**Great Bradley Annual Village Meeting held at the Village Hall on 10th April 2013**

The Chairman Simon Kiddy welcomed 30 people attending the meeting.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of last year’s meeting 18th April 2012 were approved

**Matters arising:**

1. Celebrations report. John Barnett said that the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations had been a very successful event albeit one that was much larger than originally budgeted. There had been a treasure hunt/walk which finished at the inauguration of the new Interpretation Panel beside the river. Everyone then proceeded to the church where the new seat with the Jubilee inscription was inaugurated followed by a group photo from the tower. By that time the free lunch of Hog Roast and salad was being served on the Recreation Area followed by children’s wildflower seeds sowing in the Glade and then a game of rounders. There was then an inauguration of the new flagpole and the whole day concluded with a children’s party at the village hall at which all the children were given a Jubilee mug. It should be remembered that both the flagpole and new seat had been funded by Jane Midwood from her Locality budget and over the 8 years she had been in our representative she had given over £4,000 to the Parish on various projects.
2. Litter pick report. Geoffrey Vollam said that this year’s litter pick had been postponed a fortnight because snowfall had hidden most of the litter on the original day planned. In spite of this setback we had an encouraging turnout on a lovely morning on Saturday 6th April, and you can see from the bags in the photos on the slide show how much rubbish was collected, as well as some odd bits of vehicles. The general impression was that there was a small reduction in the amount of litter compared with previous years – are people throwing less out of their vehicles because they are becoming more caring of the environment, or because in our present situation they can’t afford so much stuff to chuck away? In any event the reduction is very welcome. We are grateful to John Barnett and the Parish Council for providing the equipment and refreshments, and to Maureen for the delicious cake. Thanks also to John for arranging the final disposal of the collected litter by the Borough Council. A very big ‘thank you’ to all who took part – we hope to carry out another spring-clean next year but in the meantime let’s do all we can to continue keeping our village litter-free and tidy.

**Suffolk Police:**Apologies were received from PCSO Claire Fuller who had sent the following report:

***2012 saw:***• A burglary from an out-building on East Green in June, Equestrian equipment to the value of £2150 was taken from a tack room.
• There was an attempted theft from a caravan in November whereby the external lockers had been forced but nothing taken from within.
• A horse box trailer was taken from a secure compound on East Green overnight on 2nd - 3rd November to the value of £2000, number plates were removed before offenders made off.
***2013:***Since January great Bradley has suffered from one crime, which was a burglary from another out-building. Items taken were of high value, three John Deere ride on lawn mowers with a total value of approximately £5473. This happened between 28th March and 7thApril.
If anyone knows anything about this crime or has seen/heard anything that could help out the police with enquiries please do make contact via 101.
***Crimes Elsewhere:***Within the past month we have seen an increase in Burglaries, more specifically Burglary Other building. i.e Sheds, garages and outbuildings. A range of items are being targeted, however power tools, tools and lawn mowers seem to be the most common.
There has also been a rise in the number of Catalytic converter thefts in the rural areas recently, vehicle with higher wheel bases are being targeted for easier access to the Cat. We advise everyone to ensure that any property is kept locked away in a secure place. Keep items of value out of sight from windows and doors. Keys for items such as ride on mowers etc to be kept away from the machines. Please accept our apologies for absence at tonight’s meeting.

**Suffolk County Council:**

County Councillor Jane Midwood gave her report:

There will be no increase in Council Tax this year. This is the third year in a row that the County Council has frozen its share of council tax.

In February SCC voted through a Budget for the next 12 months that will achieve savings of £25million – the second part of a plan to save over £50million over two years. This is being done as a result of reductions in our grant from the government and will involve reducing management and back office costs and finding new and efficient ways of working and delivering front line services.

**Schools Organisation Review**

Schools in our area which were part of the first phase to change from three to two tiers have seen huge gains last year in SATS results at key Stage 2 with up to 19% improvement in some subjects. In Haverhill and Lowestoft, both two tier since 2007, there has been a 12% improvement in writing and 6% in maths. This is double the improvement rate seen across the rest of Suffolk.

**Locality Budget**

Last year the major part of my Locality Budget funding went to projects to celebrate Her Majesty’s Diamond Jubilee. Many villages gave children or households a commemorative Jubilee mug. Possibly the most unusual funding supported loo hire for a Jubilee event! It was a wonderful summer of celebration and I was very pleased to have been able to help.

**Looking back**

I would not be able to complete this Annual report without taking a look back at my 16 years on the County Council.

