christmas fast approached and our youngest pupils in EYFS/KS1 shone bright in their Nativity Performances while Lower KS2 Carols and Crafts was a hit with children and parents! EYFS were busy preparing and performing their delightful Nativity plays. Their singing, acting and infectious festive cheer were thoroughly enjoyed by families and staff. For many children, this was their first time performing on stage, and they rose to the challenge brilliantly, showing growing confidence, teamwork and pride in their learning. Our Years 3 to 4 pupils also delighted families and staff with a heart-warming performance of Christmas carols and festive crafts. The children sang beautifully, filling the hall with seasonal cheer. A particular highlight was their ukulele performance, where pupils demonstrated the musical skills they have been developing this term, bringing an extra touch of sparkle to the celebration.

Our Children and Staff absolutely love celebrating World Book Day – twice in one week! On the official World Book Day, children were enthralled by a series of assemblies throughout the day, where they listened, debated and learned about all aspects of reading and the magical world of books. To round off the day, pupils took part in our hugely popular Clonka Bar sale! Over 60 lucky pupils discovered a coveted golden ticket hidden inside their Clonka Bar and won a range of brilliant prizes, including Jump

In vouchers, cinema tickets, books and many more. It was a wonderful way to celebrate books, reading and a little bit of chocolatey fun!

The celebrations didn't stop there. Later in the week, we held our very first 'Claydon Book Day', and we were incredibly fortunate to welcome performance poet Zohab Zee Khan to our school. Zohab is an internationally recognised spoken word poet and educator who has delivered hundreds of workshops in schools around the world. His energetic performances and workshops inspire young people to express themselves creatively through poetry and spoken word. Throughout the day,

Zohab worked with every class across the school, sharing his powerful poetry and guiding pupils through exciting writing activities. Children explored rhythm, language and performance, learning how poetry can tell stories about family, identity and the world around them. Zohab's enthusiasm and creativity inspired many budding poets and encouraged pupils to find their own voice through words. A huge thank you to our wonderful HAS (PTA) for generously funding this fantastic experience for our children.

Sporting success has also been celebrated! A group of our UKS2 pupils proudly represented the school at the School Games U11 Panathlon competition. The team took part in nine different activities, including bowling, curling, football, basketball, boccia, jumping and target throwing. The pupils showed fantastic teamwork throughout the event, taking turns, supporting and encouraging each other every step of the way. When the results were announced, the team were absolutely delighted to discover they had achieved 1st place – GOLD! We are incredibly proud of their effort, determination and brilliant team spirit.

We took two teams to the School Games U11 Girls Futsal on Monday 23rd March. Our develop team won 4 out of their 5 games, rotating positions and supporting each other throughout. There were a lot of goals scored, much to the delight of the girls! Our compete team won their way through to the final through great team attitude and spirit working collaboratively throughout! The final was a very close match with full time finishing at 0.0. It then proceeded to extra time with a golden goal to decide the game. However, the two teams continued to match each other equally so it had to go to penalties. Unfortunately, we lost out on penalties, but we are very proud of the girls for their achievements.

We are delighted to share that our brand new outdoor sensory area is now complete! This wonderful space provides a calm, engaging environment for our children to explore, relax and develop their senses through a range of thoughtfully designed features. It has already made a positive impact, and we are thrilled to see the children enjoying and benefiting from it. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our fantastic HSA for their generous support and part-funding of this project, alongside Penrose Learning Trust. Their continued support helps us to create enriching opportunities and spaces for all our pupils.

Finally, our youngest learners had an unforgettable experience when local farmers visited our EYFS and KS1 classes with their enormous tractors! The children were fascinated to see the machinery up close and loved learning about the different crops grown on local farms. They discovered how crops are used to make many of the foods we eat every day and even had the chance to sample some examples. We can happily report that the Maltesers were a clear favourite!

We have a jam packed summer term coming up and can't wait to share this with you in our next report.

Appendix 6

Claydon & Barham Good Neighbours Scheme

It doesn't seem possible that another year has passed since our last AGM but here we are!

We have continued to support the residents of Claydon & Barham with our call handling service 5 days a week. It has been a quieter year and we have still undertaken 24 tasks in the year. We don't really know the reason for this and have done some extra advertising but we are still helping people so it's worthwhile. Tasks provided include Gardening , signposting calls, prescription collections and even getting a dog to the groomers!

Our Community Cuppa held each month has continued to thrive and we are regularly getting 15-20 attendees. We have a lot of regular attendees now and new connections have been made. Our Christmas Cuppa was particularly popular and we had chocolate bingo and festive refreshments. Donations received from the attendees are helping us offer a bit more and have paid for things like a new banner to promote what we do at events.

