

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
19th April 2022  
REPORT BY CHAIR OF MENDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
Cllr Andy Davey

Thank you to everyone for attending and who have made this meeting happen. It is wonderful to hold this meeting in person tonight and to see you here.

We were unable to hold a meeting in 2020, and last year's meeting was held virtually which was just not the same. Although for those of you who did attend virtually, it was great to see that you still provided your own refreshments and were comfortable and safe in your homes.

Tonight's meeting is slightly different to previous physical Annual Parish meetings, in that we have some catching up to do, to celebrate the great people and organizations we have in our Parish, including those who quietly supported any of us in need over the last two years as we have all coped with the pandemic.

For those organizations that normally provide a report, if you have not already done so, please send an electronic or written report to Sharon the Parish Clerk. We will then make all reports available for viewing on the Mendlesham Parish council web site.

If there is anything of urgency that anyone wishes to report or ask about, please do so under agenda item 4. We don't wish to prevent anything of importance to the Parish being raised or discussed, it is just that we do want to allow sufficient time to say our thank yous, and there are also several community awards that need to be presented tonight.

Please also note that the Parish Council generally meets at least once a month, and at each meeting there is an opportunity under Public Forum for matters to be raised, either at the meeting or in advance via correspondence sent to the Parish Clerk.

So where to start?

Covid initially stopped many of our projects and "normal" life in its tracks. Unfortunately we lost some residents, others were quite unwell, some are still having treatments, and some have experienced life changing circumstances.

Organisations were unable to meet, residents were afraid and ongoing projects such as the Parish Council Multi Use Games Area and Wheeled Sports Area initially stopped, and then commenced again but at a much slower pace.

However, we are an extremely strong community, and with initiative and the help of technology different solutions were found. The Parish Council met virtually, St Mary's Church found new ways to engage, the Scouts were extremely proactive in meeting as soon as possible and the Primary School remained open, initially to vulnerable children and those of families of key workers, but as time progressed, and with the use of the then Small Hall, all school years were back by the end of the Summer term 2020.

Other organisations followed in similar ways and life in Mendlesham is now in so many ways thankfully back to "normality with caution", although Covid still affects some of our fellow parishioners.

You will hear later about how the community and Health Centre worked together.

So, what are the "headlines" for the Parish?

**Mendlesham Memorial Playing fields:**

The Muga and Wheel Sport project of some £200,000 has been completed and used and you will shortly be invited to an official "opening" event.

## **Mendlesham Community Centre:**

The unique opportunity to sell the existing building, securing continued use of the Main Hall and Changing Rooms for community hire has been agreed in principle. We will build a new hall which will be financially and environmentally sustainable and provide modern facilities for the community, for the next thirty or so years.

There has been much work completed on this to date. However, at this stage there is still very little we can definitely say. An architect has been selected but not appointed, because we are waiting for permission to sell and then build from Fields in Trust. You may recall that the playing fields and associated buildings and facilities were dedicated to Fields in Trust (the old Playing field Association) for a previous Queen Elizabeth Jubilee celebration. This was to protect the playing fields for perpetuity. However, we now need to obtain permission in principle from Fields in Trust for our project, and are currently working to provide as much information as we can, so they can make a decision. After that there is still more work to do including conversations with the Charity Commission and sorting out the necessary sale particulars, but this project was never going to be quick. There is a proposed **draft** plan of a potential location and Architects brief on a noticeboard at the back of the room. As soon as we have something more to say, we will of course let you know and consult accordingly.

### **Mendlesham Revised Neighbourhood Development Plan:**

This is currently subject to a Mid Suffolk District Council Reg 17 Independent Examination, with notice of focused consultation ending 29 April 2022. It is hoped that following this latest consultation, the Mid Suffolk District Council formal process can continue, and we are getting close to asking Mendlesham Parish Council electors to support our work at referendum.

### **Charities:**

The Parish has been extremely fortunate with the support provided over so many years by Mendlesham Community Council, now known as Mendlesham Community Charity, Mendlesham Education Foundation and Mendlesham Church and Town Estate Charity. All of these charities are in the process of reviewing how they can provide best value to supporting the community, in accordance with their individual trusts. This takes time and lots of hard work, but is to be commended, as it is very easy to remain stationary and do nothing.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow councillors. It hasn't always been easy overcoming the technical problems of meeting virtually, but we did it, and we got through it. Thank you all for the work you do and for the support you show me.

We can't let this evening go without extending our thanks and appreciation to our Parish clerk Sharon Jones whose dedication and commitment to Mendlesham doesn't go un-noticed. Thank you, Sharon.

Right, I have spoken for long enough. I would now like to pass you over to Cllr Mike Exley who is going to briefly introduce another new organization which will benefit Mendlesham Parish.