

**Occold Parish Council**

# **Annual Report 2021**



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# Contacting the Council

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Email – [Occoldparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:Occoldparishcouncil@gmail.com)

Website - <http://occold.onesuffolk.net/organisations/parish-council/>

## Staff

Mrs Joy Hart – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer  
(Part time)

## Councillors

Name	Address	Email address	Phone
Colin Cripps - Chair	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:Colin.cripps@sky.com">Colin.cripps@sky.com</a>	01379 672945
Kevin Chittock – Vice Chair	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:kevinchittock@gmail.com">kevinchittock@gmail.com</a>	01379 678464
Stephen Hubner	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:stephenjhubner@gmail.com">stephenjhubner@gmail.com</a>	01379 678360
Michelle Grange	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:Grange50@hotmail.co.uk">Grange50@hotmail.co.uk</a>	07905 332396
Alison Davenport Jones	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:mrsalison@gmail.com">mrsalison@gmail.com</a>	01379 672996
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Dave Griffiths	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:Dave324@btinternet.com">Dave324@btinternet.com</a>	
Tim Weller	Address in the Parish of Occold	<a href="mailto:Tim_weller@btinternet.com">Tim_weller@btinternet.com</a>	01379 678995

## District Councillor

Peter Gould, Brome Park Farm, Brome Avenue, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7HW [peter.gould@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:peter.gould@midsuffolk.gov.uk)

## County Councillor

Andrew Stringer, Robin, Blacksmith Road, Cotton, Suffolk. IP14 4QN [Andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk)  
Tel 07545 423842

## Message from the Chairman – Colin Cripps

The past two years have been incredibly difficult with the arrival of Covid-19, affecting all of us in our daily lives. We have all suffered trauma and change resulting in a whole new way of life from the words 'Lock down', to the tragedy of losing a close family member or friend. How wrong I was to think that we would all be safe in our small rural village. Neither did I consider I would also suffer a personal bereavement.

It was heart warming to see the resilience of people against the challenges they faced and on behalf of the village we are eternally grateful to the group of volunteers who came forward to offer help and advice.

I would like to pay my personal respects to the late Councillor Brian Hull, for his work in the Community of our Village and for being a friend.

With 'Lock down', the Parish Council were still able to maintain contact and held meetings remotely via the use of 'Zoom'. Although not practical it meant that we were able to carry on the business of the Parish Council.

My thanks go to County Councillor Andrew Stringer and District Councillor Peter Gould for their assistance to the Parish Council.

I also extend my thanks to the Parish Councillors who gave up their time to support Occold Village and its parishioners.

Finally, my personal thanks go to Joy Hart, Parish Clerk, for her wealth of knowledge and patience.

Colin Cripps  
Chair – Occold Parish Council

## Introduction

Occold Parish Council is an elected body (a corporate body) and a legal entity in its own right, of qualified residents of the Parish granted powers by parliament (Local Government Act 1972 Part 1 Section 2) to represent the interests and opinions of the communities they serve and to speak on their behalf with authority and integrity.

It has the power to raise money through an annual precept which is then collected by the principal Council through the Council Tax.

It must act within the law and can only spend, raise or use money if it has a statutory power to do so.

There are few duties but a wide range of powers. The Council must hold at least 3 meetings a year and an Annual Parish Meeting in May and there is another duty to provide allotment gardens if the demand is unsatisfied.

In addition, the Council has a wide range of powers which it may use to provide such things as a public clock or a bus shelter.

In June 2020, the Clerk asked Council to pass a resolution that it was eligible to use the General Power of Competence as it met the criteria for eligibility relating to the electoral mandate and relevant training of the Clerk.

The criteria are that at least two thirds of the members of the Council must hold office as a result of being declared elected – at that time the Council had 7 elected Councillors - and that the Clerk must hold the Certificate in local Council Administration (CiLCA) and should have received training in the exercise of this power. The Clerk qualified in November 2017.

After discussion the Council resolved that it was eligible to use the General Power of Competence which gives the Council “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they do not break other laws.