We are also still running a monthly litter pick and the number of volunteers attending these has increased. On regular monthly picks we've seen 83 hours of volunteering time (up from prior year) and in March we again did an extra long pick to support the Great British Spring Clean when we had 13 people who collected 6 large bags of rubbish. It's sad that it's still necessary to do this but it's still clearly needed!

We also added a monthly walking group to what we offer which has come from the Cuppa – people asked if there was a group running so we started one! We are getting 6-10 people attend this through the summer months only. This helps with both physical and mental health.

Our team of volunteers (many of whom are here today) are amazing and the Good Neighbour Scheme could not exist without them. Whether they are call handlers, making cuppas for you or picking up litter – every bit of time given makes a difference. A big thank you to them.

I would also like to thank the people who have helped fund our organisation this year; the InTouch volunteers, Claydon & Whitton Parish Council and Barham Parish Council. We believe we offer good value for what we do and hope support will be available in the future to continue our work.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow Committee Members - Paula Gardiner, Roger Colthorpe, Gill Chapman, Fran Askew and Graham Holmes.

I have expressed my interest in continuing as Chairperson for a further year so I look forward to continuing to lead the work that the GNS does in Claydon and Barham.

Appendix 7

Report for Claydon Recreation Ground 2025/2026

We have had a minor financial setback when one of the two supporters of the Recreation Ground, Barham PC, withdrew their support after over 40 years without notice or consultation. However, Claydon Parish Council generously increased their portion of the support. While this didn't fully cover the withdrawn amount it was gratefully received and helped with the day to day expenses.

We hosted Samuel's football team for their games and they have put in a lot of effort to uplift the main football pitch. This consisted of clearing stones from a previous delivery of topsoil, spreading a sieved topsoil dressing, followed by seeding, all of which has improved the condition of the pitch.

We have moved away from Vertas to a private grass maintenance company (NSK) and have seen a significant improvement in the condition of the Recreation Ground, something that has also been mentioned by members of the public.

Other improvements have included renewing dilapidated fencing, kindly paid for by Claydon Parish Council who are very keen to support the Recreation ground for the whole community, and planting numerous trees to the perimeter.

An earth cycle/BMX style track has been created and this has been well received and regularly used by local children.

We have also had CCTV installed to increase security of the area.

As always we have suffered some antisocial behaviour although this seems to have reduced since the CCTV was installed. Looking at evidence from doorbell cameras and our own CCTV it would appear that the culprits are not local to Claydon but look to have come from a neighbouring village.

We have several other projects in hand and, after the success of our FunDay in 2024, we have held another FunDay on 4th May 2026.

This was extremely well received with our usual inflatable slide and castle, some children almost becoming a permanent fixture with ages from young teens to toddlers. Both food suppliers of hotdogs and pizza sold out, with the bar and Coffee Station supplying drinks. As well as stalls manned by local organisations and vendors the band kept everyone entertained in the comfort of our new marquee [thank you Claydon Parish Council].

Appendix 8

Claydon & Barham Village Hall

My last report of this kind was in May 2025. It seems longer ago to me than this. A sign of me getting older or the topsy turvy times we seem to be living in nowadays? Anyway, here I am again ...

I can see that last time I told you about improvement projects that were at the 'discussion stage'. If you have come to the hall recently you will have seen the finished results of these 'ideas on paper'.

First up, although a bit boring perhaps, the new carpet in the committee room was laid (by Harts Carpets) – a vast improvement that should last many years.

Next, I mentioned that the stage curtains were looking a bit 'tired'. So they should be after many many years of worthy service. Bar-Clay Music Makers has recently passed it's 50th anniversary so they were the most keen to freshen up the 'fabric'. And so it came to pass. The company chosen from three contenders came along and spent the whole day rigging up the new 'tabs', including upgrading some of the supporting bars to the latest safety standards. We thank the Parish Council for footing that bill. And just in time for the annual pantomime in January. This year it was 'Hansel and Gretel'. Brilliant as always and yet another year in which our 'Little Hall on the High Street' turns into a magical theatre. And this time we had numbered seats that could be bought online. Up to date or what?

The PC also helped us hall by funding the resin treatment of the alleyway from the back kitchen door to the stage door. And the repointing of the 'heritage' wall dividing us from the bakers next door. We have to say that the PC has been exceedingly generous in helping us to keep the hall in good shape and looking great.

And while we are on maintenance projects allow me to tell you about the 'damp wall saga' - a sequence of works that kept me awake on many a springtime night. It started before the turn of the year when it was noticed that the inside walls at the front of the building felt constantly damp. So I asked Chris the builder (who repointed the wall out the back) if he knew any damp experts. He put me in the touch with Adrian Coe, a damp expert par excellence and the start of a series of other 'tradespeople' who filled up my contacts file under their discipline rather than their surnames. So 'Adrian Damp' came in and chiselled away at the 'wrong sort' of plaster and then some of the exposed brickwork. Yes, damp was rising up from the ground, especially in the room near the kitchen, so he injected a damp proof course along the wall at ground level. We had already bought two dehumidifiers and were running them 24/7.

