

LONG MELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Offices, Cordell Road, Long Melford, Suffolk CO10 9EH
Tel: 01787 378084 Email: clerk@longmelford-pc.gov.uk



MINUTES OF Meeting of the Full Parish Council

Meeting called for: 7:30pm, Thursday 2nd September 2021

Location: The Community Centre, Old School, Long Melford, Suffolk CO10 9DX

Councillors present: I. Bartlett, R. Delderfield, J. Ewbank, R. Kemp, C. Michette, S. Powell, L. Tipper, D. Watts, J. Watts

Councillors absent: J. Lines, L. Malvisi, R. Michette, J. Nunn

Also attending: D. Lovelock (Parish Clerk), One member of the public

In the Chair's absence, the meeting was chaired by Parish Council Vice Chair Cllr D. Watts. The Chair opened the meeting at 7:31pm.

21/09-1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(a) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Malvisi, R. Michette, and Nunn.

(b) Declarations of Interest & Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Tipper declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 21/09-4 (a) as a payment to be authorised related her husband.

Cllr C. Michette declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 21/09-4 (a) as a payment to be authorised related to expenses claims submitted by herself and her husband.

No requests for dispensation were received.

(c) MOTION: Accuracy of Minutes

It was agreed that Minute 21/08-6 (a) required correcting in respect of an omission, and Minute and 21/08-8 (d) in respect of an error.

Resolved, that subject to the omission and error being corrected, the Council confirms the accuracy of the Minutes for the Full Parish Council Meeting held 5th August 2021.

(d) Public Participation

A member of the public involved in community preparations for the Women's Cycling Event to be staged in October 2021 spoke in support of Motion 21/09-5 (d). The Chair thanked them for their input and said that he would call upon them to provide more detailed information when the matter was discussed later in the meeting.

21/09-2 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

The following reports were received and noted.

(a) Suffolk County Councillor's Report (Appendix 8)

(b) Babergh District Councillors' Report (Appendix 10)

21/09-3 PARISH CLERK'S REPORTS

The following reports were received and noted.

(a) Parish Clerk's Report (Appendix 1)

In respect of item 4 regarding the village sign, Cllr Delderfield asked that an examination of it, which SCW had noted as showing signs of deterioration, should be put on the Agenda for October 2021.

Full LMPC Meeting Minutes

(b) Council Action Plan Review (Appendix 2)

Cllr Delderfield provided an update regarding charity matters. He advised that having written to the three charities' trustees to progress matters, he had only received a response from only one trustee. Some of the non-respondents were Parish Councillors acting in their private capacity. He would continue trying to obtain a response, failing which the next step would be to apply to the Charity Commission for new trustees to be appointed.

Cllr Tipper confirmed that the purchase of Country Park signage and bins had now been completed.

21/09-4 COUNCIL FINANCIAL MATTERS AS LISTED

The following financial items were considered.

Cllr Tipper left the room at 7:37pm while the Payments Schedule was discussed.

(a) MOTION: Payments Schedule (Appendix 3)

Cllr Ewbank drew to the Council's attention that a payment to Mr P. Wilson was for expenses only, and that Mr Wilson contributed significant amounts of his time to various village projects on a free-of-charge voluntary basis.

The Clerk advised that the payment for Melford Walk handrails related to materials only, which were being held by the contractor pending the completion of maintenance work to the Walk.

Resolved, that the Council agrees the Payment Schedule for September 2021.

Cllr Tipper returned to the room at 7:42pm.

(b) Cashbook Report (Appendix 4)

In response to a query from Cllr Kemp, Cllr Ewbank provided details relating to the contract with P. Crawford for the refurbishment of the Old School Car Park.

Cllr C. Michette pointed out what appeared to be a duplication regarding two listed receipts for the Car Park in the identical sum of £107.48. It was agreed that the Clerk should take this up with the RFO.

The Cashbook Report for July 2021 was then received and noted.

(c) External Auditor's Report and Certificate (Appendix 5)

The External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2020-21 were received and the following was noted:

1. The Auditor's view that Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR were prepared in accordance with proper practices.
2. That there are no matters which the auditor wishes to bring to the Council's attention.

(d) MOTION: Buildings Insurance Valuation

Resolved, that the Clerk is authorised to arrange for the Council's buildings portfolio to be valued to ensure adequate insurance cover is put in place.

21/09-5 OTHER BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

(a) MOTION: Country Park Café License & Fees

Resolved, that the Council agrees the Country Park Committee's recommendation that the Cafe Licence Agreement is renewed for a further 12 months commencing 1st October 2021, and that the 2021-22 utility charge is reviewed and adjusted as necessary.

(b) MOTION: Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration

The Long Melford Heritage Centre Committee had requested the Council's support to become the lead organisation in the village for co-ordinating a day of celebration for the Queen's 2022 Platinum Jubilee. The Council was generally supportive of the approach but decided to defer a decision to its October 2021 meeting, at which time it would be pleased to receive more detailed representations from the Heritage Centre Committee regarding its proposal.

(c) MOTION: Council Printing Expenses Rate

The Clerk advised that the proposal was for legitimate printing expenses incurred by Councillors to be reimbursed at £0.05 per sheet, that being the ICO recommended rate adopted by the Council under its Model Publication Scheme.

