

DEBENHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2008

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th May 08 at 7.30pm in Dove Cottage.

Present: Cllr Morley (Chair), Cllr's Mr R Walters, Mrs I Bull, Mrs F Winrow-Giffin, Mr P Lorenzo, Mr M Whayman, Ms M Galpin, Mrs L Cockerton (arrived at 8pm); District Cllr Mrs K Guthrie; Mr D Hughes, Mr R Blackwell, Mr M Aldis, Leisure Centre; PCSO Chris Bales, Suffolk Police; Ms M Wood, Manager of Resource Centre; Mr G Baxter, Woodland and Players; Mrs Dalison, St Mary's Church; Mr E Read, United Reform Church; Mr C Grover; Ms L O'Dell; Mr R Taylor, Royal British Legion; Mrs C Moreton; Mr D Thomas, Youth Movement; Mr S Betts (for Cllr Alcock); Mrs R Boulton, Ms J Worrell, Guides; Ms M Cracknell, Ms B Bridges, Roundabout Pre-School; Ms T Waller; Mrs H Huish; Mr P Huish; Mr A Twyford

1. **Apologies for Absence** Apologies for absence received from Cllr Mrs C Hellier, District and County Cllr Mr E Alcock, Mr S Walker (MCF), Mr P Holme (St Mary's), Mr L Grant-Adamson (Debenham Society), Sir Robert Hitcham School
2. **Parish Council Community Award: Presentations.** *The Chairman presented the first of the two awards to:*

Lynn Odell and Bev Bridges for the role that they have played in successfully providing Roundabout Preschool with a new building. They have both been involved with the school for 4 years, up until October 2007, initially as joint Chairperson and then as Chairperson Management Committee (Lynn) and Chairperson New Build Committee (Bev). During this period they discovered that the portakabin which the preschool was using was unsuitable for use into the future and took the decision to raise in excess of £100,000 so that Roundabout would have a new building with more places available for local children.

Over the course of 18 months they lead the two committees in fund-raising and project managing the new build, learning many new skills on the way, from writing effective grant applications to building site management. They overcame many challenges in planning regulations, environmental side effects, declined grants and strict conditions of access from Sir Robert Hitcham School, without having had experience of any of this previously.

Over and above the skills they acquired, was the commitment they made in time, putting in many 40 hour weeks over an 18 month period whilst looking after their children who themselves would be too old to use the new building upon completion.

They both deserve this award for having the vision to put in place this project, the courage to pursue it and the determination to see it through, leaving Debenham with the legacy of a fantastic new preschool building which will last well in excess of 20 years.

The second award went to

Maureen Cracknell who has contributed to our community through a wide range of voluntary work, especially with 1st Debenham Girl Guides.

She worked as the Head Cook at our primary school for many years. Her cooking skills were utilised during the 19 years voluntary service (1988-2007) she gave to Debenham Guides, as a unit helper. She was able to pass on these skills and encourage Guides to achieve badges in Cooks, Confectionery and Backswood cooking.

Her voluntary work included Youth reviews, where she appeared on stage with all uniformed organisations to raise funds for local youth groups. Maureen has been involved with many street fairs, running stalls, which raised funds for the Debenham Guides. Also, assisting with serving teas to people receiving inoculations (flu-jabs) at the Debenham Community Centre.

3. **To adopt the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 30th April 2007. Cllr Walters proposed, seconded by Cllr Lorenzo, six in favour** that the minutes be signed as a true and correct record of the

meeting.

4. **Matters arising.** No matters arising.
5. **To receive the Council's Annual Accounts to 31st March 2008 (not audited)** Noted by the meeting.
6. **Annual Report of the Chairman of the Council – Mick Morley**

I should firstly explain that this is my personal perspective of the past year and does not necessarily reflect the views of all of my council colleagues.

This has been a very difficult year. In October it was confirmed that our Clerk Nikki Rush was suffering from post-viral fatigue syndrome and was put on sick leave for one month. Other complications have resulted in the sick leave being progressively extended to a full six months and it is still continuing. We very much miss Nikki's enthusiasm and energetic support and we wish her a speedy and complete recovery.

At the beginning of the period of sick leave we decided that the council would attempt to cover the Clerk's duties and maintain the operation of the council in order to minimise complexities of handover of responsibilities to and from temporary or locum Clerks. I believe that a huge vote of thanks is due to the following 'gang of four' who voluntarily took on considerable extra duties, additional to their normal council responsibilities in order to make this possible. In particular Alan Moreton collected and logged all the mail and produced and distributed the information packs for each meeting, Helen Huish took on all financial responsibilities during the busiest periods of the year, Peter Lorenzo took over the duties related to the cemetery and allotment management and I tried to fill in the remaining gaps. Thanks are also due to Lynne Cockerton who volunteered to produce the minutes for two meetings in the past few weeks. Although not the primary consideration, it should be noted that this 6 months of voluntary extra support has resulted in a saving to the Debenham community of about £5,000, which would otherwise have had to be paid to locum Clerks.

Despite these problems, much has been achieved during the year. Notable successes have included the completion of difficult negotiations with the developers of The Meadow enabling the path to be laid between the development and Gardeners Road and the long awaited installation of new play equipment in the Upper Gardeners Road play area.

The Policy Group have reviewed and introduce changes to the Core Strategy of Mid- Suffolk at three review points throughout the year. This vital document will shape the future of the district and Debenham for the next 25 years and the input from this Parish Council has resulted in major changes to our community's advantage. A long-term problem has been resolved with the hard work and support of district councillor Kathie Guthrie. The roadway adjacent to Cross Green has been a major embarrassment and difficulty to the residents plus users of the library and car park. Extremely sensitive negotiations completed with colleagues at Mid- Suffolk and Suffolk County, enabled by Cllrs Guthrie and Alcock, have resulted in a solution being found and a very welcome improvement.

In the autumn the need for the bed and banks of the river to be cleared to minimise the risk of flooding was raised with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency. Despite large cutbacks in allocated budgets for this clearance work, Anglian Water agreed to double Debenham's allocation and large areas of the water course have now been cleared.

The development of 11 affordable houses adjacent to Henry Street has at last been completed and the first tenants are now looking forward to moving into their new homes. I am convinced that Orchid Close will help many local families remain in the village over the coming years. These would have been more promptly occupied following completion if it had been able to be completed 12 months ago as was planned, with the local objections that had to be overcome unfortunately taking us into a difficult and unpredictable financial period.

The new web site editor Barry Woods has brought about major improvements to the web site in terms of content and attractiveness, which has resulted in a continuing increase in visitor numbers and time for each visit. In addition the target set for advertising revenues has been exceeded resulting in a lower cost to the community of maintaining the web site.

The exciting project of developing a memorial garden and quiet area in the centre of the village at the old United Reform Church burial ground has made good progress under the direction of Ann Evans. The overall layout and access points have been agreed and we are working with the High School students and staff to draft alternative designs.

The review of traffic flows through Debenham High Street by County Highways gave some surprising results but we are hopeful that the agreed follow up investigations will result in some heavy traffic being diverted away from this sensitive route.

During the year 25 planning applications have been considered, discussed and recommendations made, helping to protect the interests of the community and maintain the integrity of the village.

Our sincere thanks should be forwarded to those ex-members of the council who have left office during the last year and we are very grateful for the contribution made by Felicity Lamb and more recently Alan Moreton, Helen Huish and Ann Evans. I am delighted that some new people have shown an interest in joining the council and I hope that they will be able to bring fresh ideas and new energies.

