

Occold Parish Council

Annual Report 2022



This page left intentionally blank

Contents

Contacting the Council.....	4
Councillors.....	4
District Councillor	4
County Councillor	4
Introduction.....	5
Councillor Areas of Responsibility.....	7
Report of Council Activity 2021-22.....	8
Coronavirus	8
Parish Councillors	8
Highways	9
Quiet Lanes Project	10
Neighbourhood Plan	10
Speeding.....	11
Village Maintenance.....	11
Planning.....	11
Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL)	12
Finances.....	12
Schedule of Meetings.....	14
Parish Council Meetings 2022-23	14
Housing and population data profile.....	15
Occold	15

Contacting the Council

Occold Parish Council
Sucrerie
Old Bury Road
Stanton
Suffolk IP31 2BX

Telephone – 01359 408759

Email – 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	Colin.cripps@sky.com	01379 672945
Kevin Chittock – Vice Chair	Address in the Parish of Occold	kevinjchittock@gmail.com	01379 678464
Stephen Hubner	Address in the Parish of Occold	stephenhubner@gmail.com	01379 678360
Michelle Grange	Address in the Parish of Occold	Grange50@hotmail.co.uk	07905 332396
Andrew Duggett	Address in the Parish of Occold	Andrew.duggett@gmail.com	07976 486362
Dave Griffiths	Address in the Parish of Occold	Dave324@btinternet.com	
Tim Weller	Address in the Parish of Occold	Tim_weller@btinternet.com	01379 678995
Heidi Stone	Address in the Parish of Occold	heidi@h-stone.co.uk	
Angela Hall	Address in the Parish of Occold		

District Councillor

Peter Gould, Brome Park Farm, Brome Avenue, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7HW
peter.gould@midsuffolk.gov.uk

County Councillor

Andrew Stringer, Robin, Blacksmith Road, Cotton, Suffolk. IP14 4QN
Andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk
Tel 07545 423842

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 vacancies for 9 Councillors and currently has 8. 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 National Model 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

Planning	Planning Applications. Planning Information.	ALL
Highways	Roads and Footways. Hedges and Trees. Street lighting. Street cleaning/litter. Road signs. SID	ALL Andrew Duggett
Projects and development	Project Management. Village Hall Liaison. Football Club liaison. Transport issues. Neighbourhood Plan	ALL David Griffiths Heidi Stone
Conservation and Community	Youth Provision/Development. Community development. Street planting. By-ways/conservation.	ALL
Environmental	Trees/landscapes/surveys. Lorry Watch	ALL
Assets Management	Planned/Reactive Maintenance, 5 year plans, Lease agreements. Defibrillator	ALL Tim Weller
Finance/Budgets	Pay Roll. Risk assessments. Insurance. Financial Regulations/Governance/ bank signatories.	Colin Cripps Michelle Grange Kevin Chittock
Personnel	Vacancies/Interviews. Annual appraisals. HR matters. Job descriptions.	Colin Cripps David Griffiths Andrew Duggett

Report of Council Activity 2021-22

Coronavirus

Coronavirus has continued to affect our residents with restrictions in place until very recently. I would like to say that the support shown by our residents to each other throughout the crisis has been exceptional and I thank you for all your hard work. Let's hope that this is now firmly behind us!

Parish Councillors

The Council have been very lucky to have a full complement of Councillors for most of this year.

We were extremely fortunate to receive no less than four applications for the post after Cllr Hull's loss and Cllr Dave Griffiths was the lucky recipient, joining the Council in April 2021. He brings a wealth of expertise to the role.

In June there were 3 applicants for the role after the resignation of Cllr Richard Owen and Cllr Tim Weller was co-opted. He has done some really great work since joining the Council. Tim looks after our defibrillator on the wall of the Village Hall and is always willing to volunteer his services for projects and tasks.

Later in the year we again lost a very valuable Councillor – Alison Davenport Jones who moved out of the area. Alison was the instigator of the wildflower seeds that you all received through your letter boxes and I hope they have brought some colour and nature to your life.



Very recently we have lost Cllr Jill Crouch who has moved away. Jill has been a stalwart at cajoling residents to take up environmental projects and she will be sorely missed.

At the meeting in May 2022, the Council co-opted Heidi Stone to one of the vacancies and we look forward to working with her.

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 has taken the lead on this, regularly reminding the County Councillor of the lack of progress. The safety of our children is paramount.

We have recently received an estimate from the County Council for a preliminary design stage into a new footway from the school to the access to the village hall. This is in the sum of £5,747.42

This would be a preliminary design to see if a scheme is feasible and doesn't guarantee that a solution will be achievable.

The outcome of the preliminary design will allow the County Council to assess the safety hazards and whether these can be overcome and to assess the need for new infrastructure from an asset management perspective. The Parish Council has resolved to contribute £2,000 of CIL funding towards this project and we await their response.

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. Unfortunately, some of the signage has seen better days and will need replacing before we can join the scheme.



The Clerk regularly reports issues with signage/street lights and public footpaths 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/>

We continue to press Suffolk County Council to investigate the flooding problems at the entrance to the Village Hall. The blocked drain has been reported recently and is awaiting action by the County Council.

