



# CODDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER<sup>©</sup>

## AUTUMN/WINTER 2020

### Welcome to the Newsletter from the Parish Council

2020 has been a significant year for all of us, in many different ways. It has been a year of significant change for our Parish Council. After more than 30 years service on the Council, over 17 years as Chairman, Donald Burton stood down in September. We also saw the departure of long-serving councillors Isabel Burgess and Colin Hardy. The current Parish Council, led by its new Chairman, Allan Fowler, would like to thank Donald, Isabel and Colin for their outstanding service to the community.

Going forward, the Parish Council is committed to transparency and accountability. In June we launched a new Parish Council website, <https://www.coddendampc.org.uk/>, which provides details on all Parish Council matters, and more recently we added a "Current Issues" section to share the current priorities for the Council and to provide a way to get your feedback on these and other matters, directly to the Council.

If you'd like to get involved with the Parish Council you are very welcome to join our Council meetings, and if you'd like to become a councillor then please contact us at [clerk.coddendampc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.coddendampc@gmail.com) or 07548 152181.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and hope that everyone stays safe and well.

### COVID-19

When the first national lockdown started in March the Council joined with representatives of other community groups to form the Coddendam COVID-19 Response Group. The Council provided funding from the parish budget for the set-up of the support website, secured £1,300 in external funding and Councillors walked the streets to distribute newsletters. This was at a time when the District and County level support had not started.

Many local volunteers have worked tirelessly to provide a range of services to help our local community and the Parish Council would like to say a huge "thank you" to all those who helped, and continue to help, our community.

Suffolk County Council provides a range of information and support:

- Find information about testing in Suffolk, changes to local services, how to get help and guidance on schools, business and wellbeing by visiting the Suffolk County Council Coronavirus site at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Suffolk Advice and Support Service provides free professional advice in confidence on a range of things that you might need some help with. The service is available on **0800 068 3131** or for more details please visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>
- Suffolk Home But Not Alone service has been reopened to support people who are clinically extremely vulnerable and in need of further assistance. The service is available on **0800 876 6926** or for more details please visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/home-but-not-alone/>



### Preparing for Next Years Parish Budget

More details available at: <https://www.coddendampc.org.uk/current-issues#Finance>

During October to January all parish councils set their budgets for the next financial year (which runs from April to March). We have started our budget planning for next year, 2021/22; this is a priority for us because it directly affects the amount of council tax that we all have to pay.

The vast majority of income we receive in order to meet our spending requirements is through a 'precept'. This is the total amount to be raised through the council tax from all the dwellings within the parish area. The 'precept' is converted into an amount per council tax band and this forms part of your council tax bill each year.

The precept income from council tax is about 97% of the total income to the Parish Council. The remainder comes from small amounts from advertising, grants for footpath maintenance, allotments, locality grant funding, bank interest and VAT refunds.

The current spending requirements are broken down into four main areas, plus our general reserve fund (for emergencies).

The four areas are shown in the graph on the right.

1. **Ongoing Costs:** the costs for a range of services in the parish, this ranges from our Clerk's salary, street lighting, maintenance of the churchyard, tree surgery, ground maintenance to dog litter bins.
2. **Community Centre Loan:** is the cost of repaying loans, taken out when the community centre was first built, for the purchase of the centre and surrounding land. Unfortunately, the Council at the time (none of whom are now involved with the current Council) took a decision to decline an offer of financial support from The Day Foundation and instead took out a Government loan. These loans will be fully repaid by 2030.
3. **Supporting the Community Centre:** in 2019 the Parish Council transferred ownership of the Community Centre building, tennis courts, bowls green and the recreational area to a newly formed charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). The Parish Council has funded the Community Centre more than £30,000 for this year and last, in addition to providing £25,000 reserve funds. For 2021/22 agreement has been reached between the Parish Council and the Coddendam Centre CIO to fully support the CIO budget proposal of £13,136.
4. **Business Rates:** Mid Suffolk District Council is seeking business rate payments for the community centre, tennis courts and bowling green. Unfortunately, the previous Parish Council was advised that business rates would not be due and made no provision. This totals almost £10,000 for the past three years. In order to minimise the impact on the precept we have reached an agreement to spread the payment over three years and we are separately challenging the rateable value applied to parts of the premises. The outcome of our challenge will not be known until 2021.