Other people who quietly provide much-needed support and work for the Council and the village include our street cleaner Mark Sillet, Geoff Ridge who battles against the uncontrollable rabbits at the cemetery, Shirley Dallison who makes us most welcome in Dove Cottage and Peter Huish who has quietly given huge support to all of our working parties around the village. I would also like to extend a special thank you to all the long-suffering partners of our council members, in particular (if I may) my wife Mary who is convinced that she missed her vocation as a call centre manager and PA.

Regrettably there are several outstanding issues and projects that we have not been able to resolve or complete. Following long delays caused by the authorities, we were at last in a position to operate Speed Watch in the village soon after Christmas. It has not been possible however to actually carry out a survey as yet due to operational restrictions in the early months of the year and inadequate time to organise sessions in recent months.

The need to remove the streetlight attached to a private house in Little Back Lane has been partly addressed, following extensive consultation, by the installation of a new lamp standard adjacent to the toilet block. Unfortunately the initial survey carried out by the electricity company on which this installation was based has been found to be unworkable and a different way of connecting the lamp has still to be found.

The public toilets have been broken into and damaged on three separate occasions resulting in the loss of use of all or part of the facility for several months. This has now been resolved through the installation of security bars and the toilets are again now in full operation. I would like to extend our thanks to Peter Huish who repaired all the damage to the doors and frames, at no cost to the community.

The legal requirement to test and notify the owners of unsafe head stones in the cemetery resulted in distress for some families. Many communities are facing the same challenge and ours has not yet been fully resolved. Other initiatives that were planned for the year included the introduction of a Youth Forum in the village to inform council of the views and needs of young people in our community. This has only just been started and much work is still to be done. No further progress has been made on the 25 year vision for Debenham and the associated updating of the Village Plan. We also wanted to build closer working relationships with one or two other communities of similar size to share experiences and ideas. A Parish Council newsletter planned to be published in December and then every six to eight weeks thereafter has had to be postponed.

I have referred earlier to inter personal difficulties within Council that I have been unable to resolve. Further frustrations were caused by an attempted referral to the Standards Board and a vexatious demand for excessive information under the Freedom of Information Act. These absorbed a great deal of time and caused an unwelcome distraction during an already very difficult period.

Hopefully Nikki will soon be able to return and until then, now that we have recruited a temporary Responsible Financial Officer and we are past the busy end-of-year period, it should be possible to identify additional clerical support that will relieve the council members of the Clerk's duties.

I had high hopes for my second year as Chairman, following three years as Vice Chairman, but it didn't quite work out the way I had planned. My "annus horribilis" may not have been on quite on the same scale as Her Majesty's but it has nevertheless been very demanding. I am pleased with what we have achieved for Debenham over the past year and I thank each of the members for the time and effort they have willingly given to our community, which unfortunately is seldom recognised. Thank you all.

7. **Report from Suffolk Constabulary**
Mid Suffolk Central Safer Neighbourhood Team : PCSO Chris Bales

Since 21st April 2008 there have been 2 reported crimes in Debenham. These include criminal damage and theft from a motor vehicle. So far one person has been charged in connection with the criminal damage. In the last 12 months there have been 73 reported crimes in Debenham.

Personal Security Throughout the last 12 months a large number of the reported crimes have occurred where property has been left unattended and unsecured. Although there is no need for any one in Debenham to live in fear of crime residents still need to be aware of securing their premises and belongings when they are not in use.

Alcohol Related Anti-Social Behaviour Throughout the last 12 months we have been targeting anti-social behavior (ASB) in Debenham. Police operations have led to numerous people being dealt with for ASB however we will not solve this problem on our own. All members of the community need to work together to tackle this issue, from becoming involved in activities that provide the young people of Debenham with something more constructive to occupy their time to identifying and reporting offenders.

Contact us Should you wish to report any criminal, suspicious or anti-social activities then please either contact **PCSO's 3117 Chris Bales & 3170 Emma Cowell** on Tel: 01473 613500 or call the Community Information Hotline on 01284 774029. Or you could bring any issues to the attention of your **Mid Suffolk Central Safer Neighbourhood Team** via your local parish council.

8. **Report from the County Councillor**

Cllr Eddy Alcock, Suffolk County Councillor for the Thredling Division, thanked Shaun Betts for delivering this report in his absence.

This has been a year of many major events and completes 3 years of the 4 year span of this Council. I am pleased to report that it is almost all good news that I can relay to you this evening, as this Council is in good shape and steadily improving. The principal objective has been to secure a sound financial base, through prudent management and to that end some £59 million pounds have been trimmed off the Council's expenditure. This has not happened by chance and isn't just because a new administration is in place. Certainly, this administration has set the financial targets, but without excellent senior staff, under the leadership of a top class Chief Executive, dedicated to an on-going efficiency drive, none of this could have been achieved. Unfortunately, that Chief Executive is known to be top class by others and is seen as the driving force behind the award to this Council of a four star rating by the audit commission, making us the only four star authority in the Eastern Region. So he, Mike More, has moved to the top job in local government as Chief Executive Officer at Westminster City Council. But we have recruited another of the same calibre to build on existing achievements, as she, Andrea Hill, as Chief Executive Officer of Bedfordshire County Council has lifted that authority from no star status to a 3 star Council in just 3 years! Leaders with that level of skill and experience earn financial savings for their Council worth many times the cost of employing them.

So much has happened in this last year that I can only touch briefly on each subject or this report will become unacceptably lengthy.

One of the big undertakings has been the Schools Organisation Review. Suffolk is one of a handful of Counties that retain a mixture of two tier and three tier layers of education delivery. Most other Councils phased out Middle Schools many years ago. We have started that process, having completed the review process for Lowestoft and Haverhill, but there is still a long way to go. The object is "to enable all children and young people in the County to aspire to and achieve their full potential, giving them the basis for a successful life as active members of their community".

During the year, the Suffolk Strategic Partnership launched its "Community Strategy for 2008-2028". This covered 8 themes, including prosperity, safety, health, culture, sport etc. Our contribution was through seeking to make Suffolk "the Greenest County". I chaired a cross-party Policy Development Panel to establish all the ways in which we might contribute to the war against climate change and global warming. This resulted in the drafting of an "Environmental Action Plan" that was presented to the "Creating the Greenest County" conference held at Trinity Park last year and chaired by John Gummer MP; a hugely successful event attended by some 400 people.

The highly emotive subject of Post Office closures remains a current topic. The problem of course is that more and more of the post office business has been eroded over the years. Car tax on-line and TV licences to name just a couple of items. Restrictions on hours of opening and what goods can be marketed and other strangleholds have reduced viability of so many of these businesses. I chaired a Policy Development Panel to seek ways of helping communities cope with these losses and a scheme for self help within communities will be reported to Cabinet for implementation in the very near future.

The introduction of the means to dispose of our Waste, other than through landfill, is moving steadily forward. All of our research has indicated that the solution that ticks all the boxes will be Energy from Waste through Incineration and a business case has been drawn up and put to Defra at central government, seeking support. Not only have we been congratulated by government for this project, but they are contributing £102 million pounds towards it! One of the criteria that makes this grant possible is the fact that we will have exceeded 50% recycling & composting by the time the project is built, as the government won't give financial support to an Energy from Waste solution for poor performing recycling Councils. So we will burn our un-recyclable waste, creating electricity and part of the residue will be a clinker that can be used for road building foundations, so two more products are reclaimed as recyclables through the process. We are of course one of the top performing Counties for recycling rates in the Country and enjoy Beacon status as a result.

One of the most recent problems that has arisen in our County is coastal erosion, with rising sea levels and the Environment Agency's intention to retreat from coastal protection. This is another highly emotive subject, where people's homes may be sacrificed to the sea and we are part of the consortium opposing this new policy. We will carry our argument to Government Ministers, as the Environment Agency is "owned" by government and funded by government.

