**Great Bradley Annual Village Meeting held at the Village Hall on 18th April 2012**

The Chairman Rowan Sylvester-Bradley welcomed 32 people attending the meeting.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of last year’s meeting 18th May 2011 were approved

**Matters arising:**

Local bus services. John Barnett said that ABC buses timetabled service to Haverhill had been replaced by Road Train Transport. If Parishioners wish to go to Bury St Edmunds then the Demand Responsive Transport service will take them to the A143 to catch the timetabled service from Haverhill to Bury. However if Parishioners wish to go to Newmarket then the DRT will take them all the way there and return. Jane Midwood said that there had been some concerns regarding the Stephensons Haverhill - Bury service.

**Suffolk Police:**

Kayla Packman said that they had had to fight to keep Clare Police station open but the lease now has another 4 years. There is a new Response Officer for the area together with a new PCSO Chris Shields. PC Trish Sinclair and Kayla remain responsible for our village (and 31 others).

Since last year’s AVM there have been 6 crimes 4 of which were burglary from out-buildings although in 2 nothing was taken. The overall number of crimes remains the same as 2010-2011. Burglary from out-buildings has become more prevalent recently.

**Suffolk County Council:**

County Councillor Jane Midwood gave her report:

**Council Tax**

Suffolk County Council has frozen Council Tax again for the second year in a row. This follows from two years of record low increases.

Budget savings for 2011 – 2012 of £42.5 million are well on track to be achieved. At the February Cabinet meeting it was reported that extra savings of £5 million are expected to be realised by the end of the financial year. Strong financial management and leadership are achieving tremendous results.

**Adult and Community Services**

Many of the additional savings have come from Adult and Community Services. The total number of staff directly employed by SCC in the services will reduce from 3,557 to 895. This is not due to cuts in services or frontline provision but to a radical reorganisation.

This month, SCC Cabinet will decide on the future provider of care home services in the county. 1,116 staff working in SCC residential care homes will transfer to an existing company in the independent care sector. Only three staff will be taking voluntary redundancy. Planning for the future will take into account the very large increase in the number of dementia care places needed.

Nearly 500 library staff will cease to be employed by SCC and transfer to the employment of the new Industrial and Provident Society which will be running the county’s library services.

**Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service**

In October the new joint control centre with Cambridgeshire was set up – a hugely successful operation which has delivered significant savings.

The new Fire Training Centre at Wattisham was opened – a state of the art facility which will be training firefighters in many different scenarios for years to come.

**Diamond Jubilee**

Fees for road closures for street parties have been waived for the weekend of the Diamond Jubilee. It has just been confirmed that there will be no costs for permission to close roads or supply of road closure and diversion signs. Organisers of street parties can obtain a Special Events Order through the County Council’s website or over the telephone to Customer Service Direct.

**Locality Budget**

I am very pleased to be funding both Great Bradley’s new flagpole and Jubilee bench from my Locality Budget.

**Bus services**

I believe that the DRT is still providing a good service generally but I am concerned about some local villages which seem to be missing out. I met the Traffic Commissioner in February but found the meeting rather disappointing. It seems that his area covers 7 counties and bus routes are not his responsibility. He has to ensure that bus companies meet certain criteria (mainly financial) before he will grant them a licence.

**Changes at SCC**

It has been a year of change at SCC with the departure of Andrea Hill and the appointment of Deborah Cadman. Mark Bee remains as Leader of the County Council, he has my full support.

**Home Security Workshop**

On Thursday May 3rd 18.00 – 20.00 I am running a Home Security Information Evening at Wickhambrook Memorial Hall. There will be a range of information on offer from a number of security experts and the Police and Suffolk Fire and Rescue will be present.

Very best wishes to everyone in Great Bradley, it has been a pleasure to serve as your County Councillor for the last 7 years. Please get in touch if there is anything you think I may be able to help you with.

**Parish Council**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley, Chairman of the Council, presented his annual report of the work of the Parish Council. The Parish Council does on a routine basis:

1. Organise and pay for the grasscutting of the Recreation Area and Parish footpaths. Charles Ryder (Great Bradley Farms) assists with the cost of the Recreation Area grasscutting whilst Suffolk County Council reimburses the footpaths costs completely.
2. Organise and pay for the Churchyard grasscutting
3. Look after the children’s play area and football pitch. Thanks go to the volunteers who do a safety check of the play equipment on a weekly rota.
4. Assist with the litter pick and pay for the use of the hall. Thanks also to the volunteers here who keep the village tidy for us all.
5. Print the Bugle
6. Assist with the Community Speedwatch
7. Check all planning applications - although the number of these had dropped significantly recently.
8. Pay for the internet connection to the Village Hall
9. Give an annual grant to the Village Hall.