Next Adrian recommended his plasterer, 'Dean Plasterer'. He came in and applied the right sort of plaster. Looking better. Once that was dry the walls needed painting. Dean recommended his dad - 'Malcolm Painter'. He did a cracking job. Looking much better now. Anson, 'our plumber', had already removed the radiator in the big room. So the next stage was redoing the skirting boards and other bits of carpentry. Adam and his partner of 'Orwell Carpentry' did that job. Then I thought that maybe water was getting in through the windows at the front so I asked 'Windiman' to reseal the edges to be sure they weren't leaking. And finally we decided that the front walls needed a bit of attention. So Malcom came back and painted the black zone along the base of the outside walls and filled any cracks he found. The front door also received a new coat of black paint. Job done. Phew! The PC paid for a good proportion of the costs involved so, again, we thank them for their financial help.

While this was going on Stuart on our committee was having discussions with Port One about fixing solar panels on the roof. And they were duly fitted - with a minimum of fuss I have to say. So now we have some 'sunshine energy' that must reduce our electricity bill to some extent. By exactly what amount I can't say because I am waiting to be instructed as to how I can record this on my phone. Clearly, having batteries to store the energy would help but these are expensive.

Oh I nearly forgot, we could do with getting the main hall floor sanded and oiled this year. We pencilled it into the Easter holiday but there was too much going on and not a two-day gap in the diary to have it done. So perhaps in the summer holiday period?

Have you had enough 'infrastructure' news? Good, so lets have a quick whizz through the bookings agenda.

We seem to have survived the 'painting with prosecco' episode with only a sticky table or two. And we have declined a request for a 'dog-related' session. Can't remember exactly what they wanted to bring dogs into the hall for but we have always steered away from animals being brought into a hall that hosts young children and floor-related classes such as Yoga. Looking across the booking plan for May I can see all the usual regulars, such as Gipping School of Dance, Brownies, Yoga, Young Families, Slimming World, Community Cuppa, Health and Safety training classes. And there's a new kid on the block that started this week - Pilates on a Wednesday evening (to be arranged for another evening when BMM start their usual Wednesday evening meetings for the new pantomime). And look there is an election next week on 7 May. That's good business for the hall. And it enforces why I think this hall is so great. It has one outstanding asset - its on the High Street, not tucked way round the back or in the middle of a field where you have to drive to reach it. People coming to vote can just walk in at street level. That counts for a lot, especially for local residents.

And another thing counts in our favour - the committee that look after the hall day in day out. They are the best bunch of caring a hard-working people I know (including me). So well done all of you. Long may it continue.

Looking back at what I have written, it all seems a bit long-winded. But you asked for a report and this is what you get.

Geoff Rogers - Chair, Village Hall Management Team

Appendix 9

Wombles Report 2025 to 2026

Generally the Wombles of Barham and Claydon continue to litter pick in areas not covered by paid litter pickers. We have members living on Barham Green and around the Sorrell Horse and Sandy Lane areas.

Anne regularly cleans up from Sandy Lane down to Wades Windows.

Margaret covers the Crescent and Pesthouse Lane. Lawrence and Anne try to do Sandy Lane whenever possible.

A returning member, Jenny, recently did a mammoth clear up from the Sorrell Horse down to the woodyard collecting 6 bags of rubbish.

An unknown person was recently seen litter picking near the Sorrell Horse and when Anne did her area this week it seemed as if someone had done that already. Who was this? However walking back on the non path side Anne collected another half bag of rubbish.

Members living near Claydon pharmacy have recently returned to litter picking wherever they see it, often in the main village which should be covered by paid people. Gill lives on the boundary of the two villages and picks wherever is needed. Several other members are working and pick up litter when they can.

We currently have 12 registered members. The council realm provide us with bags and pickers. We try to report any fly tipping.

The stretch from the Sorrell Horse to the Woodyard does get quite bad and needs doing more regularly. Between the Woodyard and Beacon Hill there is lots of litter but this area is Coddham and we cannot manage that. The Suffolk Realm does clear it sometimes.

Many of us are in our seventies now and we cannot get down or up the banks easily so sometimes we have to leave litter there which is frustrating. Perhaps we might be able to get some new younger volunteers from the new housing.

We recently had a members' catch up at the Friendly Fork down the Old Ipswich Road. It was most enjoyable and we hope to do it more often. This cafe is recommended.

We will continue as long as we can.