Cllr C. Michette stated that she was paying somebody to do her printing and it was costing her £0.10 per sheet.

Resolved, that the Council adopts a universal rate of £0.05 per sheet to be used for reimbursing Councillors for printing expenses incurred regarding Council business.

Cllr C. Michette asked for it to be minuted that she wanted to be reimbursed at £0.10 per sheet, and did not agree with the adopted rate.



(d) MOTION: Women's Cycling Event 6th October 2021

The Chair called upon a member of the public present, who was involved in community preparations for the Women's Cycling Event, to advise the Council regarding progress. They said that Babergh District Council (BDC) was contributing £1000, primarily to fund live music to be provided by several bands.

Resolved, that if BDC's grant in respect of hosting Stage 6 of the Women's Cycling Tour is fully utilised, but additional funds are required to assist with the success of the event, then subject to the submission of proper costings the Parish Council commits to providing up to a maximum of a further £1,000 for this purpose.

(e) MOTION: Purchase of Mower for Country Park

Resolved, that the Council purchases a Grillo GF2 sickle bar mower, for cutting long grass and meadows at the Country Park, from Tomlinson Groundcare Ltd. for the sum of £2,600.

(f) MOTION: IT Systems Review (Appendix 6)

The Clerk withdrew the Motion, advising that comparative quotes were not currently to hand and that the Council had delegated appointing a contractor to rationalise the IT system to the Clerk and the RFO at a previous meeting.

21/09-6 REPORTS

The following reports were received and noted.

(a) Country Park Committee Report (Appendix 9)

(b) Village Maintenance Issues Report

The Clerk advised that all relevant maintenance issues regarding Parish Council assets were covered in the Clerk's Report. Consequently, the Council agreed that in future a maintenance report should not be listed on agendas as a separate item.

Cllr Kemp advised that he was progressing the matter of the overgrown footpath between Roman Way and Cotswold Drive with Suffolk County Council, as this was their responsibility.

(c) Long Metford Biodiversity Group Report (Appendix 7)

Cllr Tipper provided additional detail regarding the Report, which dealt with a plan to convert several mown grass areas in the village into small wildflower meadows for a trial period of one year.

The Council agreed in principle with the plan, while acknowledging that the residents living adjacent to some of the proposed areas might raise objections during the public feedback exercise.

Cllr Kemp made his apologies and left the meeting 9:00pm.

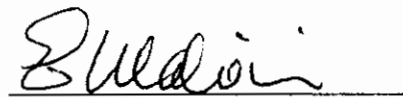
21/09-7 MEETING SCHEDULE

(a) Details of the Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next Full Parish Council Meeting will be held at The Community Centre, Long Melford, Suffolk CO10 9DX at 7:30pm, Thursday 7th October 2021.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9:02pm

Signed:



L. Malvisi
Chair, Long Melford Parish Council

Date

07/10/2021

Long Melford Parish Council
Meeting of the Full Parish Council
Thursday 2nd September 2021
Meeting Pack



Members of the public can find copies of the documents listed below
on the Parish Council's website at <http://www.longmelford-pc.gov.uk>

Agenda Item	Appendix
21/09-3 (a)	1 Parish Clerk's Report
21/09-3 (b)	2 LMPC Action Plan
21/09-4 (a)	3 September 2021 Payments Schedule
21/09-4 (b)	4 July 2021 Cashbook Report
21/09-4 (c)	5 External Auditor's Report & Certificate 2021-22
21/09-5 (d)	6 LMPC IT Review Quotes & Recommendation
21/09-6 (c)	7 Biodiversity Group Report - Wildflower Areas
21/09-2 (a)	8 SCC Councillor's Report 09 2021
21/09-6 (a)	9 Country Park Committee Report
21/09-2 (b)	10 District Councillors' Report September 2021

Parish Clerk's Report for the FPC Meeting September 2021

1. Vehicle Activated Signs

SCW have collected the VAS devices and will be taking on deployment and data downloading from this point forward.

2. Melford Walk Cycling

The Clerk has written to both Suffolk County Council and the Council's insurers to inform them of the Parish Council's decision to permit cycling along the Walk.

3. Public Seating

The rainbow picnic bench at the Cordell Place Play Area has been installed and ground-fixed. Two picnic benches for the Old churchyard are due to be delivered shortly.

4. Village Sign – Little Green

SWC have secured the Village sign at Little Green in an upright position. They report that it is beginning to show signs of deterioration due to long-term exposure to the elements.

5. Village Signs – B1064

The two rotten, white picket fences on the B1064 entrance to the village have been completely replaced by SCW and the village signs reinstated on them. SCC have been advised that no further action is required.

6. Tree Work

A request has been made to the Kentwell Hall Estate to take action regarding a large, dead Beech tree partially overhanging the Cemetery boundary and Manager's office.

7. Christmas Lights

SCW have attended to the lights in the tree outside the Onion Bhaji restaurant, which had become partially detached and were hanging dangerously over road. A 2 metre damaged section had to be removed from the string and the cable respliced.