The problem of guaranteeing electricity supplies to our homes and to industry has reared its head once again, particularly in view of the carbon emissions from coal, the volatility of middle east oil supplies and the potential for unreliability of gas supplies from Russia. Renewable Energy as a technology remains in its infancy and cannot be relied upon to cover a potential energy deficit. So Nuclear is back on the agenda and has the full support in principle of Suffolk County Council, subject to detailed study of actual proposals. Sizewell is of course a highly likely site for proposals for one or even two new generating stations.

On environmental grounds, we oppose a 2nd runway at Stansted and have joined the consortium of Essex County Council, ourselves and four District Councils in "CO2" (Councils Opposed to 2nd Runway). We held a protest lobbying event opposite the House of Lords a few weeks ago with the National Press and TV present and hopefully made our mark and maybe, even raised some eyebrows.

Council Tax increases are another emotive issue. This year we have succeeded in holding the County's increase to below the rise in pensions at 3.9% and the Retail Price Index at 4.1%, to come in with an increase of 3.75%. This is the lowest in the Eastern Region of England, is in line with our manifesto commitment and will be maintained if possible into the future.

Lowestoft has been a centre of low growth and of deprivation for a long time. It is well placed though to become a centre of excellence for the Renewable Energy sector. Already the Scroby Sands wind farm is situated just off-shore and the Greater Gabbord proposal, off Orfordness and bringing electricity ashore at Sizewell, is scheduled as a 140 turbine project, with the go-ahead to proceed. To assist this industry, we are building a £10 million pound office building at Ness Point, beneath the wind turbine known as Gulliver, to provide accommodation for small emerging companies in this industry sector. This is being funded by The East of England Development Agency and Objective 2 European money. The aim is to make Lowestoft then, the National centre for renewables and if possible, a Global centre, thus bringing prosperity to the area. The building, known as "OrbisEnergy" has just won a "Green Apple" award for environmental excellence and I go to a ceremony at the Tower of London in June, to receive the award from Professor David Bellamy. I imagine there are those who preferred I went to the Tower of London for a different ceremony!

I was invited to a lunch at the Café Royal a few weeks ago to celebrate 10 years of "Green Gym". I'd never heard of it! It transpired that it is a charity that inspires volunteers to organise visits into the countryside to take part in maintenance programmes of woodland pollarding, coppicing etc and take valuable exercise as a consequence. One of the speakers referred to us all having busy schedules with little time for exercise. He said, "would you rather spend an hour a day taking exercise or spend 24 hours a day dead" Provokes thought! I was inspired by all this, recognising that it is very popular and well supported in other Counties and I want to

introduce it into Suffolk as part of the “Greenest County” strategy. I am working on it now.

I have found my Locality Budget to be a valuable tool in helping communities realise small projects that they might otherwise have difficulty funding. I have about £10,000 per annum and have this year supported 14 projects in my Division. These have included such as the Debenham Roundabout Pre-School new log cabin, sign posting on the A1120 for Debenham’s Post Office, the Debenham Street Fayre, Debenham annual Fireworks and Debenham at “the Heart of your Christmas”. I have supported other projects with this fund in Bedingfield, Earl Stonham, Creeting St Mary, Framsdon etc.

We are in the process of overhauling Adult Care, building new Fire Stations, assisting the police set up Community Support Officers and building Children’s Centres (one is being built onto the Debenham Youth Club building right now).

So finally, Unitary Authorities. Ipswich Borough Council set a “hare” running by bidding for Unitary status with its population of around only 120,000 people. A Unitary, to be successful, needs a minimum population of around 250,000 and their bid was therefore rejected by the Government. The Boundary Committee has been asked to look at Suffolk (and Norfolk) to advise the Government on the possibility of one or more Unitaries for these Counties. So, Suffolk has a population of 700,000, so really no more than two Unitaries would make sense. We are proposing a single Unitary for Suffolk. Not Suffolk County Council, as all Councils will be abolished in order to start with a clean sheet. But a single Authority, using what Suffolk County Council has achieved, would have a really good head start and be the least expensive by far to set up. We have a sound strategic infrastructure in place which has four star status to enable the creation of an excellent “Suffolk Council”. The structure of the principal services is already in place, namely, education, social services, highways, waste, fire service etc. In order to provide “neighbourhood empowerment” we could set up “area committees” and “neighbourhood groups” to devolve power, money and decision making down to local people. Planning decisions, for example, could be made at these lower levels, recognising that National policies would still need to be complied with. Substantial delegation from the strategic county body could, with skilful thinking, be placed in the hands of those people close to the local opinion holders, thus ensuring true democracy. But the really big pill to enjoy swallowing is COST. Without duplication of management functions, as exists now, and would continue to exist in multiple Unitaries, we are confident that millions of pounds could be slashed from the cost of delivering all Council Services in Suffolk and then for the first time ever, perhaps we could see a REDUCTION in Council Tax.

I submit my annual report for your acceptance.

9. Report from the District Councillor – Cllr Kathie Guthrie

I cannot believe it is a year since I was elected as your councillor for the area.

As I have said in all my reports it has been a huge learning curve for myself and I have undertaken many training courses and seminars.

On a monthly basis;

- I am on Planning Committee A
- Planning Referrals Committee
- I am Vice Chairman of Licensing
- I am substitute for the Scrutiny Committee
- I am substitute for Environment Policy Panel
- I also attend Safer Neighbourhood Team Meetings
- I have also sat on Bridleways and Footpath hearings

The training courses include sessions on the

- Budget and funding for MSDC
- Planning
- Wind Power
- Code of Conduct
- Emergency planning
- Choice based lettings

I have also been attending technical advice and referrals meetings over the regeneration of Stowmarket.

I attended the Debenham High School for a presentation on Democracy. Philip Tallent from the MSDC put together a very good programme on how the Council works and interaction with the Parish Council and Councillors.

I have also attended fund raising events for bicycles for the Police, and 'stab vests' for Police dogs and was pleased to attend the official opening of the pre school log cabin.

The pre Christmas event was a huge success and I hope to attend that again this year.

And in between.....

....I have enjoyed working with and for the people of Debenham, Winston and Aspell and of course Winston and Debenham Parish Councils. In particular I would like to thank Mick Morely with whom I have worked closely over the last year and for all of his time, experience and wisdom which he has shared with me. I would also like to thank all the other members of the Winston and Debenham Parish Council.

I have been working tirelessly behind the scenes both at the MSDC offices and with individual parishioners who have come to me with their problems and of course the Parish Council. Where I haven't known the answer I have found out where I could get an answer and will not leave a stone unturned! And as many of you may have discovered, I don't give up easily!

This can be demonstrated over the issue of the potholes at Cross Green. The biggest problem there was, and still is, ownership of the strip of land which gains access to the Car Park. The car park was donated under a charitable trust by the Lord Henniker Estate. Other access users are those to MSDC bungalows, private bungalows and houses, and the Library (formerly the Fire Station).

With a lot of hard work between the Parish Council and myself we presented a 20 page document to the MSDC as to why they should pay for the repair the road. To my surprise I had the backing of the relevant parties in MSDC and in particular the Chief Executive. To my even bigger surprise it was the members (other Councillors on the Executive Committee) who put obstacles in the way and recommended the MSDC only provided part of the funding. Again I would not give up and enlisted the help of Eddy Alcock from the point of view of Highways. Again we got no, no, and no. Eddy and myself kept at it and at the eleventh hour when we thought all was lost we got a compromise which included the Debenham Parish Council making a contribution and help from the Suffolk County Council and we were able to get the first round of repairs to the road. There is a further surface to be put over the current one and I will pursue that along with what we need to do for the future.