Occold has 9 Councillors. All Councillors carry out their duties voluntarily but can be reimbursed for expenses incurred.

Councillors do much more than just attend meetings where projects are discussed and progressed and policies, procedures and practices are constantly reviewed – their work involves taking part in parish activities; dealing with varying resident issues and representing Occold Parish Council on outside bodies.

Electors over the age of 18 years may become local Councillors as long as they are a British Citizen or a Citizen of the Commonwealth or European Union.

They must reside in the Parish or within 3 miles of it or have had their principal place of work or have occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises within the Parish. They are either elected at the four yearly elections or can be co-opted after a casual vacancy occurs.

Councillors represent the views and concerns of residents. They must attend meetings when summoned by the Clerk. They must take part in meetings and consider all the relevant facts on matters which require a decision and should report back.

Individual Councillors do not have powers to make decisions. They are required to comply with a code of conduct, in line with the Nolan Principles [8] which includes the completion of a 'register of interests'.

At a meeting of the Council a member must declare a 'disclosable interest' and must not participate in any vote on the matter declared.

A Councillor cannot be appointed to a paid office whilst a Councillor or for 12 months after he ceases to be one.

Occold Parish Council continually works towards improving community well-being and providing better services at a local level.

Through an extensive range of discretionary powers, we provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services including bus shelter cleaning, street lighting, benches and litter bins.

The Clerk is employed by the Parish Council as an independent and objective servant to carry out its administration and take action on its decisions. The Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer.

The Clerk prepares policies and procedures and gathers information to help the Council make decisions. They have no inherent powers to make decisions unless it is allowed for in Standing Orders.

The Clerk is known as the 'Proper Officer' meaning the person appointed by the Council to do its work. The role is crucial to the continuity and efficiency of the Council. They are not elected and hold a statutory role to give guidance to Councillors and the Chair on decisions made by the Council even if the guidance is unpopular and includes advice and guidance on Governance, ethical and procedural matters.

The Clerk is not answerable to any individual Councillor and must remain objective. Currently the Parish Council does not have an office and Council services are administered from the Clerk's home address.

Appointments to see the Clerk can be made by contacting her directly.

## Councillor Areas of Responsibility

<b>Planning</b>	Planning Applications. Planning Information. Rural Development and Parish Plans	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Highways</b>	Roads and Footways. Hedges and Trees. Street lighting. Street cleaning/litter. Road signs.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Projects and development</b>	Project Management. Village Hall Liaison. Football Club liaison. Transport issues.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Conservation and Community</b>	Youth Provision/Development. Community development. Street planting. Village tubs. By-ways/ conservation.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	Trees/landscapes/surveys. Lorry Watch	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Assets Management</b>	Planned/Reactive Maintenance, 5 year plans, Lease agreements, safer neighbourhood	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Finance/Budgets</b>	Pay Roll. Risk assessments. Insurance. Financial Regulations/Governance/ bank signatories.	Colin Cripps Michelle Grange Kevin Chittock
<b>Personnel</b>	Vacancies/Interviews. Annual appraisals. HR matters. Job descriptions.	Colin Cripps Jill Crouch Alison Davenport Jones



# Report of Council Activity 2019-21

(This report will cover the last two years)

It has been a very strange year since the Coronavirus caused us to completely rethink the way that we work both privately and as a Parish Council.

Joy Hart took over from Caroline Emeny as Clerk in November 2019 and since April 2020 all of our business was carried out over Zoom conferencing until May 2021.

## Coronavirus

Coronavirus in March 2020 brought challenges for the Village – the Council are very grateful to a local support group set up by Lucy Elkin and Sam Cutler offering support which worked really well and continues to do so.

Support for all the Area came from Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council has set up a dedicated hot line.



## Parish Councillors

The Council were very saddened at the loss of Cllr Brian Hull in November 2020. On Thursday, October 29, Brian worked as normal on his farm. By Friday he was still working but had started to feel unwell. His condition deteriorated rapidly over the weekend, and on Monday 2 November he was taken to hospital. He died two days later “after a short, vicious battle” with Coronavirus. Brian was a huge part of the village and a Parish Councillor for such a long time and he is sorely missed.