There have been enormous changes to the way local government operates and the County Council is very different to when I was first elected in 1997. The change to a cabinet system has meant that there is far less opportunity for back benchers to develop a particular interest or expertise, which is a sad waste of talent. Outsourcing of front line services such as care homes and highway maintenance will bring economies for the County Council but ultimately the responsibility for these areas still lies with the elected members.

The electoral boundary change in 2005, and my election to represent the Clare division, meant hard work with 24 villages to look after but it has been a very happy eight years. I have loved getting to know people and hearing their concerns and learning of the pride they take in their local area.

There have been successes along the way but some very frustrating lack of progress in areas of concern.

Traffic speeds, in particular, are an enormous worry for many villages. I was enthusiastic at the start of the Community Speedwatch programme and put in £1,500 of Locality Budget funding for buying speed cameras and equipment. Sadly, enthusiasm is difficult to maintain and it is a shame that some of the schemes have folded for lack of volunteers.

The increase in size and number of HGVs using our narrow lanes is a common theme through the whole Clare area. I hope that in the future some way will be found of encouraging these vehicles to stick to the larger road network.

Farewell, I shall miss you all. Thank you for your support over the years and may the future bring you every success in your endeavours for your local community.

Simon Kiddy said he wished to thank Jane for her support for the village, particularly financial support and devotion to duty over the years with turning out for so many meetings .

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council:**

Councillor Clifton-Brown said that he commended Jane’s 16 years representation of her constituents - he knows the effort it needs especially as he has done 40 years! His grandson’s wind turbine in Clare was narrowly approved (he was not allowed to be involved at all in this). There is a long debate running about the Community Centre in Haverhill.

**Parish Council:**

Simon Kiddy, Vice-Chairman of the Council, presented the annual report of the work of the Parish Council.

A new flag has been purchased for the Village Hall flagpole. A flag-flying schedule has been adopted but if anyone has any particular wishes for a further addition please let him know. The new Interpretation Panel is to have leaflets in a new holder shortly. Thanks to the previous Bugle editorial team for their years of service and thanks to the new team who have taken over. The Bonfire Night was a great success and the bonfire lit well this year. The planning for this begins in June with John Barnett visiting the firework’s supplier’s demonstration and ordering for November 5th. The Coronation Seat was demolished by a car in the icy conditions and will be put right. The Clarendale flood was finally sorted. Finally thanks must go to John Barnett for all his work on organising the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations and many other things, Charles Ryder for all his help so willingly given in so many areas, George Hendry with cutting the Garden grass, Mike Brophy for producing and maintaining the village website which is a marvellous facility and the envy of most villages both large and small and Stuart Wilson as the new editor of the Bugle.

The Council is one Councillor short at present and seeking to fill the vacancy.

There is a Parish Council financial summary on every seat tonight which gives the current situation. If anyone has any questions then please contact John Barnett who will provide the answers.

**Village Hall**

Wendy Mansfield said that due to the illness of the Chairman of the committee she had been put forward for tonight’s presentation at the last minute. It had been a busy year with highlights of the Jubilee children’s party and Quiz. They are planning a Christmas children’s party. The recent problem with the manhole cover and chamber in the entrance has now been rectified although the other covers further back in the car park will also need attention. They are a managing committee and are working well but they need ideas for fund-raising events please. They are always looking for people to join the committee and the AGM will be held before the Summer where everyone is welcome. Thanks to all the people who help and especially Simon who helps with the lottery.

**The Bradley Bugle**

Stuart Wilson added his thanks to the previous editorial team and said he was getting the hang of it all now. He also wanted to thank the distribution team who take it round to every household. As always he needs ideas for articles. John Barnett said that they had picked up another new advertiser and the annual income is now £455 against an estimated cost of the Bugle of around £900. St Edmundsbury Borough Council also give a 30% grant to this type of expenditure so the total cost is nearly covered.

**Great Bradley Farms:**

Charles Ryder wished to thank the Parish Council for the organisation of the day of celebrations for Diamond Jubilee and the Bonfire Night.

He is pursuing the undergrounding of power cabling and is making significant progress. There is now agreement to do from the village seat to the top of Bradley hill which is hoped to be completed by the Summer but he suspects may not be till next year. There is an interminable hold-up on the cabling from Spring Barns to Kennel Cottages due to the presence of the oil pipeline. There is also BT cabling from Spring Barns to Kennel Cottages scheduled but it needs constant pushing.