I have also worked with many people over their planning issues of which many are still on going.

The council has worked to give people value for money and as I learn what the scope of the Council is I believe they do just that with huge restraints. As I reported earlier on this year for next year we have received a below inflation increase from the government of 1.8% in the sum of just over £6.2 million pounds. But for the following two years there will only be half (0.5) percent increase per year. This represents real terms funding CUT of 2% over a three year period. It will be a challenging period ahead.

Boundary Commission - Many of you will know as a result of the failed Unitary bid for Ipswich the Boundary Commission is working with all the Councils in Suffolk and Norfolk to recommend Unitary Councils. There is an update in the form of an email which I have forwarded to the Chairman Mick Morley who will arrange for it to be put on the Debenham Website. Further

information will be forthcoming at a meeting tomorrow night and if in e format I will forward. This information will be in the public domain on the MSDC Website.

Snoasis Update - Again I will forward an email to Mick Morely for inclusion on the Debenham Website and can be accessed via the MSDC Website. We still do not have a definitive decision.

Planning - There are new forms and new procedures designed to make things quicker and clearer and again are on the MSDC Website.

Waste - Eddy will no doubt have updated you but I can inform you that last year we have achieved 40.13% recycling rate, the previous year when we were top straight recycler (without composting) in the country our rate was then 34.2% This is excellent. It needs to be 60% by 2014.

The Garden waste has been a huge success and 3226 households have signed up for garden waste. There are still 120 on the waiting list! This too is excellent and will stop people dumping their garden rubbish on the side of the road causing nuisance and littering.

There is a litter pick campaign and any Parish Council who would like to take up a 'community clear up' they will be supplied with fluorescent coats gloves pick sticks and bags and these will be left with you to distribute at any time for further litter picks.

As regards the A14 new Contractors are in place and along with the litter bins in lay byes we should see an improvement.

Fly tipping we must be vigilant and report any such activity to 08456 066067

Stowmarket Master plan and regeneration – This is well on track and I have been to several planning and technical meetings both on site and at MSDC

Core Strategy Submission Development Plan Document – I know many of you are concerned about land bids for Debenham. So I would like to repeat my explanation I gave in my February Report There have been road shows, workshops and so on to put people in the picture. The purpose of the workshop was to show people the land Bids which had been received (They are legally obliged to do this) People were able to put their view forward.

The next stage of the process was to determine those land bids which do not fit in with the new development hierarchy i.e. those in the villages which are loosing their settlement boundaries and these have been discounted. The remaining bids are being subjected to the sustainability appraisal. Once those assessments have been completed they use the information as PART of the criteria to move to preferred options. The sustainability appraisal helps identify the issues affecting a given site and also need to consider against planning policy and consider any mitigation of the issues raised within the sustainability appraisal. Once the preferred options have been worked up they commence another round of consultation (lasting 6 weeks) to give people another chance to consider these and provide feedback.

As Debenham is a Key Service Centre it means Debenham would have the opportunity for future development but this is unlikely to be on a massive scale and that any potential development does not have to be delivered immediately. The 'scores' from the Sustainability Appraisal are on the high side, but the intention is to test these during the next round of consultation, when they reach the preferred options stage. The SA was a desk top exercise delivered for MSDC by the County and there are some scores which people are concerned about – hence the intention to include this in the next consultation stage. I have been informed when the preferred options are put out to consultation if people do not feel that the village can take any further development at all or at least without some form of action regarding schools, parking and flooding issues then they have the opportunity to say so within the consultation response. Please note the SA is not the only consideration in deciding

which land bids will be taken, it is just part of the assessment process.

The 'soundness' of the Core strategy document is being tested by an independent examination of this document is being undertaken from the 29th May for three weeks. The public can attend but not speak but would need to book their seats with Mr Simon Osborne 07710 969411 email simon@poservices.co.uk.

The Mid Suffolk Local Development Scheme is currently being revised to take account of the proposed Government changes to the Local Development Framework process. As a result the proposed timetable will be formally adopted once the Government changes are finalised which is expected in summer 2008 but is potentially subject to change. Stowmarket and surrounding areas site specific allocations will be looked at on or around August 2008 but the rest of the allocations will not be reviewed until September 2009.

I hope this is helpful.

Choice Based Lettings - MSDC and several councils have agreed to participate in this scheme which is believed to be the best approach for the future allocation of social housing. This scheme allows social landlords to advertise their available homes and customers are then asked to express an interest in the property they would like to live in. A new lettings banding scheme is being developed to prioritise customers.

Affordable Housing and Shared Ownership – such houses have been made available to residents in Debenham.

Mere View Very Sheltered Housing Haughley – This is a first VSH scheme in the country built in partnership with Housing 21 and MSDC and SCC. It is available on a shared ownership basis. To qualify one has to be over 55, require a minimum of 4 hours care per week and have some connection with Suffolk. There are 32 one and two bedroom flats. It is a fantastic purpose built enterprise and is currently sold out with a waiting list!

Stansted Stacking Eastern Hold area – Whilst this doesn't directly impact us MSDC have sent strong representation suggesting the stacking is located over the sea. I understand there is a slight problem in so much Holland uses the North Sea for stacking and approach for Schipol Airport.

To update specific issues I know the Debenham Parish Council are looking at programmes for the young people in the village and I will do my best to ascertain funding where possible. I will leave the PC to update people as and when anything transpires.

It is noted we have a new Take Away facility and Dental Practice and welcome all new initiatives. However local planning regulations and so on will be part of an ongoing process to enable all activities to gel within the village.

I have tried to include all relevant issues and apologise if I have missed one area or another and if I have please contact me or look on the MSDC Website where all the information can be located.

Finally, I look forward to working with you all again next year. Contact me on: 01728 861752 Email Kathie.guthrie@midsuffolk.gov.uk.

10. **To receive reports from the Trustees/Representatives of**

10.1 **Debenham High School.** No Report received

10.2 The Resource Centre requested to bring their item forward due to travelling time. *Permission granted*

**Resource Centre: Melanie Wood, Debenham Resource Manager
Gill Jenkins, Mid Suffolk Locality Manager**

Background Debenham Resource Centre was converted from the old Barclays Bank Building in Cross Green, Debenham, opening in May 2003, so it is celebrating its fourth birthday next month. Mid Suffolk District Council are supporting staffing at Debenham for 3 years from 2006-2009 by contributing £2,300 each year. Debenham Resource Centre is a library, linked to the Suffolk County Council Libraries, Archives and Information Service. As such, it offers the same services to the people of Debenham as every library in Suffolk.

It's free to join the library and everyone is welcome. With a library card you can borrow books, CDs, DVDs, videos, spoken word such as story cassettes and language courses, and computer games from Debenham Resource Centre or any library (and return them to Debenham Resource Centre or any other Suffolk library). You can use the internet for free The virtual reference library on our web site provides links to a wide range of selected internet resources from travel information to homework help.

Staff at the resource centre are trained to help customers access e-government sites, including parish, council and national services. Access is free. You can ask a question on AskSuffolk, our email enquiry service. From Debenham Resource Centre or any library, you can access services and special collections, such as the Music and Drama collection; the home library service and the Suffolk Record Office; you can also access ancestry websites and research your family history – a very popular pursuit, these days!

Facts about Suffolk Libraries

- Around 500,000 library cards in circulation
- In Suffolk, all libraries are open on Sundays. This is a pioneering service.
- 2500 people are offered library services in their own homes
- Suffolk is one of the first library services in the country to offer a self-service system
- We answer over 700,000 queries each year
- Over 117 million internet pages are accessed from libraries each year

Suffolk Record Office holds written, aural and photographic historical documentation of Suffolk for the use of present and future generations

Services Offered at Debenham Resource Centre

All Suffolk Library services mentioned above are offered at Debenham. We also offer:

Free basic computer tutorials for adults

Free Bookstart activities for babies and toddlers – nursery rhymes and story time.