8. B&MDC Joint Standards Board Hearing – Cllr Carole Michette

The BDC Monitoring Officer has written to advise that a meeting of the Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Standards Board sub-committee has been convened for 7th September 2021. This is to consider any explanation that may be offered by Cllr Carole Michette regarding her failure to carry out the sanctions imposed by the Monitoring Officer in respect of Code of Conduct complaints 2020 October 0001, 2020 October 0004 and 2020 December 2005, where in each instance she was found to have breached the Suffolk Code of Conduct.

Action Plan - Actions Arising from Meetings

Agenda Reference	Action Arising	For Action By	Status	Review Due
20/08-17	Redraft the Civic Awards Policy	The Clerk	Pending	Aug-21
20/10-16	Investigate employing an external contractor to revamp the Council website	The Clerk	Contractors approached to quote	Aug-21
20/10-20	IT systems review	The Clerk	Contractors approached to quote	Aug-21
20/11-11 (c)i	Review the Council's arrangements for data control and management, and make changes to improve security if required	The Clerk	Pending	Sep-21
20/11-11 (c)iii	Create and adopt a policy for the use of social media by Councillors and Council staff	The Clerk	Model policies obtained. Review to follow.	Sep-21
20/12-10 (5)1	Purchase new signage for the Country Park up to a maximum of £3,550	Country Park Committee	Pending	May-21
20/12-10 (5)3	Purchase new bins for the Park's car park area, up to a maximum of £600	Country Park Committee	Pending	May-21
21/04-10 (4)	Hold a meeting of the charity trustees to decide immediate and future actions required	Cllr Delderfield	Pending	Jun-21
21/04-E4	Redraft the revised Standing Orders for the Council's further consideration	The Clerk	Gathering further advice re sub-group definitions and public attendance at meetings.	Sep-21
21/05-12 (7)	Repaint Upper Green Beacon	The Clerk	Order for work issued top SWC.	Sep-21
21/06-10 (3)	Tree Work	The Clerk	Some work completed. Remainder to be completed following the end of the nesting season.	Aug-21
21/07-8 (2)	Order two benches for the Upper Green	The Clerk	Sourcing suppliers.	Aug-21
21/07-8 (4)	Make enquiries with local councils to ascertain how they deal with public access to council meetings.	The Clerk	In progress.	Sep-21
21/08-5 (e)	Arrange a hot water supply for the Cordell Road Toilet handbasin, then re-open the facility to the public.	The Clerk	In progress.	Sep-21
21/08-5 (g)	Obtain quotation for refurbishment of the War Memorial.	The Clerk	In progress.	Oct-21
21/08-5 (h)	Write to SCC Cllr Kemp regarding what assistance the County Council can provide in respect of Melford Walk ditch and drainage maintenance.	The Clerk	Pending.	Sep-21
21/08-6 (b) 1	Write to BDC to ask that they honour their maintenance responsibility re the Cordell Place play equipment.	The Clerk	Pending.	Sep-21
21/08-6 (b) 2	Seek grant funding for new Cordell Place play equipment subject to final confirmation of cost, specification, and authority from BDC.	The RFO	Pending.	Nov-21
21/08-6 (b) 4	Submit details of two bench types to the Council for a purchasing decision to fill the Upper Green requirement.	The Clerk	Pending.	Sep-21
21/08-6 (b) 5	Write to SCC Cllr Kemp to request that SCC fund and install a Puffin Crossing in Hall Street outside Budgens supermarket.	The Clerk	Pending.	Sep-21
21/08-8 (b)	Submit an application for a local building to be listed as an asset of community value	The Clerk	Pending.	Sep-21
21/08-8 (c)	Write to certain landowners with a proposal to meet to discuss purchasing land from them.	The Chair	Pending.	Sep-21

Long Melford Parish Council
Sept 2021 payment schedule
Presented to the Parish Council meeting dated 2 September 2021

Appendix 3

Contractual and other payments approved by Cllrs email since the last meeting		Amount	VAT Accrual	Net Payment
Birketts	Subject access request	£930.00	£155.00	£775.00
		£930.00	£155.00	£775.00
 September 2021 payments for authorisation (updated)				
Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Training for Cllr Powell	£180.00	£30.00	£150.00
Babergh District Council	Change to Old School refuse collection	£151.86	£0.00	£151.86
Suzanne Dixon	5 x Jumbo toilet rolls for Country Park	£139.80	£23.30	£116.50
Cliff Dark	3 x owl nesting boxes for Country Park	£180.00	£0.00	£180.00
Paul Wilson	Reimburse cost of materials for work at Country Park	£264.41	£44.05	£220.36
Sudbury Office Supplies	Fill soap dispenser for Country Park	£17.62	£2.94	£14.68
Gillian Ann	Updating Neighbourhood Plan website	£590.63	£0.00	£590.63
BW Fencing and Landscaping	Materials for Melford Walk entrance handrails	£258.00	£43.00	£215.00
Alan Sawyer	August expenses	£105.27	£12.57	£92.70
Cllr C Michette	Printing meeting papers	£3.70	£0.00	£3.70
Cllr R Michette	Printing meeting papers/mileage	£5.90	£0.00	£5.90
		£1,897.19	£155.86	£1,741.33

Payments due prior to next meeting

Direct debit and standing orders approved by the Council in June and August 2021

September 2021 salary, pension and HMRC payments

Contractual payments arising from prior decisions of the Council (e.g. Cleaning of public toilets, Ranger contract etc)