We welcomed Cllr Andrew Duggett to the team in January 2021. He is already playing his part by being a volunteer for the SID team and has also taken on the task of looking at the Occold website and updating information on there. This is a huge task and we are grateful to him for attending to this. Village organisations are encouraged to keep their details updated.

At the April meeting Cllr David Griffiths was appointed to the vacancy but sadly then – for work commitment reasons - we received the resignation of Cllr Richard Owen – again a stalwart for the village and we are grateful for the time he took to contribute to village life as a Councillor.

As a result of Richard's resignation, the Council co-opted Tim Weller to the role of Councillor in June 2021.



## Highways

June 2019 saw the Council's first enquiry with Suffolk County Council relating to a safer crossing area for the school. Progress has been extremely slow and Cllr Kevin Chittock regularly reminds the County Councillor of the lack of progress. We will continue to press for safety measures at this spot.

The Council has an active request in to the County Council to join the Lorry Watch scheme after several reports were received of HGV's ignoring the weight restriction and is awaiting further action from them in respect of training and signage.



The Clerk regularly reports issues with signage to Suffolk CC when she is made aware of them. Residents are encouraged to report issues themselves at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue/>

Suffolk County Council has received reports of the flooding issues last winter in the village and especially near the Village Hall and an engineer has been out to survey the problem.

## Neighbourhood Plan

In September 2019, flyers were distributed to all households to seek volunteers to consider a 'Neighbourhood Plan' and Community Led Housing. This led to a number of meetings and a presentation from Mid Suffolk District Council.

Unfortunately, after a number of volunteers pulled out it was considered not viable. The project will be revisited in the future should volunteers come forward to carry out the work.

## Speeding

Wheelie bin stickers were distributed throughout the village in December 2020 – thank you to Cllr Davenport Jones for co-ordinating the project. It is hoped that the stickers will remind drivers to slow down in the village.



Speeding is an ongoing concern and the Council continue to operate the Speed indicator device (SID) with volunteers. The data shows that there is a speeding problem in the 20mph area.

A new project has been launched by the County Council inviting all Parishes to take part in an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) trial where the SID device will display the registration number of the offending vehicle.

We will have to take our turn in the scheme as it proving popular in the whole County. Watch out for this in the area in the future.

## Village Events

Unfortunately, events planned for the VE day celebrations in May were cancelled after Coronavirus hit the whole Country in March 2020 and the Council went to 'Zoom' meetings.

Although it is good to get back to physical meetings, the public (and Councillors) have embraced the opportunity to log in from home on cold wet nights and there has been a reasonably good attendance.

## Planning

The Council has had some interesting plans across the table in the last 2 years including applications for additional properties at the rear of Cedar Cottage, a development at the rear of Cedar Close, a large detached house at Bulls Hall Road and large poultry houses at Castle Hill.

The Council works closely with the District Councillor to oppose controversial and excessive applications which have an adverse effect on the Village. Unfortunately, the Planning Authority at Mid Suffolk ultimately make the decisions on whether planning applications are subsequently approved.

Enforcement continues and the Council has reported several issues which are now being investigated by Mid Suffolk Council.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to the total value of £7,770 have been received from the developer of the properties at Cedars Rise. £5,000 has been donated to ORAC to help towards the development of the hall and the new extension. Further payments are due in this financial year.

The Council has also used the CIL monies to purchase two benches in memory of Cllr Brian Hull and another stalwart of Occold Tom Rivett who sadly passed away earlier this year. The benches will be placed shortly and thanks go to Cllr Jill Crouch for organising the Memorial benches after liaison with Brian's and Tom's families.



## Finances

Expenditure/Income for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 was as follows: -

General Admin	£4,674
S137 Payments	£ 750
Village Maintenance	£2,007
CIL payment to VH	£5,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£12,431</b>

Nationwide Building Society	£11,149
Unity Trust Bank	£ 500
c/f	<b>£11,649</b>

The Budget for 2021/22 was agreed at £9700. The precept was set at £8800, no change from the previous year with £900 taken from reserves.