Bookstart is a national programme that works through locally based organisations to give a free pack of books to babies, with guidance materials for parents and carers. It promotes a life-long love of books and is based on the principle that every child in the UK should enjoy and benefit from books from as early an age as possible. The first five years are the best time for learning to talk and most of a child's language comes from the adults around them. Babies and toddlers who love books begin reading sooner and have a better chance at school.

Free craft activity sessions for children at weekends

National Initiatives such as the Reading Game

The largest national reading promotion for children aged around 4 to 11, the Summer Reading Challenge is now run in 94% of UK library authorities (99% in England). It runs

in public libraries through the summer holidays, and is supported by leading children's publishers.

A free local noticeboard for events and activities

A selection of leaflets and information about local events and services

A small reference section which includes Parish Council minutes, as well as online reference access to e-government

The newspaper and a cup of coffee

And always, a welcome to every customer.

Use of the Centre

There has been a general increase in the use of the centre in 2007-8, with visitor figures up by 13% in the last year.

The Resource Centre is a popular and well-used facility in Debenham and some statistics about its use and services are attached. It is a significant community resource for learning, leisure, information, culture and ICT, despite its small size.

Volunteers

We have run a very successful programme of volunteer placements for young people, helping with ICT, stock work and the Reading Game. Other volunteers from the community have also supported the Centre, particularly over the summer months with the Reading Game. We would welcome additional volunteers for the Reading Game this summer to talk to the children about what they have read.

Events at Debenham Resource Centre, 2007-2008. National Reading Game

Debenham took part in THE BIG WILD READ, the annual National Reading Game for school children in Summer 2007. This game is a reading challenge to children to read and describe six books over the course of the summer holidays. It keeps them reading, helping maintain their reading skills in the long summer break. It is a fun, family-friendly way of bringing books into everyday home life. Over 26 local children and families took part in the challenge this summer, topped off by a presentation of certificates by Councillor Eddy Alcock in September. The library will take part again in 2008.

Bookstart

A regular nursery rhyme and story session is now taking place every Saturday morning at 11.15 for the under fives and their carers. This happens while the library is closed, and is very well supported by local dads in particular. Plenty of out-of-key singing and loud musical instrument playing goes on, and children change their books each time they attend a session.

Internet Tutorials

There's a long waiting list for our weekly, one-hour, basic online sessions now, and over 30 local people have attended between one and six sessions each over the year. They learn how to use the internet and email in sessions which take place while the library is closed.

Christmas Fair opening

The library opened specially for the Debenham Christmas Fair on a dark Friday night in December. Children's activities and a big secondhand book sale went down very well with over 250 people who visited on that evening. The children decorated the library for Christmas, and we were delighted to be able to support the village.

Extension of library services

- Sales of greetings cards, booktokens, secondhand books and DVDs and other items - we have introduced items for sale at the library as an extension of the service we offer the village
- Increase of spoken word - we have extended the selection of storytapes and CDs for adults as there are particularly popular in Debenham.
- Increase in numbers, and refreshed display of books - we have increased the number of children's books available, and we change the books and DVDs available in the library every few weeks.

Resource Centre and mobile library are now interchangeable -both library service points are using the same computerised system now, so that customers can take out and return items to either. Many

people are enjoying this increased choice of when and where you can take out and bring back books.
- **Dog water!** - we have now placed a bowl of dog water outside the library. Obviously, this is an essential item in a service that tries to meet the requirements of every inhabitant of this village...

Plans for 2008-2009

National Year of Reading - 2008 is designated the National Year of Reading and at Debenham we are planning to celebrate with several activities.

Jane Hissey, a well-known and loved children's author and illustrator will be visiting the Resource Centre in October. We are planning to invite children to listen to stories and do activities with her.

Debenham Street Fair opening. To support the village's street fair this year we will open until 6pm and run children's activities and a secondhand book sale among other things.

Reading Game 2008. This year on the theme of sport, our annual reading game will take place through the school summer holidays.

UK Online courses. As part of the national network of UK Online centres, the Resource Centre will be able to offer computer courses in topics as varied as "understanding job hunting online", "understanding government services online" and even "understanding shopping online"... Children's centre in Debenham. We are having talks with Fran Woods, who will be based in the new children's centre about how we can work together.

AS the year progresses, we will continue to report in the parish magazine and continue to post our news on the village website. We look forward to welcoming you all to the library this year.

Comments about Debenham Resource Centre in 2007-2008

"I am very happy the children have the summer reading to do. It keeps them progressing so it is not a struggle when they go back in September. I have noticed real progress each time they do the course. Many thanks."

"We really enjoyed taking part in the big wild read. It was good for the children to have a goal to go for and they enjoyed the stickers. Also we talked about recycling, animals and nature together. It was great."

"It gives a good incentive to keep reading over the holidays. My children have thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to next year's scheme."

Opening Hours

16 hours per week : Tuesday 9.30am - 1pm; Wednesday 3pm – 7.30pm

Saturday 12 noon – 4pm; Sunday 12 noon – 4pm

Plus ICT classes and weekly Bookstart activities (eg Storytime/Baby Bounce/Tot Rock)

Service Provision

- Suffolk County Council Libraries, Archives and Information service point, part of the Adult and Community Services directorate
- Access point ('C Store') for Customer Service Direct (CSD) – the partnership between Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and British Telecom, offering supported on-line access to Mid Suffolk and County Council services.

Use of the Resource Centre

Issues May 2003 – March 2004 - 7869; April 2004 – March 2005 – 8426; April 2005 – March 2006 -9907; April 2006 – March 2007 - 8936

Visits Figures assessed from Library Visits Surveys
2003/04 – 8008; 2004/05 – 7449; 2005/06 – 7332; 2006/07 – 6725; 2007/08 - 7748

ICT classes

2007/08 Over 30 adults tutored by the manager in basic internet skills.

Reading Game

The annual Summer Reading Game for children aged c. 4-12 years. The children read six books

over the summer holidays, discuss their reading with staff or volunteers and receive certificates and medals when they complete the Game.

2003 – Starters: 36. Finishers: 23. Percentage finishing: 63%

2004 – Starters: 52. Finishers: 28. Percentage finishing: 53%

2005 – Starters: 60. Finishers: 34. Percentage finishing: 56%

2006 – Starters: 24. Finishers: 9. Percentage finishing: 37%

2007 – Starters: 47. Finishers: 26. Percentage finishing: 55%

10.3 **Sir Robert Hitcham Trust:** Ron Walters - Parish Council Representative on the Sir Robert Hitcham Trust.

Report on Sir Robert Hitcham Trust Meeting 2008.

Election of Officers

Chris Wilkes, Andy Lucas and Elspeth Borley were re-elected Chairman, Treasurer and Clerk.

Accounts

The accounts of the Trust are in good order, the interest that the funds are earning more than cover the usual annual expenditure. The interest from the trust investments (about £6000) is more than covering the cost of the annual awards.

Correspondence

A number of letters had have been received from previous award applications thanking the trust for their awards.

During the last year 12 awards were made.

Other Possible Awards: The trust discussed the possibility of making wards to other youth groups and young people's organizations in Debenham that have an educational focus. It was agreed that this be discussed fully at the next meeting in July.