Payments arising from decisions of the Council on 2 September 2021

The payments above were authorised at the Parish Council meeting dated 2 September 2021

Councillor Signature:

Appendix 4

How paid received	Payer	Description	Amount	VAT	Net
Council receipts during July 2021					
FPI	M & MJ Hudson	Burial Income, Crem 2:H1	410.00	0.00	410.00
CP carpark	CP Petty Cash	June 2021 CP car park	107.48	0.00	107.48
500483	LM Community Assoc	Old Sch car park donation	50.00	0.00	50.00
500483	Old Sch car park users	Old Sch car park	104.97	0.00	104.97
500483	Janet Munro	July CP cafe	120.00	0.00	120.00
500485	East of England Co-op	Burial Income, Crem 4: B12	330.00	0.00	330.00
500485	Old Sch car park users	Old Sch car park	104.54	0.00	104.54
FPI	Edward Undertakers	Burial Income, Sec D: X13	1,050.00	0.00	1,050.00
BGC	Babergh District Council	Cleansing grant: Qtr 1	1,042.47	0.00	1,042.47
500512	Old Sch car park users	Old Sch car park	130.74	0.00	130.74
500512	Old Sch car park users	Old sch cark park	133.38	0.00	133.38
500512	Old sch car park users	Old sch car park	148.32	0.00	148.32
FPI	H&AW Palmer Ltd	Burial Income, Crem 4: A17	820.00	0.00	820.00
FPI	H&AW Palmer Ltd	Burial Income, Crem 4: B15	820.00	0.00	820.00
FPI	H&AW Palmer Ltd	Burial Income, Sec D: J16	55.00	0.00	55.00
BGC	Groundwork UK	Neighbourhood Grant	2,200.00	0.00	2,200.00
CPPC	Country Park car park users	June Country Park car park donations	107.48	0.00	107.48
NWBS	Nationwide Building Society	NWBS Int to Lloyds	28.87	0.00	28.87
			7,763.25	0.00	7,763.25
Council payments during July 2021					
DD	British Gas	Electricity to 12/6/21	63.76	3.03	60.73
FPO	4i Pumping Services Ltd	2 pumps / 2 disposal visits	4,255.20	709.20	3,546.00
FPO	Alan Sawyer	June 2021 expenses	123.85	15.95	107.90
FPO	Babergh District Council	Improved trade waste services	349.28	0.00	349.28
FPO	Baldwin Alarms	CP CCTV and Cemeteery alarm	536.89	89.48	447.41
FPO	ETF Ltd	Clean public toilets, May/June	1,742.00	0.00	1,742.00
FPO	Furniture@Work	Old Sch car park safe key lock	183.60	30.60	153.00
FPO	Gillian Ann Virtual Solutions	NP website updates	251.25	0.00	251.25
FPO	Glasdon UK	Seat and biodegradable bags	1,834.97	305.83	1,529.14
FPO	Grown in Suffolk	MIB, establish /care of plants	3,255.00	0.00	3,255.00
FPO	Indigo Ross	CP signage and NP documentation	1,960.50	326.75	1,633.75
FPO	AJ Griggs	Electrical work at Old School	8,140.08	1,356.68	6,783.40
FPO	Martin Richards	Melford Walk risk assessment	30.00	0.00	30.00
FPO	P Crawford	Old School car park improvements	56,591.81	9,431.97	47,159.84
FPO	Richard Delderfield	Old Sch car park maintenance	11.71	1.95	9.76
FPO	Society of Local Council Clerk	SLCC subscription, RFO	144.00	0.00	144.00
FPO	Susanne Dixon	June Ranger service	550.00	0.00	550.00
FPO	Sudbury Office Supplies	Office sundries	31.28	5.21	26.07
FPO	TA Accounts	July payroll	6,372.98	6.80	6,366.18
DD	British Telecom	Cemetery mobile	7.33	1.22	6.11
DD	Lloyds Bank Chargecard	School polytunnel sundries	37.95	6.32	31.63
DD	Lloyds Bank Chargecard	SLCC subscription, Clerk	208.00	0.00	208.00
DD	Lloyds Bank Chargecard	Website hosting and domain	233.00	0.00	233.00
DD	EOn	Electricity to 28/6/21	30.82	1.47	29.35
DD	EOn	Electricity to 8/7/21	213.40	10.16	203.24
FPO	LM Old Sch Community Centre	Meeting room hire	20.00	0.00	20.00
FPO	Marmax Products Ltd	Picnic bench	520.80	86.80	434.00
FPO	Edd Keogh	Paint brushes for volunteers	3.49	0.00	3.49
DD	EOn	Electricity to 14/7/21	9.25	0.44	8.81
DD	British Telecom	Office telecoms	217.15	36.19	180.96
DD	British Gas	Electricity to 12/7/21	63.47	3.02	60.45
DD	EOn	Electricity to 7/7/21	894.24	184.57	709.67
			88,887.06	£12,613.64	£76,273.42

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Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

Long Melford Parish Council – SF0258

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2020/21

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

30/07/2021

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

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Details Not Available at the Time of The Meeting

Motion Withdrawn

CONVERTING MOWN GRASS AREAS INTO WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

As part of Babergh District Council's environment plan, they are undertaking a trial to replace some of the areas of mown grass with wildflower meadows. This only applies to land that BDC manages (Maps showing all areas currently maintained by Babergh DC can be found via this link <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/pre-application-advice/free-online-planning-guidance/interactive-mapping-service/>). The aim is to enhance biodiversity and the areas will be managed by BDC, but in a different manner. BDC has purchased a new 1.6m mower/scarifier/collection machine to enable this new management. This is not about leaving areas unmown to go wild – it is about establishing and managing a species rich area.