Projects last year:

1. Bonfire night. This continues to be very successful although the fire itself last time was too slow to get going which will be improved this year
2. Assistance with other community events
3. New lower basketball hoop in the play area for younger children
4. New Interpretation Panel which will be sited down by the river on Hall Road. This has been fully funded by grants from 2 different organisations.
5. Village archives. A small group has been examining the huge amount of papers, maps and pictures that have been accumulated over the years with a view to conserving and archiving it.
6. A new Bar-B-Q has been purchased for use at village events
7. Two new grit bins have been purchased, one at the top of Hall Road and the other at the entrance to Clarendale.

Projects for this year:

1. Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations with a Hog Roast lunch on the Recreation Area
2. New Diamond Jubilee seat in the churchyard (fully grant aided by Jane Midwood’s Locality budget)
3. New flagpole at the Village Hall (fully grant aided by Jane Midwood’s Locality budget)
4. Installation of the Interpretation Panel
5. New wildflower area on the Glade - it is hoped that youngsters at the Jubilee celebrations will be helping to sow this.
6. A new bench and a log bench on the footpaths
7. A new permissive path going up the hill to the Three Tuns
8. Renovation of footpaths signage
9. Bonfire Night
10. Continuation of work on the village archives

Parish Council finances:

The Parish Council strives to keep costs down, however, after 2 years with no increase to the Precept there has been a small increase of £200 this year. The percentage amount on the Council Tax appears larger than this because the rural Parish grant aid that Great Bradley gets from St Edmundsbury Borough Council is being reduced. However, we have been able to keep costs down and provide a number of new items for the village by way of grants from outside bodies.

The Council is one Councillor short at present and seeking to fill the vacancy. Volunteers are also being sought for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Bonfire Night and village archiving.

**Village Hall**

Edward Fletcher said that the hall was now fully operational again after the disastrous flood last Winter. He thanked all the village hall users and groups for their patience during the repairs. He also wished to thank the Village Hall Committee for their help over such a difficult period.

They are now putting in some extra storage. Pete Smith is also kindly putting up an adjustable hanging system around the walls at present. They are considering setting up an events committee which will allow others to become involved.

**The Bradley Bugle**

Sue Sylvester-Bradley said that the committee continue to be happy to put together articles and information that is received. However, apart from Les & Anne Bunyan’s regular and very welcome bird spot, the majority of the information comes from outside the village. She put in a plea for everyone to try to send an article, if only once a year. The committee are always looking for comments from Parishioners to help with the future editions.

**Village Website**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that it was unfortunate that the internet connection was currently down at the village hall as it would have been good to show everyone the website. It was thanks to all the hard work that Mike puts in that the village website is such a wonderful resource and continues to expand. The most popular pages continue to be the family history sections and that is the main topic of any questions put on the enquiry form.

**Neighbourhood Watch**

John Barnett said that they had a committee of 7 members and they had had 4 meetings over the past year. The 3 NW signs are now in place and that there was another one at East Green obviously from an earlier NW scheme. NW leaflets and materials had been delivered to all households. Bob Steele of Rural South Watch provides an amazing amount of information often on a daily basis and is especially useful with suspicious vehicle movements. Anyone can join his email list if they wish.

**Community Speedwatch**  
John Barnett said that they now have 4 members in Gt Bradley and 2 in Cowlinge. We like to get out every 6-8 weeks from April through to October with the lighter evenings. We combine a couple of watches here at the approved spots of Fox Green and Spring Barns in GB with one in Cowlinge.   
We have found the evening rush period the time when most people forget the speed limits and when our presence is at its most effective.

The Parish Council has been looking at the possibility of digital display signs which could be moved to different locations each for a week or two but at present they seem rather too expensive and possibly somewhat vulnerable to ‘disappearing’.   
It should also be said that one of the continuing Police priorities in our Rural South Area is speeding in villages and so they do still come with their radar and sit at Spring Barns from time to time. It’s somewhat more serious if you get caught by the Police of course!

**Great Bradley Farms**

Charles Ryder said he would like to thank everyone who put in their time to help in the village. He asked that people did not go through the new hedgerows on the Recreation Area as they will be damaged and gaps created which was not the intention. There is some residual tree surgery to be done at the Recreation Area.

The pipeline went in during a very dry year so there will be some subsidence along the length which will be attended to in August. There is too much pumping going on at Kirtling at present so that there is bank erosion and some associated wildlife problems. He has a meeting with the Environment Agency in May to discuss this.

Undergrounding of cables is a long-term commitment with the section of Thurlow Road from the Kennels to Spring Barn being pressed for.