10.4 **Sir Robert Hitcham School Governors** No Report received

10.5 **St Mary's Church PCC**

The Churchwardens' report was produced by Church Warden Mr P Holme and read by Mrs S Dalison

Patrick has made a good recovery after breaking his hip 12 months ago. He provides good and caring leadership to our parishes and is prolific in the amount of visiting he does across all our parishes. This visiting is very welcome and a credit to him. Patrick has organised a regular meeting called Philosophy 7 whereby well respected and authoritative speakers give talks on various subjects then the meeting is opened up for discussion. These talks have proved to be extremely interesting, very popular and are recommended to all.

Morning prayer at 08:00 each day has been introduced and a special thank you to Patrick & to Shirley Dalison for making these services possible.

Unfortunately due to lack of numbers we still do not have a Junior Church. This is being looked at by the Ministry team and hopefully in the future we will be able to offer more to our young people.

Attendance at our Communion services has averaged 42 each Sunday. Festival Services were all well attended, particularly at Christmas & Easter.

The Church Organ is to be cleaned and repaired over 2 weeks in June. This requires a complete dis-assembly and then a rebuild. This work is being paid for by the Friends of St Mary which we are very grateful for.

In December of this year we received an offer of a Grant from English Heritage. This Grant is for replacement of the Parvis roof (The roof above the Galilee Porch - West entrance), replacement of the churchyard drainage system and for more exploratory work to establish the best course of action to correct the outward movement of the North aisle wall. This Grant comes in two stages, the first stage is to do project development to establish the extent of the repairs needed, identify the contractors and sub-contractors required and to produce a well costed estimate. We are given 12 months to complete this first stage. The second stage is the actual repairs. Although English Heritage has offered a generous grant we have to find a substantial

amount of money, this is:

Stage 1: English Heritage Grant £13,000. We have to find £4,754 Stage 2: English Heritage Grant £61,000. We have to find £34,751

As you can see this is a large commitment and a lot of fund raising will need to be done.

Once again our thanks to the Parish Council for arranging grass cutting in the churchyard and pruning of the Trees on the East Boundary of the Church yard. The contractors continue to do a good and careful job. It is much appreciated by the P.C.C, villagers and visitors alike.

10.6 **United Reform Church: Mr E Read.**

Congregation averaged about 30 each Sunday.

Bi-monthly Songs of Praise is very popular.

Women's Fellowship held fortnightly.

Recent listed building survey cost £700 and identified rising damp which will cost £17k to treat.

10.7 **Debenham Village Hall & Playing Field Trust & 9.15 Debenham Leisure Centre :**
Mr Mel Aldis, Centre Manager

DEBENHAM LEISURE CENTRE (DLC) ANNUAL OPERATIONAL REPORT - MAY 2008

On the sporting front DLC offers a wide variety of sports for all ages and abilities.

We continue to host several County and Inter-league matches in Football, Badminton & Bowls and are regularly congratulated on our fine facilities and level of hospitality from our visitors.

DLC is the home base of Debenham and Deben Vale Badminton Clubs, Debenham Bowls Club, Debenham Karate Club, Debenham Bridge Club, Debenham Squash Club, the Kickboxing Academy, plus the newly formed Debenham Tennis Club.

We also run an extensive programme of Exercise, Dance & Yoga classes for adults, along with an Art Club, Carpet Bowls Club, Scottish Country, Tap and Salsa Dancing classes.

We offer regular coaching sessions for children in, Football, Tennis, Hockey, Cricket, Gymnastics, Squash, Basketball, Kick-Boxing, Trampolining, Dance, Badminton, Netball, Karate and in association with 'Polka Dots' a Drama and Performing Arts Club.

The Football Club based at the centre currently runs 2 adult teams, with the first team playing in the Eastern Counties League and the 2nd eleven playing in the Reserves Section, the Youth Section also has 14 teams, including 3 Girls teams, providing competitive and development matches for children aged 8-18. This season saw the first team compete in the FA CUP for the first time and although they won't be playing in the final at Wembley on Saturday they did win through 4 rounds finally bowing out to the 1987 winners AFC Wimbledon in a match that courted considerable publicity and media attention for the Centre and the village of Debenham. We also deliver an extensive Summer Holiday Programme with a wide range of activities from just play to County standard coaching.

The Fitness Studio is very popular, with several members being of the older generation along with a good number that are making use of the Referral Scheme we run in partnership with the Doctors Surgery.

The Community Centre continues to flourish and is booked most weekends for events and every weeknight for activities/clubs etc. Over the past 12 months we have had a variety of hirers, from private bookings for weddings and parties to corporate events and conferences. We are pleased to be the home of M.C.F every Sunday morning, M.C.F. bring over 300 visitors to the Centre each week.

The community centre lists amongst its regular users Debenham Young Farmers, the Women's Institute, Dance East, Suffolk Farm Machinery Club, Debenham Players, Eastern Angles, Bury Theatre Royal, Wingfield Arts, Suffolk Primary Care, Blood Donors, Stowmarket Lions, Mid Suffolk District and Suffolk County Councils to name but a few. Once again we have been able to support the Primary School, High School, Debenham Church, Women's Institute and Roundabout Pre-School by allowing them a free use of the Community Centre for a fund raising activity.

One of the major DLC events is the Country Music Festival and Caravan Rally. This, once again, was fully booked and brought in around 450 people to the village for 5 days, this not only helps the Leisure Centre financially but these visitors also support all the other businesses in the village. This year sees the 20th Country Music Festival.

Last November saw us host the 9th Bonfire & Firework Spectacular with an estimated 800 visitors to this free event, which is only made possible due to the generous donations by local companies and organisations and the voluntary efforts of a number of villagers. With the increase in the cost of Fireworks we will need to find even more financial support for this year's event, so

please direct any possible sponsors towards the Leisure Centre Reception.

The DLC remains grateful to Mid Suffolk District Council for the annual revenue funding received, despite this gesture we still find it very difficult financially with the ever increasing cost of our overheads and the various forms of Legislation that are introduced each year that we have to adhere to.

DLC enjoys an average 2800 visitors per week for Sport and Leisure and the Deben Lounge is still a favourite social meeting place for many people.

As well as the Debenham Schools, Hartismere, Stowmarket and Stradbroke High Schools, Bedfield, Occold, Woringworth, Helmingham and Wetheringsett Primary Schools have all benefited from our facilities in Sport and the Arts. This Multi-Use-Games-Area (known affectionately as the M.U.G.A) is still managed by DLC in the evenings on behalf of the High School. We continue to work with the minimum staffing levels that current legislation allows and so at times the DLC Staff are somewhat stretched, the continued support of the villagers and surrounding district is very much appreciated as we strive to maintain the levels of Sport and Leisure available at an affordable rate to all in Debenham.

If anyone would like to discuss any of the activities at DLC or like to offer any suggestions or advice please do not hesitate to contact me at the Leisure Centre,

10.8 **Debenham Football Club** No Report received

10.9 **First Responders**
No report received

10.10 **Simpson Charity:** Mr Mick Morley

The Simpson Charity is a trust that came into being more than 300 years ago to help the people of Debenham. The purpose of the trust is described in the following excerpt from the Will of John Simpson who died 7th May 1697.

“(a) £17 6s 8d to be laid out for the poor in bread, to be distributed on the Lord’s Day for ever, Forty

(twopenny) wheaten loaves of bread, to be given out at the Parish Church at Debenham.

(b) £12 13s 4d to be paid the five and twentieth of December yearly, to be laid out in eight coats and

six gowns, to be yearly delivered to the eight most needy poor men and six poor women of the town of

Debenham

£17- 6s – 8d

£12-1s3- d4

£30- 0s- d Annual Bequest”

Of course, £30 now doesn’t quite buy what it did in 1697, so the trustees have had to change the way the benefits are distributed. However the records show that this wonderful gift has continued each year to help people in the parish.