Long Melford Biodiversity Group has assessed some suitable areas to try this in 2022 in (1) Harefield; (2) Southgate Gardens and (3) Sampson Drive/Chadburn/Middle Way/Raille Walk areas – see maps attached*. The Group intends to advise local residents and seek their feedback ahead of the change in regime. Suitable signage will be erected to explain the value of the new areas.

Babergh DC will be solely responsible for establishing and maintaining these areas. In early 2022 the areas will be cut very short, scarified (heavily raked) and sown with an appropriate wildflower mix including Yellow Rattle (that is parasitic and weakens the growth of any grasses). The areas will be cut, with the cuttings collected, in late autumn every year.

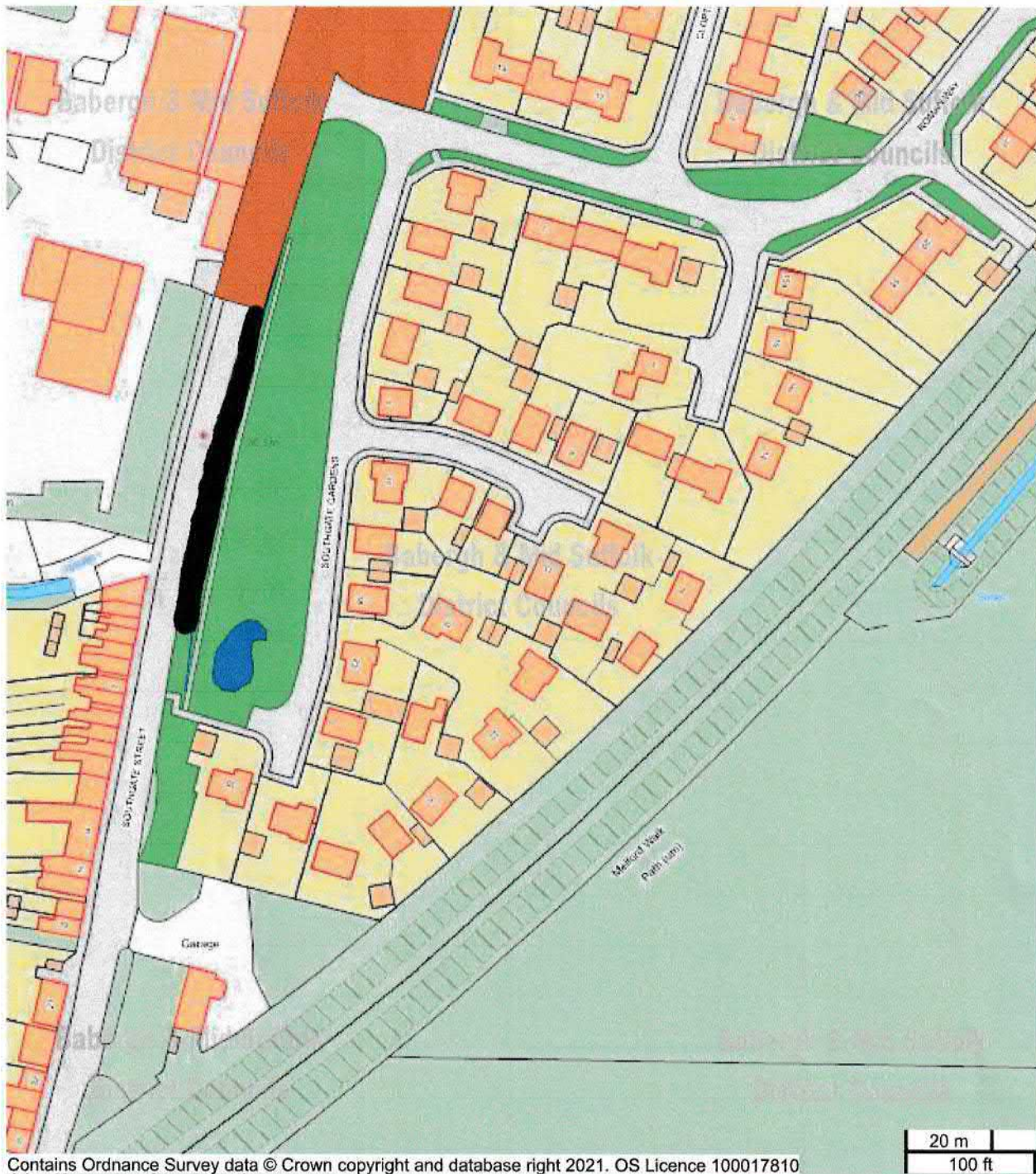
Two other new wildflower areas will be established and maintained by volunteers in the village. These are a small strip in front of St Catherines Church and an area within Long Melford Country Park to the east of the entrance. Discussions are also underway with private landowners to seek other suitable areas.