Finally, we would like to thank all our volunteers in Occold who have got us through the very difficult last year with Coronavirus, from the litter pickers, the street sign cleaners, the Luncheon Club team, the speed team and anyone else we have forgotten to mention.

Thank you everyone for your valuable contributions.

# Schedule of Meetings

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2021-2022

All Parish Council Meetings are held at the Village Hall on the first Monday of the month with the exception of Bank Holidays. All monthly meetings commence at 8.00 p.m.

Additional Council Meetings may be called to consider responses to Planning Applications or to deal with other Business when the deadline is fixed and falls before the next Regular Meeting. Committee Meetings will be called as and when required.

The AGENDA for each Parish Council Meeting is posted on the Parish Council Notice Board on The Street opposite The Beeches, and on the Parish website not less than three working days before the Meeting.

The ANNUAL PARISH MEETING is open to All Registered Electors within Occold Parish and is held in May each year. The agenda for this will be posted not less than seven working days before the meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for all parishioners to express their views.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Specific Business at Meeting</b>
7 June 2021	Approval and submission of Annual Return to External Auditor
5 July 2021	All relevant council business included in the July meeting to enable Councillors to take a Summer break
August 2021	The Council will only meet in August if there are urgent matters
6 September 2021	Annual Insurance renewal due. Audited Accounts reported
4 October 2021	Commence Budget preparation for ensuing year
1 November 2021	Budget preparation
6 December 2021	Review of budget variances. Consider Grant awards
10 January 2022	Budget meeting and precept setting
7 February 2022	Chase any outstanding accounts and expected built for payment
7 March 2022	Last meeting of Financial year to review: Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Internal Controls; Freedom of Information Act -Publication Schedule; Register of Assets; Risk Assessment - Assets; and Risk Assessment - Financial. Election year prep if relevant.  Review Budget Variances.
4 April 2022	Finalise accounts: appoint internal auditor: Confirm date of Parish Meeting and send invites to village organisations.
Monday 9 May 2022	ANNUAL MEETING – Appoint Chairman, Vice Chairman, RFO, Members of Committees and Representatives to other Bodies. Make arrangements to publish Annual Accounts and submit same to audit

# HOUSING & POPULATION DATA PROFILE

## Occold



**(Last Updated: October 2019)**

This Parish Profile has been produced by Mid Suffolk District Council primarily to help inform local discussion on housing need. Most of the data comes from the 2011 Census (accessible via the ONS website). Other data sources have also been used as appropriate, and will be updated periodically.

How many people live locally?	Children Under 16	Working Age Adults (16 to 64)	People Aged 65 +	Dependency Ratio
<b>519</b>	<b>88 (16.9%)</b>	<b>331 (63.8%)</b>	<b>100 (19.3%)</b>	<b>0.57</b>
50.3% Males 49.7% Females	Mid Sflk Avg = 18.4% England Avg = 18.9%	Mid Sflk Avg = 61.5% England Avg = 64.7%	Mid Sflk Avg = 20.1% England Avg = 16.3%	Mid Sflk Avg = 0.63 England Avg = 0.55

[Source: ONS 2011 Census: KS101EW & KS102EW] [Dependency Ratio = Ratio of Non-working Age to Working Age Population]

Single Pensioner Households	Single H/holds < 65 years old	Lone Parent Families with Dependent Children
<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>
10.1% of all Households Mid Suffolk Avg = 12.9% England Avg = 12.4%	11.0% of all Households Mid Suffolk Avg = 12.4% England Avg = 17.9%	12.1% of all families with dependent children Mid Suffolk Avg = 17.7% England avg = 24.5%

### General Health (All Usual Residents)

Very Good	Good	Fair	Bad	Very Bad
<b>51.8%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Mid Sflk Avg = 47.9% England Avg = 47.2%	Mid Sflk Avg = 35.3% England Avg = 35.2%	Mid Sflk Avg = 12.8% England Avg = 12.8%	Mid Sflk Avg = 3.1% England Avg = 3.6%	Mid Sflk Avg = 0.8% England Avg = 1.0%