The charity is managed by three trustees:

Mick Morley, The Oaks, Gracechurch Street

Corel Moreton, 7, Gardeners Road

Francis Prout, 9, Gracechurch Street.

A letter will be sent to C Styles shortly requesting that the annual bequest be paid to the charity as willed. Mr Styles has always responded very promptly to the request and he is thanked for his earlier payments. Coral Moreton acts as treasurer for the charity and manages the bank account. The year opened with assets of £95.19. Following discussion last year on the approach to be used to make donations, the trustees agreed that notices should be placed around the village requesting nominations of those who could most benefit from a gift to the value of about £30. Notices are normally placed in the following locations: Parish Magazine, Notice Board, Paper Shop, Post Office, Dove Cottage, PC Newsletter. However, due to unexpected extra tasks

during the run up to Christmas, this publicity did not take place and there were no nominations this year.

No expenses have been claimed which leaves assets of £95.19

In these days of the welfare state it should be less necessary for charities to provide support for life's fundamentals, as did the Simpson Charity in earlier days. However, with a little bit extra it is still possible to make the year a little more special and memorable.

10.11 **Royal British Legion:** Mr R Taylor

The Debenham and District Branch of the Royal British Legion is a small but very active group. We are well known in the village for organizing the Remembrance Day celebrations and for the Poppy Appeal Collections. In both ventures we are lucky enough to have tremendous support from people in the village and surrounding areas. We endeavor to have a coffee morning in Dove Cottage as close to Remembrance Sunday as possible so that our members and friends who, for one reason or another, are not able to attend the actual services on the day can still pay their respects in a short service at the cenotaph. The two minutes silence on the day is very well supported and the placing of a cross at the base of the cenotaph for each of the fallen by children has proved to be a very popular move and is particularly appreciated by those relatives who are unable to do so personally.

A corner of Hogskiss wood has been planted with trees grown from seeds taken from the First World War trenches and we have placed a bench there so that people who lost relatives during the conflicts can just sit and remember. For each Remembrance Day we place four crosses there. One for each of the world Wars and, between them, the Star of David and the Red Crescent.

Not so well known, and quite rightly so, is the confidential work that we do for ex-service personnel and their dependants who need our help in one form or another. If we cannot help ourselves then we have the resources of the British legion to call on and this has proved to be very beneficial in the past.

So far this year we intend to have a stall at the Debenham Street Fair and we are also hoping to organize a veterans lunch in Dove Cottage. As usual our main concern will be the Remembrance Day Celebrations and the Poppy Appeal.

10.12 **Woodland and Waterways Steering Committee:** Mr G Baxter

The last 12 months has seen

1. The completion of the main tree planting for the wood and lake
 2. Further planting of the hedgerow along the front of the wood.
 3. 1st stage of planting the Flower Meadow • \
 4. Continued work parties for 2 hours on the 2nd Sunday of the month from 10am until 12 noon.
- What happens next?

1. Further planting of the hedgerow
2. Planting of Suffolk apple trees along the far side of the flower meadow.
3. Mulching later in the year to protect young trees
4. Maintenance of the wood and lake at the monthly work parties
5. The path is in need of repair due to Rabbits, we will try to repair where possible but it may require more drastic action.

10.13 **Scouts, Cubs and Beavers:** Ron Walters GSL 1st Debenham Scout Group.

Last year was the hundred-year anniversary of Scouting and I am pleased to report that we have had a very successful year; our numbers in Beavers, Cubs and Scouts continue to increase. We are now the second largest group in Stowmarket District and I believe the have the fastest growing Scout Troop in the county.

In the past year, three of our leaders have been given Scout awards by our Chief Scout, Peter Duncan, I received the Award of Merit, Tamara Walters our Assistant Beaver Scout Leader has been given the Chief Scouts Commendation and William Wickham our Scout Leader has also been recently been given the Award of Merit. Well done to them all.

James Nunn our Cub Leader and Julie Nightingale, Gary Cutts his assistants, have given the cubs another very good year. With three camps, including the scouting millennium camp, a visit to Felixstowe docks, water activities etc.

William Wickham our Scout leader assisted by Peter Wood has really given the scouts a great year, lots of camping and outdoor activities including the visits to the Army and RAF and this year are planning a camp in Scotland.

The beavers still managed for us by Coral Moreton, assisted by Tam Walters, they have had a lot of interesting activities including being present during the day at our millennium camp. All the groups have delivered very good programmes and as our waiting lists show we have a very healthy group this is all thanks to our leaders without them scouting will not happen and with more adult help we can keep growing. We need more adults to come forward and be warranted Beavers Leaders and each of the other sections could also do with more help. Like all the youth groups in Debenham our main wish is for a headquarters that we can manage and develop. I would also like to thank our Executive Committee, especially Secretary Alan Moreton and Treasurer Mark Ormond for their help and support over the last year, Stuart Hudson has volunteered to be our group chairman for next year.

Our AGM is this Thursday the 15th at Stonham Aspal School starting at 6.30pm, all parents of our young members should attend and anyone else who would like to help us is welcome.

AGM 2008 Agenda

Formal Business (Max 30 minutes)

1. Apologies
2. Introduction - Group Scout Leader
3. Elections
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Members to Serve on Executive Committee
5. Financial Report
6. Reports

10.14 **Guides**

Debenham Guides Spring Term 2008

We have 24 enrolled, 4 to enroll, one new guide coming next week, seven brownies moving up in September and a waiting list of four. We have put our subs up to £11.25 per week although we are encouraging the guides to pay per term. The Guides are starting to do badges and we have one who does one per week, we have given out approximately 15 so far. We have started a new patrol, the Elephants. We have all our GiftAid forms completed. We have booked a table for Debenham Street Fair on June 15th in order to raise funds. We have a new helper, Lesley Burgess, who comes every week and we will be enrolling her on May 8th. We have asked parents and now have a list of helpers at least one for every week. We have eight guides going to Thorpeness. We have roughly 16 Guides going to Guide Camp and one Guider and two Guide helpers. We have been handing out newsletters, at least one per term.

10th Jan: We rearranged the Guides into patrols and started Go For Its Dolphins - Chocolate Puffins - Party

Penguins- Showtime

Pandas - Chocolate

17th Jan: We welcomed new Brownies and continued with Go For Its

24th Jan: We celebrated Burns Night -the Guides were asked to bring in 10 things that were Scottish and we tried Haggis and shortbread

31st Jan: Go For Its

7th Feb: We celebrated Chinese New Year. The Guides were asked to come in something red. We tried some Chinese sweets and all had a fortune cookie and read out our fortune and the Guides were all given a printout of their Chinese animal and we attempted a dragon dance.

14th Feb : Half Term

16th – 17th Feb: Thinking Day: Most of our Guides came and stayed over although they didn't go to sleep very early.

21st Feb: The Puffins hosted a 60s Party. They raised £53 through a Cake Sale at Debenham High School and spent just over half on food and refreshments and did a really good job getting them their party Go For Its and badges

28th Feb: We made Mothers Day gifts by decorating boxes with lots of glitter and sequins and then we had Enrolment for our new Guides and presented the Go For Its.

6th March: We compiled unit guide lines and signed them .The Guides received their new patrol badge files and bags and played games and we said goodbye to Ruth and gave her a Royal Doulton Bunnykins guide.

13th March: We decorated paper eggs and threaded ribbon through them to make ornaments and made cards from cotton wool, feathers etc.

20th March: We made Easter Nests and had an Easter egg hunt. The Guides all got a little egg and Becky played a game.