The Parish Council is asked to approve the Biodiversity Group applying to BDC to undertake the establishment of wildflower areas on the public realm areas proposed. If successful and publicly popular in 2022 there could be further areas to consider in the following years.

Jane Burch

Chairman, Long Melford Biodiversity Group
07495 762372

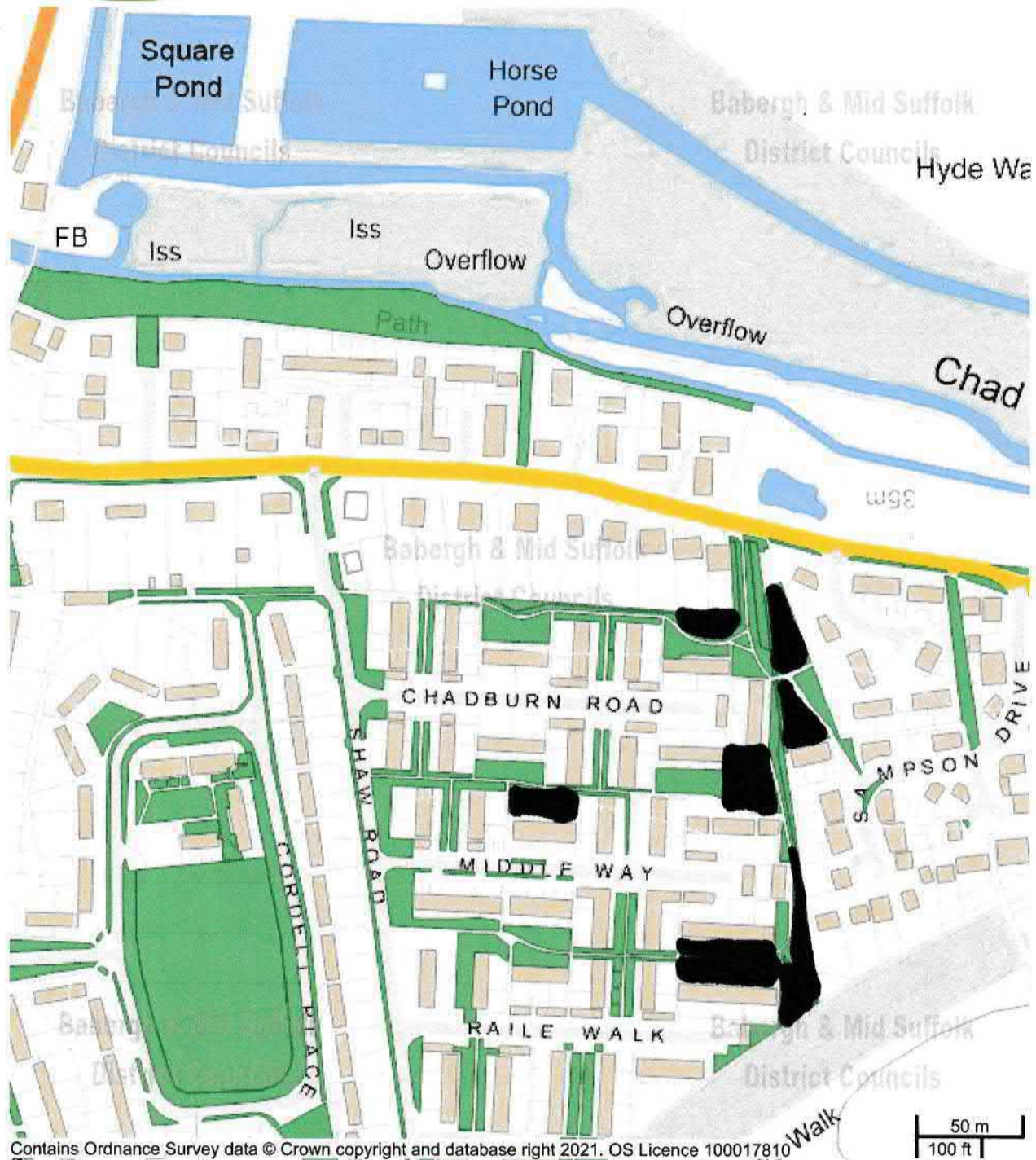
On the maps attached the green areas represent the areas that BDC is responsible for and the BLACK areas are those proposed for Wildflower Meadows.