[Source: ONS 2011 Census: QS302EW]

Total # Occupied Households	Owned (Outright or with Mortgage)	Shared Ownership	Socially Rented	Privately Rented
<b>208</b>	<b>170 (81.7%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>15 (7.2%)</b>	<b>20 (9.6%)</b>
	Mid Sflk Avg = 75.1% England Avg = 63.3%	Mid Sflk Avg = 0.8% England Avg = 0.8%	Mid Sflk Avg = 11.3% England Avg = 17.7%	Mid Sflk Avg = 11.2% England Avg = 16.8%

[Source: ONS 2011 Census: QS405EW]

- At the time of the 2011 Census some 13 dwellings (5.9% of all dwellings in Occold) appeared to be unoccupied. (Mid Suffolk Avg = 3.8%) [QS418EW]



<b>Number of Bedrooms (Occupied Households)</b>				
<b>None</b>	<b>1 bed</b>	<b>2 bed</b>	<b>3 bed</b>	<b>4 bed +</b>
<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>11 (5.3%)</b>	<b>42 (20.2%)</b>	<b>77 (37.0%)</b>	<b>78 (37.5%)</b>
Mid Sflk Avg = 0.1% England Avg = 0.2%	Mid Sflk Avg = 6.0% England Avg = 11.8%	Mid Sflk Avg = 25.0% England Avg = 27.9%	Mid Sflk Avg = 40.4% England Avg = 41.2%	Mid Sflk Avg = 28.5% England Avg = 18.9%

[Source: ONS 2011 Census: QS411EW]

<b>Total # Occupied Households</b>	<b>Total # with Under-Occupied bedrooms</b>	<b>Total # with Over-Occupied bedrooms</b>
<b>208</b>	<b>169 (81.3%)</b>	<b>4 (1.9%)</b>
	Mid Sflk Avg = 80.8% / England Avg = 68.7%	Mid Sflk Avg = 1.6% / England Avg = 4.6%

[Source: ONS 2011 Census: QS412EW]

<b>NET NEW RESIDENTIAL COMPLETIONS</b> (Last 5 Years: April to March)				
<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

[Source: Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Annual Monitoring Report]

<b>Avg Price &amp; No (in brackets) of Properties Sold in IP23 Postcode Area (Aug 2018)</b>				
<b>Detached</b>	<b>Semi-Det'</b>	<b>Terraced</b>	<b>Flat</b>	<b>All</b>
£386,000 (9)	£386,000 (1)	£375,000 (1)	£0 (0)	£385,681 (11)

[Source: Right Move website: Market Trends]

#### **MID SUFFOLK**

**In Mid Suffolk, in 2017 ...the average wage was £25,070. The average house price was £255,000. Therefore, the wage to house price ratio = x 10.17**

[Source: ONS website: Median wages, median house prices and ratio calculation]

## Other Information

- **County Councillor = Cllr Andrew Stringer** (Upper Gipping Division)
- **District Councillor = Cllr Peter Gould** (Eye Ward)
- Occold is identified as a **Secondary Village** in Policy CS1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy DPD (Adopted Sept 2008)
- Local Services in Occold are limited but include ... a Primary School, Parish Church, Village Hall and a Pub / Restaurant
- 68% of all households in Occold with at least one usual resident are reliant on oil-fired heating [QS415EW]
- There are no Housing Associations (Registered Providers) currently known to be active in Occold
- The **2014 Suffolk Housing Survey** shows that, across Mid Suffolk district:
  - 12% of all existing households contain someone looking for their own property over the next 3 years (mainly single adults without children). The types of properties they are interested in are flats / apartments, and smaller terraced or semi-detached houses. Although this is not their first preference, many accept that the private rented sector is their most realistic option.
  - 25% of households think their current property will not be suitable for their needs in 10 years time.
  - 2 & 3 bed properties are most sought after by existing households wishing to move.
  - Suitable housing options for more elderly people are less available within the current housing stock. 6% of all households have elderly relatives who may need to move to Suffolk within the next 3 years.