The paperwork for the new Permissive Path on the Cowlinge Road from the bends to Three Tuns footpath has been submitted but is taking some time to be processed at Suffolk County Council. However, he hopes it will be opened by early May. Some people are still cycling along the footpaths and some riding horses which causes damage.

The 4 Black Poplars are to be planted along the river and scheduled for October/November.

The river levels are very low at present due to the recent dry spell. There will be a need to keep a close eye on the water levels now the new pipeline is operational. There is a plan to do some Willow spiling on the river bank.

Pigeon numbers are a plague at present so gas guns have had to be utilised again - so apologies for any nuisance but the crop damage would be considerable otherwise. If anyone has a particular problem with a gun placement then please contact him as it may be possible to have it re-sited.

The Bluebell Walk is scheduled for 27th April provided they have come on sufficiently. The Farm Walk is 8th June. On 7th June there is to be a presentation at the Village Hall on the project at the old Stradishall airfield. This 512 acre site will include a 150 acre 30MW solar farm which will power sufficient homes for a town approximately the size of Haverhill with grazing grassland underneath. Also a further 130 acres of grassland and 60 acres of Woodland. It is planned to have a presentation from the Woodland Trust and others.

The problem of dog fouling on the Recreation Area is serious and needs to be tackled. The new hedge at the Recreation Area appears to have taken well.

**Village Website:**

Mike Brophy gave statistics for the usage of the website and was able to demonstrate it via the broadband connection at the village hall. The site is a fantastic resource that would normally be found run by a large town council at huge cost. Mike makes no charge for this wonderful facility. There are many sections of considerable interest in the website which Mike demonstrated such as the family history, famous residents, village timeline, Bugle editions going back to 2004, Census records, old maps amongst many others.

**Neighbourhood Watch**

John Barnett said that the committee had met twice last year and had represented the village at the recent Safer Neighbourhood Team priority setting meeting in Chedburgh. The priorities agreed were to concentrate resources on burglaries of outbuildings and speeding in rural villages.

**Community Speedwatch**
John Barnett said that the local Speedwatch area included Great Bradley and Cowlinge. They are a team of 4 in Great Bradley and thanks go to Geoffrey Vollam, Elaine Bareham and Keith Willington for this. They had a late start last year due to intermittent problems with the speedgun. This was returned to the manufacturer and sorted together with re-calibration that has to be done every 2-3 years. They managed 4 speedchecks before the Autumn weather closed in and the clocks went back. The cold weather has meant a late start this year too. There is a new and impressive Vehicle Activated Display Sign which was shown at the meeting. This is to be shared with Hundon and will be put up and left for a day in different places. In this way the reminder that this is a 30mph area will be further reinforced.