Notes

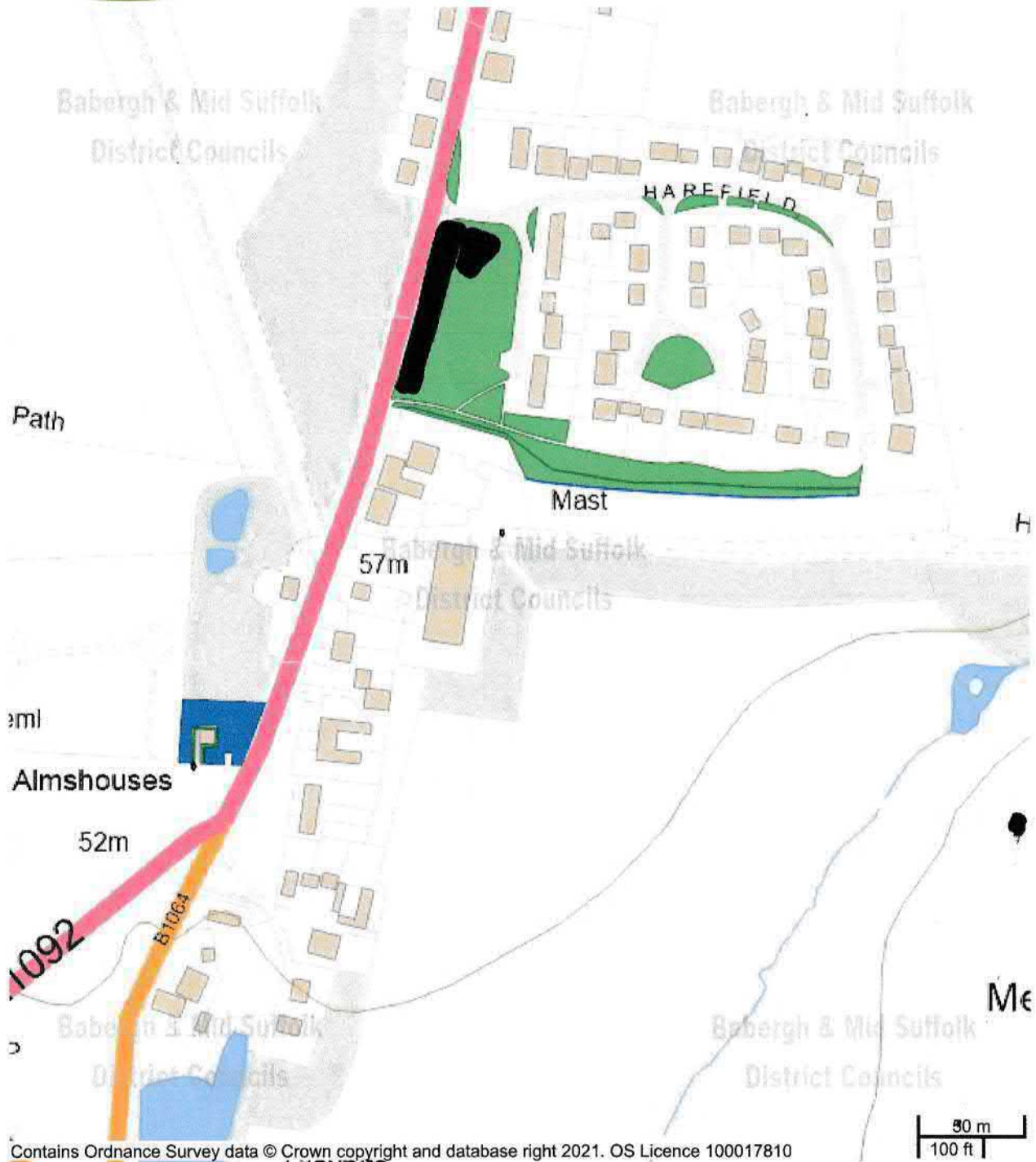
SOUTHGATE GARDENS

Area between road and hedge as far as the land used for cars parking.



Notes

CHADBURN/MIDDLE WAY/RAILE WALK/SAMPSON'S DRIVE
Pathways through the green areas will be maintained.



Notes

HAREFIELD

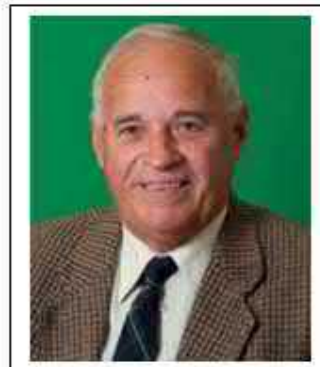
This area is also planted with bulbs.

Parish Report September 2021

Councillor Melford Ward

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Appendix 8

Statement on behalf of all Suffolk Councils regarding Afghan refugees

"On Wednesday 18 August, the Government announced its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it is crystal clear that the Government needs local authorities everywhere to step up and support this national effort.

"All councils in Suffolk are committed to this cause. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk, in addition to ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other refugees entering the UK. In the coming days and weeks, the district, borough and county councils will continue working with the Government to do what we can to provide assistance to vulnerable refugees.

"Times like this call for acts of humanity. Suffolk will play its part."

Review of SEND provision

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision which has now been completed.

The report, with any recommendations, is due to be published this month on Suffolk County Council's website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinised, in public, by the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. We await it with interest.

Suffolk's expression of interest in discussions with Government on Devolution for Suffolk

A 'levelling up' white paper is to be produced by Government and Robert Jenrick MP (Sec of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) has invited Councils to express interest in involvement in this. The aim appears to be to allow local 'leaders groups' to have more power in local decision making including 'greater financial efficiency, administrative streamlining and/or more joined up services'. It is not necessary to be a unitary authority although Government want evidence of working together.

It is not clear yet what the benefits and draw backs or any details of these proposals are yet.