In addition to the operating costs we also hold a 'General Reserve'. This is used for when we need exceptional items of expenditure. A recent example was when the Church wall needed urgent repairs. The reserves have reduced over recent years and we need to ensure we have sufficient reserve funds. By the end of this year we expect to have just £12,000 in our general reserves and we expect we will need to increase this in next years budget.

### What this means for your Council Tax

The amount you pay to the Parish Council through your Council Tax bill is based on the total precept divided by the number of houses, and the council tax band of your property. The legacy of the loan for the Community Centre and the ongoing support for funding the Community Centre requires more than half of the total precept payment, around £26,000. This equates to ~£90 a year if you live in a Band D property (more if you live in a higher band property, less if in a lower band). Ongoing costs equate to ~£45 per house, and Business Rates will be around £14, assuming Band D average. This means a total precept (excluding increasing general reserves) of £43,000, which equates to around £150 per year for a Band D property. Please note that the final budget for next year will not be formalised until January 2021, but, in an attempt to be as transparent as possible, this is the current view for next year.

The current Coddendam Parish Councillors are committed to supporting community initiatives and reducing the precept payment, and for your council tax payments to be at comparable levels with other parishes. However, this will take a number of years to achieve mainly because of the repayment of the Community Centre loan up to 2030.

The Parish Council fully supports the leadership team of the Coddendam Centre CIO and are certain that with access to funds available now that the Centre has charitable status, the range of great services offered, and the new management team that they will turn around the previous loss-making venture into surplus over the coming years, thereby reducing the demand on parishioners in their council tax.

### Coddendam Parish Precept Breakdown\*



*\*Note: the final precept budget will be agreed in January 2021, the figures shown are the expected amounts (rounded to the nearest thousand), this does not include increasing general reserve funds*

## STOP PRESS: Census 2021

Households across England and Wales will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021, ten years after the last census.

# census 2021

In spite of the Covid-19 restrictions, the Census is going ahead on 21 March next year, but with an emphasis on digital, as well as more traditional forms of engagement. There will be more information nearer the time.

## Planning: The Dukes Head

More details available at: <https://www.coddenhampc.org.uk/current-issues#Planning>

At the end of October plans to turn the Dukes Head into a house were approved by Mid Suffolk District Council planning officers.

The Parish Council has for many years been escalating the situation with the Dukes Head pub on the High Street, lobbying for action to be taken to reinstate it as a pub.

The owners applied for permission to convert the building into a home and although the Parish Council objected, Mid Suffolk District Council received only 4 comments from residents, 2 in favour of conversion, and 2 against.

There was also a five year "Asset of Community Value" period. This allows for other interests to come forward to try and activate community interest in the site. However, despite the very best efforts of some parishioners, unfortunately nothing was able to be resolved. It was only with great reluctance that the Parish Council determined to raise no objections to the application.



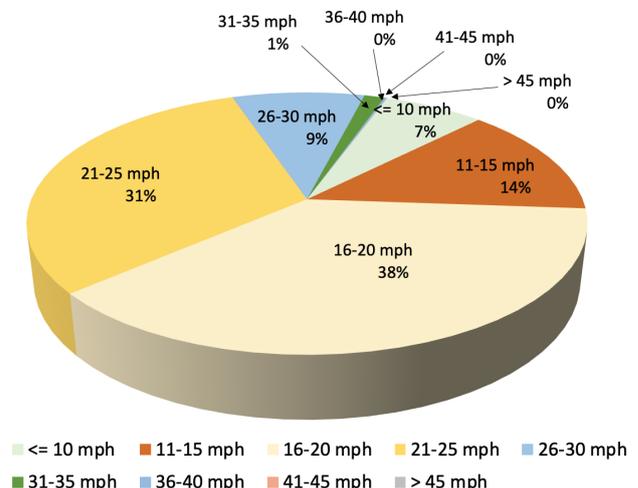
Over the years it has been clear that, as with so many village pubs, it is no longer viable for continuing as a pub. Whilst this is extremely disappointing we do have the excellent Country Club in Coddenham as well as a number of very good pubs nearby.