**Reports from other village groups/organisations:
Parochial Church Council:**
Keith Willington read the report. PCC members are Revd Derek Hollis, Sue Ireland (Churchwarden) Geoffrey Vollam (Treasurer) and Keith Willington.
A pattern of a communion service on the second Sunday of every month has been established. Although we have lost several regular members from the village these are always well attended and offer a chance to catch up with others from across the Benefice over a cup of coffee afterwards.
We were lucky enough to host the service on Easter Day. Despite the cold, the church was packed with a congregation of over 80 members. The church was also full in February for the wedding of Lisa and Martin Lovell, with Scandinavian decor and folk music. We are now looking forward to another wedding very soon. As always the future of the church in Great Bradley looks uncertain but the Quota was paid in full thanks to prudent management of the Treasurer. The fete was the major fundraising event and despite inclement weather, takings were only marginally down from the previous year. A 5% donation was reserved for charity. We are extremely fortunate to have the use of an alternative venue and would like to thank Charles Ryder for his massive contribution to the success of this village event.
This year’s fete will be on Sunday 7 July and further details will be available shortly. As always, offers of help will be welcomed with open arms.
As part of the Jubilee celebrations a bench was installed in the churchyard by the Parish Council. The old bier has also been refurbished by Peter Smith and Keith Willington and is at the back of the church. Peter has also made a font cover and donated it to the church.
Sadly, the cedar tree in the churchyard had to be felled in January after losing two more branches: the Parish Council kindly paid half the cost of this work.
**Workers Educational Association:**There were 2 courses in 2012/13; in September Ian McLachlan enlightened us with 8 sessions on the ‘Friendly Invasion’, about the visiting members of the USAAF in WW2, who operated from over 100 airfields, the majority in East Anglia. Over 450,000 personnel were involved: of these some 50,000 aircrew were killed or reported ‘missing in action’. We heard about the high probability of their death or injury on bombing missions, plus the logistical problems of getting 100’s of bombers into the air from different bases to form a wing for a raid. Even when the mission was completed, flying home was hazardous – enemy fighter attacks were still highly likely, or crew lost their lives when damaged bombers failed to land safely. Other matters of interest included the somewhat ambivalent relations with British servicemen, and also with the local female population, some of whom became GI brides and eventually returned to USA to be with their husbands. It was a fascinating and revealing course, with plenty of good slides.
In January we were treated to ‘Church and Chapel, priests and parishioners, saints and sinners’, from the 7th to the 20th centuries, a course given by our old friend Stuart Bowell. He showed how religious ideas and beliefs developed and how some were later challenged by those who dared to stand up against the established order of the time. We were reminded of the importance of the East Anglian saints such as St Felix and St Fursey, of Lady Julian of Norwich, and of the daily life of a priest as told in the diaries of Parson Woodforde, and more questionably that of Revd Harold Davidson, one time vicar of Stiffkey. The course covered the periods of the Reformation and dissent, the story of those who were martyred for their beliefs, and the growth of Puritanism and the non-conformist churches. Stuart illustrated his course with some excellent slides of churches, their architecture and furniture, reflecting the changes and the conflicts over the centuries.
This coming September we should be welcoming Dr Rosemary Williams with Part 2 of ‘History of the English Language’ which I have no hesitation in recommending to you, and the following January we hope that Wendy Barnes will be talking to us about the Washington family, who migrated from Northants to Virginia, and from which came the first President of the USA; again I think this will be a course of considerable interest.
Further information about these will be available to you all fairly shortly, and of course you will be very welcome to join us on Wednesday mornings from 10 o’clock to 12 noon. They are good social occasions, as well as being educational and entertaining, and the refreshments are free! There is no fee payable for the first session if you only wish to try it as a ‘taster’.
Gt. Bradley WEA could not function without the willing help of our volunteers, particularly Gill Brown and Anne Smith who look after the book list and refreshments, and the perseverance of Peter Smith our secretary and chairman who is indefatigable in fielding the considerable WEA paperwork; I should also mention Alan Bampton of Burwell, our very efficient treasurer.
**Bowls Club:**Carole Durrant said that they have just started up again. They do need extra members please to maintain it in the longer term. Her thanks as always go to Simon Kiddy who comes down at the end of the session to help pack the mat away.
**Afternoon Club:** Gill Dunn said that they meet on a Thursday afternoon at 2.30pm once a month for a chat and some refreshment. Everyone is welcome.
**Art Group:**Pat Spires said that the Art Group continues to meet on Tuesday afternoons in the Village Hall under the tuition of Jan Couling. Jan’s classes are friendly and informal, suitable for all levels of ability, and complete beginners are welcome. Why not come along and have fun learning to paint and draw using different media and a wide variety of subjects.
New members are always welcome, and if you would like to know more about the classes and want to speak to someone please see the Events List in the Bradley Bugle for my contact number.
We are planning to hold our usual exhibition in conjunction with the Village Fete in July.
**Scottish Dancing Class**:
Helen Smith said that The Great Bradley Scottish Dancing Class has been progressing throughout the year, although there is a break between June and September.
The numbers have increased this year and we again have a goodly number of enthusiastic and happy dancers!
On 26th April we will be holding our dance in Thurlow Village Hall; this is because we need a larger hall than Great Bradley, and are expecting dancers from all around the area including Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge.
On St Andrew’s Day this year we would like to resurrect the Ceilidh in this Village Hall as they were such good fun in the past. Support from the village would be appreciated as it is really a local event and a wonderful family occasion. There will be advertisements well in advance of the date so to have a Hall full again would be great.
We very much appreciate this Village Hall although find the heating rather long winded in getting up to temperature.
**Computer courses:**
John Barnett said that they had managed to get a substantial grant of just under £2,000 to run 3 sets of courses. The first course had proved so popular that a second session in the afternoon had been put on in addition. The second course had been sold out for both mornings and afternoons and the third course is to begin shortly on April 25th and there is one remaining space. The WEA has been impressed with the success of these courses and Great Bradley village hall with its broadband connection so that they are now planning a course of their own here in June/July.
**Flexible Friends:**Gill Dunn said that they meet on Tuesday mornings for some gentle exercises. It is only £3 per session and they would like to have more members - all welcome.
**Pilates:**Helen Smith said that they have been going for about 8/9 months and they have about 9 members at present so there are some spaces free if anyone wishes to come along.