The 'Suffolk Leader's Group' (Leaders of County Council, District Councils, Ipswich Borough Council, and Police and Crime Commissioner) have written to the Government expressing interest in this proposal.

Public sector leaders in Suffolk say they welcome early discussions with Ministers about a possible devolution deal for Suffolk.

The Government wrote to councils in July 2021, setting out its ambition to make available to county areas the kind of devolved decision-making powers and public funding currently enjoyed by larger cities and urban areas. It's part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and will see a White Paper published in the coming months.

It is understood that Suffolk's approach involving all councils is rare among other expressions of interest being submitted to Government, a point that has been welcomed by the county's seven MPs.

Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan

This document was released in June by the 'Suffolk Leaders Group' (County, District and Borough Council leaders) as a follow up to the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership report of 2019.

This sets out broad goals for change in behaviours and technology to achieve zero carbon by 2030 by means of measures of: 'transitioning to a fully decarbonised heat supply for homes; improving energy efficiency; behavioural change to use less energy; low carbon travel; reducing car use; more efficient freight transport; reductions in commercial and industrial carbon use; improvements in renewable energy production and a flexible grid' among others.

The Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group on Council will be putting a motion forward to the next Council Meeting to require the Council to set specific benchmarks and targets each year up to 2030 to encourage the modal shift in behaviour and technology required as without this we believe that the targets set out, laudable though they are, are unlikely to be achieved in practice.

For example: In July 2020 the Government's Gear Change paper called for a doubling in the amount of journeys walked or cycled. This spring, Suffolk Conservative's county council election manifesto said "we have identified over £20m of upgrades for our cycle network"

We will ask for this money to be allocated to specific projects to improve our cycle network, such as across our Peninsula where the current state is pitiable and completely unfit for purpose.

Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns

Suffolk residents will come together to invest in renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Suffolk residents have until 27 September 2021 to register their interest, for free and with no obligation, to join the group-buying scheme to have solar panels installed at their home. Not only does Solar Together Suffolk offer solar panels, but also optional battery storage and retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels.

How does it work?

- Until 27 September: Householders can register to become part of the group, for free and without obligation, at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk
- 28 September: Pre-vetted UK solar PV installers participate in an auction. They are able to offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.
- After the auction, registered households will receive a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
- Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

Suffolk County Council brings 'Solar Together Suffolk' to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk's local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. Across the UK, iChoosr has delivered almost 5,000 installations to date and over 80,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

Country Park Committee Report – September 2021

The Park has had lots of visitors in the school holidays and we've had some lovely feedback on the new signage and even been asked to provide educational signs for insects and wildflowers for next year.

Susie, our Park Ranger, had to help "ASBO" the swan as he was getting picked on by a couple of other swans and he was losing strength during a heavy moult. He was rescued from the riverbank, helped back to fitness and released back to Brundon. Ollie, the swan, is now ringed and the Ranger is in close contact with Mike Reed who started marking swans as part of an ongoing project investigating the demography of Mute Swans in Eastern England.

The results of our 2021 Breeding Birds Survey are in the process of being collated by our survey volunteers and they should be available very soon. Also, we have acquired three further barn owl boxes. In the autumn we will mend and update our existing box and put up the three additional boxes, with guidance as necessary from local owl experts.

Donations have increased exponentially since the improved signage has been installed in the toilets and around the car park. We've asked the Clerk to send 3 special thanks to visitors who made a kind cash donation, to a village resident that has donated some tools and to Suregreen that donated damaged sleepers that we will use in the park, compound and up at the Upper Green project.

The Park Friends have been busy keeping the paths cut back and the grass mown, and the compound has been cleared out ready for Little Woodland Tribe to start once they receive their certificate from OFSTED.

The mobile coffee van "kind.heart.coffee" has been building up a customer base and visitors are telling us how lovely it is to be able to get a coffee and a slice of traybake in the morning, either before or after their walk round the park. Over the next couple of weeks we will issue Natalie her licence which will increase income coming into the park, which combined with the increased car park donations and Jenny Wren's rental will help towards future purchases for projects at the Park.

Cllr L. Tipper
01/09/2021

District Councillors' Report - September 2021

Statement regarding Afghan refugees

August saw the Government announce its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it is clear that the Government needs local authorities everywhere to step up and support this national effort.

You can [read our statement in full here](#) and a [Suffolk County Council webpage](#) has been created in the event of offers of help from your towns and parishes.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk join calls for devolution talks with Government

Together with other public sector leaders in Suffolk, we wrote to the Secretary of State responsible for local government this month, to say we welcome early discussions with Ministers about a possible devolution deal for Suffolk.

Design blueprint agreed for Chilton Woods

Details of phase one of Chilton Woods and the development's design code received approval last month – ensuring a high quality, well designed, sustainable new community which meets the needs of residents.

District to play crucial role in international cycling event

Babergh will be co-hosting the thrilling Sprints and challenging Queen of the Mountains climb in stage six of the Women's Tour on Sat 9th October. This is a wonderful opportunity for many businesses in Long Melford but also for the residents. There should be something for everyone with stalls and crafts on the Green, music outside the Bull and most hostelryes providing food and drink all the way through the village. Information is going out via social media and so far many are really excited.

Cllrs L. Malvisi & J. Nunn
02/09/2021