## Traffic Speeding

A 20mph speed restriction was introduced a few years ago to help reduce speeds in Coddenham. Unfortunately, Suffolk Police has stated that exceeding speeds in a 20mph area will not be enforced.

The Day Foundation has provided the Council with a speed indicator device which you can see on School Road. Many thanks to Colin Hardy for managing the speed indicator device and providing the results.

The pie chart on the right is the most recent data (August to November 2020). This measured more than 34,000 vehicles with 59% within the 20mph limit, and 90% not exceeding 25mph. The worst offender was travelling at 54mph.



**Traffic Speed Results – School Road**  
August – November 2020

## Traffic Congestion

More details available at: <https://www.coddenhampc.org.uk/current-issues#Traffic>

The problem of traffic congestion continues to be a serious issue for our parish, notably in the High Street and the knock-on impact on Church Road and School Road. Recently a number of cars have been damaged and an ambulance heading to an incident was stuck so long that another ambulance had to be sent. Lorries continue to travel down the High Street in contravention of the Suffolk Lorry Route Network, and the Lorry Watch Scheme, run by Suffolk County Council Trading Standards, is ineffective.

The development of Sizewell C will almost certainly create even more traffic travelling through our parish. The Parish Council has written to the Planning Inspectorate to express serious concern about the lack of infrastructure to support this development and the direct impact we expect on our parish. Our correspondence is published on our website.

Previous schemes to trial a one-way route and the Northern Route Bypass are not progressing. There is clearly no simple answer. However, the Parish Council is once again raising this issue and in response the Suffolk County Council Leader, Cllr Matthew Hicks, has agreed to meet in December. The Council will continue to lobby for a review and investment into initiatives to improve this situation. The "Current Issues" section of our website will be kept up to date with progress.



Ambulance stuck on the High Street



Lorries travelling in both directions on the High Street

## St Marys Churchyard

For many years the "closed" churchyard at St Mary's Church has been maintained by the Churchyard Management Group. As a result, the Churchyard area has significantly improved over the years thanks to a number of volunteers. A little-known fact is that parish councils can often have a legal responsibility for closed churchyards, and with the good work over previous years meaning there is less and less for a separate group to do, the Parish Council decided that it should take back the responsibility for managing the churchyard. The Parish Council is extremely grateful to the Churchyard Management Group and the volunteers, which include a number of parish councillors, who have helped look after the churchyard. Although the Parish Council has taken back this responsibility it still very much welcomes and encourages the help and support of volunteers.

## New Parish Council Noticeboard

As part of the recent improvements at the entrance to the recreational ground we now have a new noticeboard for Parish Council information.

The noticeboard and fencing is made of "man-made timber", this is "timber" made out of recycled plastic.

The noticeboard was funded from a District Council Locality Budget grant and our thanks go to District Councillors John Whitehead and Tim Passmore. We'd also like to thank the Community Centre CIO, our Parish Councillor Roy Groom, Alan West and other volunteers for all the work that made this possible.



**The Parish Council wishes you a very happy Christmas and to stay safe and well**

Editor: Cllr Neil Scoresby. All information correct at time of going to print. Enquiries regarding this newsletter and future newsletters should be made to the Clerk to the Parish at: [clerk.coddenhampc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.coddenhampc@gmail.com)