Simon Kiddy thanked the organisations for their presence tonight and the information.

**Allotments:**

The meeting was asked if there was any desire in the village to have allotments available. Four people present expressed an interest and there was known to be at least one other who was unable to attend tonight’s meeting. Simon Kiddy said that it was just an idea and it was not possible to know at this stage if this could be taken any further.

**Mobile Library:**

Simon Kiddy said that this was reminder to everyone that this service is available in the village but is currently not used. We will doubtless lose it unless that changes.

**Recreation Area**

1. The problem of dog fouling was very keenly discussed with several people incensed by the thoughtlessness of some dog owners. The problem was not just on the Recreation Area but also on the Permissive Path from the Recreation Area towards Spring Barns which Les Bunyan said prevented him from enjoying the countryside as he had to keep checking where he was walking the whole time. Others said it was also on Clarendale Green. There was a suggestion that dogs should be banned completely from the Recreation Area or that they should be on leads in order that owners could see when and where their pets leave their mark. John Barnett said that a recent ‘Litter Wars’ television programme had shown success in one case with the use of flagging up individual ‘piles’ together with free doggie bags and notices explaining the dangers to children. Flags would not be appropriate on the Recreation Area but other villages had used fluorescent paint spray to highlight every pile to illustrate the extent of the problem and shame owners into clearing up.

Helen Smith asked if anyone had ever seen owners not clear up after their dog so that the culprits could be identified. No one had so it was suggested a rota of volunteers could be mounted throughout the day to keep watch. It would have to be started early as apparently there is at least one early bird dog/owner. Pete Smith said he had seen it regularly by the play equipment seat. It was suggested that the play equipment could be fenced off but that would not solve the problem of the football pitch. Another suggestion was to liaise with Thurlow and Burrough Green schools about educating the children on the dangers to them of not clearing up and also possibly get the children to produce posters which could be used around the Recreation Area, Clarendale Green and problem paths. Another piece in the Bugle was suggested.

1. Outdoor gym equipment. John Barnett said that a suggestion had been received that it would be good to have some equipment that all ages could use on the Recreation Area. The question was asked if the meeting would support the idea, only 2 people did, and a number were against it.
2. Living Willow structure. John Barnett explained that this had been raised as an idea at budget time for the Parish Council which decided to put a small sum aside and then ask the Village Meeting if it was wanted. There was general support for this idea.

**Village Archives**

John Barnett said that very little had been able to be done on this since the initial rough cataloguing of all the material over a year ago. He had been able to digitise all the colour transparencies found in the archives but was unable to go further at this stage. He said there was a lady in Lt Bradley who had experience in archiving who had offered her services. Wendy Mansfield and Gill Dunn offered assistance with this project. Pete Smith also has an archiving contact and can help. Mike Brophy said the Headteacher at Burrough Green could also be useful with this. So hopefully together with the original small team from last year this can now be taken forward.

**Coffee Caravan**

The caravan was returning for 3 more visits this year on April 18th pm, June 20th am and August 22nd pm.

**Forthcoming events:**

The following events were notified:

* 18th April - Coffee Caravan 2 - 4pm
* 27th April - Bluebell Walk - anyone wishing to join in should please let Charles Ryder know.
* 10th May - Village Hall talk/presentation from Ross Skingley on the history of Army Aviation
* 20th June - Coffee Caravan 10am - 12noon
* 7th June - presentation on the plans for the old RAF Stradishall airfield
* 8th June - Farm Walk - anyone wishing to join in should please let Charles Ryder know.
* 7th July Fete
* 22nd August Coffee Caravan 2 - 4pm
* September date to be advised - visit to the old RAF Stradishall airfield

**Any other ideas/problems etc:**

Amanda Troop said that there had been a number of accidents at Sipsey Bridge and she had been trying to get something done by the 2 Highways authorities. Cambridgeshire say they don’t think the number of accidents is serious so they are going to do nothing. However, there appears to be a big discrepancy in the number of accidents both Highways authorities are reporting compared to the actual number known to have occurred at the bridge. She was also involving Matthew Hancock MP to help resolve this. The matter is complicated by having 2 Counties Highway authorities involved as it is on the boundary.

The Chairman thanked everyone for taking the time to come to the meeting and it was declared closed at 9.30pm

Signed: Chair date:

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