The farming side has seen little change although the use of gas guns has been reduced this year. The Barn on Hall Road is being renovated and there is some evidence of earlier habitation that he is looking at. There will be some work done in places on the ‘concrete road’. Some Oak trees were being planted along the footpaths.

The Bluebell Walk is to be this Saturday and the Farm and Woodland Tour will be on Sat 2nd June.

**Reports from other village groups/organisations:**

1. **Parochial Church Council.** Sue Ireland said last year they were in interregnum. However, since October there has been a new Rector - Derek Hollis. She thanked Gill Brown for her years of service as she has now resigned from the PCC. Last year the fete raised £2,400 which helped to pay for the Benefice quota. Their thanks go again to the Ryder family for the use of their lovely house and garden. This year’s fete is on 8th July.  
   They have had their quinquennial inspection which showed that the main building is ok with no major repairs needed. Thanks go to all the people who report any problems as they are walking along Hall Road - e.g. leaking pipes and broken branches.   
   Thanks also go the Parish Council which looks after the grasscutting in the churchyard.  
   Sue thanked all the hard working people who help to keep the church clean and looking so pretty with all the flowers.
2. **Workers Educational Association.** Pete Smith said thatthey were pleased to be back in the village hall although the Black Bull at Balsham had other things to recommend it! There had been a Shakespeare course last September, then in January there was a course on the greatest ever films from local tutor Laurence Staig. His choice ranged from Hollywood productions to those of France and Italy by way of Ealing Studios and all was presented in a very enjoyable and informative way. This coming September there will be a course on the effect of the American military presence in East Anglia during World War 2. The following January Stuart Bowell will be presenting on ‘Church & chapel, priests and parishioners and religious life in East Anglia throughout history’.
3. **Bowls Club.** Carole Durrant said that the carpet bowls meets on a Monday evening. It is not competitive so everyone just enjoys it. There are currently 6 regular attendees but they need more please. Her thanks go to Simon Kiddy who comes down at the end of the session to help pack the mat away.
4. **Afternoon Club.** Carole Durrant said that this is normally held on the second Thursday in the month in the afternoons. It is simply a get-together for people and to enjoy some tea and cake. There is a small charge of £1.75 which goes towards paying for outings from time to time.
5. **Art Group.** Anne Pigden said that the Art Group has a membership of 7 currently, is held on Tuesdays from 2 - 4pm and has a marvellous tutor. They are always looking for new members.   
   There will be an exhibition of their work in the Church as usual on the day of the Fete.
6. **Scottish Dancing Class**. Helen Smith said that their sessions were held on Monday afternoons from 2 - 4pm and they are going well with 18 members.

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said it was always very pleasing to see all these organisations doing so well in the village and thanked them for their presence tonight and the information.

**Interpretation Panel**

Karina Joyce said that the panel was due to be delivered next week. The next part of the project is to produce leaflets which are designed to go in a holder on the panel. These would focus on wildlife and designed to be child-friendly.

**Queen’s Diamond Jubilee**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that the date of the celebrations in the village was to be on the Bank holiday Tuesday 5th June. The events currently being planned are:

1. Hog roast lunch with drinks on the Recreation Area going through the afternoon. There was to be no charge for this for Great Bradley residents, family and friends. However, there would not be unlimited amounts of food and drink available so everyone is advised to not to leave it too late.
2. Children’s Treasure Hunt/Walk. It was hoped to be able to organise this but it depended upon a volunteer, probably a parent coming forward.
3. Children’s tea party in the village hall
4. Informal game of rounders on the Recreation Area
5. New wildflower area in the Glade near the Ryder seat. It is hoped to have children’s involvement with this with the scattering of wildflower seeds.
6. Village Photo. It is hoped to get as many people as possible together as a village photo for the archive/future generations
7. Official ‘opening’ of the new Interpretation Panel near the bridge by the river on Hall Road
8. Official ‘opening’ of the new seat in the churchyard
9. Official ‘opening’ of the new flagpole at the village hall
10. Purchase of commemorative mugs personalised to the celebrations in Great Bradley. With one being given to all the children attending the tea party and as there is a minimum order of 72 there will be some remaining and available for purchase by residents.

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that there is a need for volunteers for these events.

**Recreation Area**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that there was now a new lower basketball hoop in the play area which has been well received already but that by its very height is vulnerable to older children swinging on it.

**Bonfire Night**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that it had been very successful again last year although the bonfire itself had taken too long to get going. Steps were being taken to rectify that this year.