Thank you to Cllr Stephen Hubner for poring over some very old maps to try and resolve the issue of ownership of the various blocked drains.

Quiet Lanes Project

After consultation with the village, Council submitted an application for 'Quiet Lanes' status for Bulls Hall Road and Redlingfield Road. These have now been approved and were designated on 9 March 2022.



The County Council has erected posts for Councillors to put up the required signage. Thanks to Cllrs Andrew Duggett and Tim Weller who have now installed the signs (June 2022) and to Andrew for his work on this project.

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.

Some residents have recently indicated a wish to revisit a Neighbourhood Plan and a recent leaflet drop has been completed with a number of residents coming forward. This will be discussed further in the June Parish Council meeting.

Speeding

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

A new project was launched last year 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. The scheme is now scheduled to start in July 2022.

Village Maintenance

Two dog waste bins have been installed at Barric Lane near Wingfield House and Church Lane j/w Church Street.



These were provided free of charge by Mid Suffolk District Council but the Parish Council will pay an annual fee for them to be emptied.

Planning

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 Levies (CIL)

A total of £20,437 of CIL monies has been received from the developer of the properties at Cedars Rise.

Memorial benches to commemorate the lives of Councillor Brian Hull and local resident Tom Rivett have been installed on the Village Green and at the Village Hall at a cost of £1,350.

£7,500 has been donated to ORAC for various projects, and £85 to a wildlife project led by Cllr Alison Davenport Jones.

At the meeting on 4 April 2022 Councillors agreed a further £3,345 for an additional Speed indicator device and £1,000 to ORAC on completion of driveway repairs. With the £2,000 offered to the school safety project the Council currently has £5,157 for future projects.



The newly formed Occold Conservation Group instigated by resident Chris Hook already has some great ideas for environment and conservation projects for Occold,

These include wildlife corridors, (joining up existing habitats) opportunities for leasing and rewilding pieces of land, replanting hedgerows at various locations, creating walks with double hedged tracks and seats, improvements to the recreation ground area, foraging walks for Autumn seed collections and summer plant swops and an Occold/Oakwood Platinum Jubilee project to plant groups of Oak trees around the village.

The Parish Council are fully in support of this group and hope to give some financial support in the coming months.

Finances

The Budget for 2022/23 was agreed at £9885. The precept was set at £8800, no change from the previous year with £1085 taken from reserves.

Expenditure/Income for the year ended 31st March 2022 was as follows: -

Expenditure		Year End	
Democracy inc training and website	125	Opening balance	11650
Section 137 donations	650	Plus receipts	22119
Overheads	957	Minus expenditure	-13127
Admin	3658		20642
Village maintenance	3275		
CIL	3935		
VAT	527	Bank balance c/f	20642
	Total expenditure	13127	(Unity Trust)
Income			
Precept	8800		
CIL payments	12667		
Grants	304		
Other	348		
	Total receipts	22119	

Finally, I would like to thank all our Councillors – Kevin Chittock, Stephen Hubner, Michelle Grange, Andrew Duggett, Dave Griffiths, Tim Weller and Heidi Stone for your support of me and the giving up of your precious time for the residents of Occold

Also, a big thank you to the volunteers of all the organisations in the Village that make this a great place to live.

I look forward to working with you in the coming year

Colin Cripps, May 2022

Schedule of Meetings

Parish Council Meetings 2022-23

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.

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.

Date	Specific Business at Meeting
6 June 2022	Submit completed Annual Return
4 July 2022	Ensure all relevant council business is included in the July meeting to enable Councillors to take the summer break.
August 2022	The Council will only meet in August if there are urgent matters to consider
5 September 2022	Renew insurance. Note Audit result and display it
3 October 2022	Commence Budget preparation for ensuing year
7 November 2022	Budget prep
5 December 2022	Review Budget Variances. Award Recurring Grants
9 January 2023	Finalise Budget and set Precept for ensuing year.
6 February 2023	Chase any o/s debts before year end. Award recurring grants.donations
6 March 2023	Last meeting to review: Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Internal Controls; Freedom of Information Act -Publication Schedule; Register of Assets; Risk Assessment - Assets; and Risk Assessment - Financial.
3 April 2023	Review Budget Variances. Make arrangements for Final Accounts, appoint Internal Auditor and review scope of their work. Confirm date and arrangements for Annual Parish Meeting. Check and prepare for elections.
8 May 2023	ANNUAL MEETING – Appoint Chairman, Vice Chairman, RFO, Members of Committees and Representatives to other Bodies.
8 May 2023	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING for all Occold Registered Electors

Housing and 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
519	88 (16.9%)	331 (63.8%)	100 (19.3%)	0.57
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
21	23	8
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
51.8%	32.0%	13.7%	1.7%	0.8%
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
208	170 (81.7%)	0 (0%)	15 (7.2%)	20 (9.6%)
	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]

Number of Bedrooms (Occupied Households)				
None	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed +
0 (0%)	11 (5.3%)	42 (20.2%)	77 (37.0%)	78 (37.5%)
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]

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

[Source: ONS 2011 Census: QS412EW]

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

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

Avg Price & No (in brackets) of Properties Sold in IP23 Postcode Area (Aug 2018)				
Detached	Semi-Det'	Terraced	Flat	All
£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.