Easter Hols

10th April: Preparation for Ruth's Party decorations and practising singing

13th April: Ruth's Party: The Guides all brought in cakes and waited on tables. Ruth gave the Guides a Cheque for £800 for a new shed.

17th April: New Brownies Patrol Quiz and choose a Go For It Planning Week. Dolphins Party Laras 18th April

Puffins- Glamarama

Pandas - Show Time

Penguins - Passion For Fashion

Elephants -On The Move

24th April St Georges Day the Guides brought in facts about St George and shared them
Week 8 Go for Its

Thanks from: Ruth Bolton, Jem Worrall, Tracy Lander And Lesley Burgess

10.15 **History Society:** Mr Lesley Grant-Adamson

The main news at The Debenham History Society was the retirement of the chairman Ian McKechnie after 13 years in the role. Ian remains on the committee and continues to work on the society's dendrochronology project which is investigating the age of properties in the village centre. The position of chairman has yet to be filled.

The society has enjoyed a good year with increased levels of attendance. Each year our challenge is to arrange two attractive programmes of lectures that will appeal to people from Debenham and beyond. Like other village societies we had been concerned about falling numbers, and so we decided to bring back speakers who had already proved particularly popular. Malcolm Russell returned with a new series on *Opera Through The Ages* in Autumn 2007; and in Spring 2008 Clive Paine talked about *Victorian Debenham*. Clive Paine had also given our 2007 Knowland Memorial lecture, on the sister of Henry V111. Future lectures will include topics as varied as genealogy and East Anglian painters. Our AGM has been arranged for August 27, when the Knowland lecture will be by Philip Aitkens, historic buildings consultant at Crows Hall.

The contact for the Debenham History Society is the secretary Susie Bronniman 01728 861561.

10.16 **Allotment Association** No report received

10.17 **Debenham Players:** Gerry Baxter, Vice Chair Debenham Players

What a wonderful 12 months for amateur dramatics in Debenham. During 2007/8 we have performed an original Pantomime by a local playwright "Happy Ever After- Return To Zog", plus "Debenham I'odel" by the Debenham Young Players, "Inspector Prickle and the Case of the Mickfield Mystery" a Dinner Theatre, written by a local playwright and produced jointly with EyesWrite followed by a second pantomime "Dick Turpin", then the musical "Oliver" and another play "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress". All productions use the village facilities of The Long Room in the Red Lion and/or the Community Centre.

The last production performed was Oliver and consisted of a cast of 45of all ages between 6 years old and 70+ also including 20 others Backstage, Front of House, Publicity, Lighting, Sound, and not forgetting Directors and Producer. All performances were sold out.

It was and is a pleasure to see so many villagers of all ages and skills and occupations join together for enjoyment - long may it continue!

This coming 12 months will see another Murder Mystery by another local Playwright in Sept. after a summer of play readings and weekly activities in the Red Lion followed by the Pantomime - Oh yes it is!

There are a number of plays that we have in mind for 2009 that will be discussed and agreed over the coming months for participation by new and not so new thespians.

10.18 **Debenham Youth Club**

The High Suffolk Centre (Youth Club) is used by a Girls' Group every other Monday evening * 7.00 - 9.00pm; as an "Open Youth Club" on Wednesdays (7.15 - 9.30); as a project evening on Thursdays (7.15 - 9.30) and our aim is to make it available once a Month on Fridays for "Live Music" 7.00pm to 10.30, and every other Friday for live music practice.

Mondays - Girls' Group and we have also run 2 Babysitting courses a year on Mondays from 5.30 to 7.00pm. The course leads to an AQA accreditation.

Wednesdays: Open Club & Girls' football

Young people can use the facilities and equipment available - Pool, Table football, Table tennis, darts, DJing, TV, Radio/CD and access to the Internet. There is the opportunity to make drinks, and some refreshments have been available. The young people have the opportunity to speak to staff about their successes and raise any issues of concern to them. It is an alcohol and smoke free, safe place to be. There is also a girls'football group - this started from scratch on Gary French's initiative and has developed into an extremely successful team.

Over the last year, the staff have used the activities and resources to work on:

* Citizenship - What it means to be part of a community. What is a community? Work on Anti Social Behaviour.

* Skin care and the dangers of sunbathing, use of sun screening.

* Using the Internet to access information and support - Source-me.

* Encouraging young people in the club to use their artistic skills. Using "The Big Draw" which takes place on one Saturday of the year.

* Sexual health - information about testicular, ovarian cancer, contraception, STIs. The staff will be taking further training on this and linking with local health workers.

*Surveying young people on their wants and needs.

Thursdays: Project Evening .

The projects offered to young people were:

Drama, Art, DJing, Photography, film making. At the moment, photography is being offered to year 8, but there have been no takers as yet.

Fridays:

Last year we ran a number of successful "Open Mic" sessions on a Friday evening, initiated by Mike Carpenter and Kate Scott. They ran from 7.00pm to 10.00/10.30pm once a month.

Numbers of young people attending varied between 45 and 90. The performers used equipment belonging to Mike Carpenter and his family. James Dixon, Alfie Carpenter and Kim Moore were the leading group of young people organising and running the evening's events. We have not been able to reinstate these evenings yet, due to disruption from building works at the High Suffolk Centre and many of the band members who have played before, are now taking their exams. However, as I said at the beginning, we plan to run these live music sessions as soon as possible, with regular opportunities for practice sessions on other Fridays.

10.19 **Debenham Society**

It has been a quieter year for the village's civic society because it decided not to take part in the 2007 Heritage Open Days weekend, an educational event that gives free access to properties and to information about them. It had been hugely successful the three previous years, and people were disappointed that it was not held here last year. However, the Debenham Society is organising it again this year, on September 13 and 14. The Debenham Society's Heritage Open Days organiser is Lesley Grant-Adamson 01728 861601.

10.20 **Garden Club**

Verbal report given by Mrs L Cockerton.

10.21 **Pre-School**

Verbal report given by Mr C Grover: The new building is in operation with 2 new members of staff, totalling 7 staff.

10.22 **Mendlesham Christian Fellowship**

First of all, apologies that we are unable to attend tonight's meeting. The last year has

brought many changes in the life of MCF with the introduction of a new strategy for the next three years. Alongside our Sunday morning meetings, which are attended by around 250, we have put on a number of events throughout the past year. The highlight had to be the Christmas production. Around 600 people came to see “Christmas Cards”, led by ex-Zimbabwean cricketer, Henry Olonga. Other events included a cabaret evening and visits from comedian John Archer and the Lacey Theatre Company.

Avalanche Ranch, a holiday club for 5-11 yr olds, ran during the first week of the summer and was attended by nearly 100 children. September then saw the start of a children’s club on Thursday evenings, which takes place in the community centre. Planning for this years holiday club, PowerLab, is already under way. As in previous years we sent a team, of mainly young people, to Croatia to help run a holiday club for local children. This was supplemented in December when we delivered over 200 shoeboxes full of goodies to be distributed in local schools. In addition to the Croatia team we will be sending two teams to Denver to work with the homeless and three teams to rural Zambia to help with building, medical projects and two children’s camps. In local terms we have formed a partnership with Eye Volunteer Centre, which covers the Debenham area, and are working with the new High Suffolk Children’s Centre, to allow us to help the community more effectively. We are also planning several more events for this year in Debenham, including a Euro football finals fun day in association with the Leisure Centre. Furthermore, we are currently working with several schools in the area as part of the OneChristmas project in which children record a Christmas CD and DVD with the proceeds going to charity.

This year has been very worthwhile and the next can only be better, as we try to be a light in this community.

11 **To receive suggestions and answer questions from the meeting**
None

12. **Any Other Business.**
None

The Meeting closed at 9.46pm

.....Chair.....Date