**Litter pick:**

John Barnett said that Geoffrey Vollam had sent a report:Many thanks to those of you who met at the Village Hall on Saturday 31 March to take part in the Great Bradley annual spring-clean. Although the warm days of March had just finished, the weather was dry,

cool and ideal for lifting the rubbish that spoils our hedgerows and verges, a lot of which unfortunately is thrown by careless drivers on their way through the village. As well as the usual glass and plastic bottles, drinks cans and various sorts of packaging, a car wheel and tyre were retrieved, plus wheel trims, and some heavy overhead line ceramic insulators were all added to the collection.   
Altogether a praiseworthy and conscientious effort by adults and children, well deserving of the refreshments afterwards in the Hall. We are grateful to Anne Smith and Karina Joyce for their lovely cakes and for offering us coffee and tea. Also to John Barnett and to the Parish Council for obtaining the gloves, sacks and pickers, etc. which will now be available to us for future clear-ups.   
Doubtless we will have to have a similar exercise next year but in the meantime let’s all try to keep our village in the ‘best-kept’ category!

**Village Archives**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that there was a small number of people who had begun to become involved in organising and archiving of all the papers that several Parishioners had gathered over the years. There is a great deal to be sorted and done and decisions made regarding the future of any archive and any help with this would be very welcome.

**Coffee Caravan**

John Barnett said that the caravan was returning for 3 more visits this year on April 19th pm, June 21st am and August 23rd pm.

**Hedgerow survey**

John Barnett said that the survey had been completed and there were a total of 172 hedges surveyed and all the associated paperwork had been taken through to the Suffolk organiser Guy Ackers. John Barnett said he would like to thank those who had helped over the 3 year period of the survey. One team of Les & Anne Bunyan had done the public area hedges on the roads and footpaths whilst the other team of Charles Ryder, Anne Smith, Maureen & John Barnett had had the luxury of Charles’s all terrain vehicle ‘Mule’ taking us to the furthest areas of the estate. It had been a very interesting time, good fun and company, educational for all of us and a good new archive resource.

**Forthcoming events:**

The following events were notified:

* Farm Walk –Saturday 2nd June and anyone wishing to join in should please let Charles Ryder know.
* The fete this year is on 8th July.
* Diamond Jubilee Tuesday 5th June

**Any other ideas/problems etc:**

Richard Bradberry asked about the confusion regarding Matthews/Evergreen Lane and Satnavs and the Land Registry. Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that they had looked into the problem but the Land Registry was not the road naming authority which was St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Post Office is the postcode issuing authority and it would appear difficult to reconcile the differing authorities.

Carole Durrant asked if the old school hall bell was ‘ringable’. There were differing opinions on this and there was also the cost of checking the bell housing for safety.

Les Bunyan said that Charles Ryder had put up various ‘no public right of way’ signs and he asked that people respect these. It was especially important in these times of drought that people did not walk along the out-of-bounds areas of the river upstream of the sluices as the wildlife is under stress there currently.

The Chairman thanked everyone for taking the time to come to the meeting and it was declared closed at 9.35pm

Signed: Chair date:

The following is the full text of Mike ’s report on the website for the AVM:

**Annual Village Meeting: Report on the Village Website**

The website continues to be a huge repository for everything to do with the village and its history. For such a small village there is a lot to be proud of on the site. We can always do more ... so if anyone has any photos, maps, memories or ideas for development then Mike would be happy to hear from you.

1. Changes to the site this year include

* Updated **front page** to include direct links to
  + Tweets about Suffolk
  + The Newmarket & Haverhill newspapers
  + A world map, showing from which countries people have visited
  + The webcam at Cambridge Airport (so you can now always see what the weather is like, even when you are away from home!)
* New **maps**, including
  + Map of the streetlights in the village
  + Crime in the area
  + Road Casualty information
* **Updated** information on
  + the landscape classification round the village
  + the village hall & the clubs using it
  + the Stour Valley pipeline (including some great pictures)
  + News, travel & weather (both local & regional), so that the pages have the very latest ‘feeds’ from the relevant authorities
  + The church – including a 360 degree photo taken from the top of the tower: It’s quite stunning
  + The Hedgerow Survey

1. Ongoing record keeping includes
   * Minutes of the Parish Council meetings
   * Copies of the Bugle
   * The Birdlist from sightings round the village
2. Statistics
   * There were 11,000 pages viewed in 6,600 visits to the site
   * 45% visits came from the UK; 10% from the US; 5% from Australia and 2% from Canada
   * 75% of visitors were there for the first time & 25% were return visitors
   * The average stay on the site was 5 minutes
   * The most popular pages continue to be the family history sections and that the main topic of any questions put on the enquiry form
   * 60% of visits are via search engines; 10% are redirected from other websites and 30% come direct to the site
3. A copy of all the source material on the website has been put on-line in a ‘Dropbox’ account which the Clerk & Chairman of the Parish Council have access to. This provides a backup copy of all the information on the website

*MJB April 2012*

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