

# APM – Chair's Report

Welcome to the Debenham Annual Parish Meeting. Thank you all for attending today.

It has been an interesting but successful year for the Parish Council as we have mostly been operating without a Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. However, we are now fortunate enough to have secured ourselves an experienced Clerk and RFO in Brian Mansfield, I hope you all welcome him warmly. He has already done some fantastic work and we really appreciate having him.

I'd like to thank all of the councillors for pitching in to ensure that everything continued to run as smoothly as possible whilst we were without a clerk.

The refurbishment of the recreation ground is now complete. It was a huge but very worthwhile project. Thanks to our funders Cllr Davis, Cllr Hicks, Mid Suffolk Capital Fund, The National Lottery & Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Funding. A special thank you to Cllr John Sweet for organising the whole thing, overseeing the work and quite often negotiating and sourcing equipment in order to save the Parish Council money. For example, a saving of £429 was made on the purchase of the two new bins and a further £1,004 was saved on the new goal posts & nets.

Cllr Sweet even managed to get the trim trail for free from the play equipment supplier.

We will be holding our Debenham Day in the recreation ground this year, details will follow.

This year the cleaning contractor ended their contract for the public toilets, this meant that councillors had to cover until a new contractor could be found. Councillors investigated self locking automated doors and the total amount saved by fitting the electric door is £10,000 a year. We now have a separate cleaner who has done a marvellous job of keeping the facilities sparkling despite some challenging circumstances, so a big thank you to her.

Because the Council have been financially diligent over the last year and made savings on expenditure it has meant that we have not needed to increase the Council Tax precept.

The Council would like to thank both our street warden and our grass cutter for their continued work to make the village a delight for both residents and visitors.

A special mention and thanks to parishioners Lucy Robbins and Vicky Blick for their hard work in turning the allotments round. They have both worked hard to get the allotments all rented and have created a great community feel.

The Bressingham Museum who have been displaying the Victorian Parish Bier for a number of years has sadly run out of space and so now we are now looking to find it a new home, any suggestions for a place where it could be displayed or even just stored would be very welcome.

You will have heard that Debenham has been given a target to provide 350 new homes over the next 20 years by the new government.

We are currently working very hard on updating our Neighbourhood plan along with a new housing needs

survey. We aim to keep residents fully informed and there will be a consultation at some time in the future.

The Parish Council are looking forward to another productive year and as always, welcome comments and suggestions on how to enhance our village.