

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TUESDAY 7TH MAY CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Parish Council has had a very busy and productive year on behalf of the community and would summarise this as follows....

The Council has worked hard to create a more open, dynamic and two way communication environment with parishioners. Meetings are now streamed live to reach those who cannot attend in person and each meeting is preceded by an informal "surgery" during which time any resident can come and discuss any matter of concern to them. A Facebook page has been launched and now has in excess of 150 followers who can keep up with matters that affect them in real time. In addition to this, a new website is about to be launched which will carry the same content and information as the Facebook page, thereby enabling residents who may not access social media to keep abreast of relevant village matters. Finally, a Newsletter was distributed with February's In Touch magazine which was well received by all.

On infrastructure matters, a major investment was made in a new play area at Fen View and the new equipment is being enjoyed by all who use it. Our revised Neighbourhood Plan has now been formally submitted for examination and we hope to put it before the Village via a referendum later this year. We continue to stay close to developments with Babergh's Joint Local Plan particularly now that their second attempt at establishing housing numbers and distribution up until 2037 is underway. On a more micro scale, the Book Exchange has been renovated making it an eye catching and attractive feature coming into the village and a new Notice Board is in place at the Church Room.

The Council has been very active in trying to manage and reduce vehicle speeds within the village which we know is a major concern to residents. Quiet lane status has been implanted along Folly, Church and Back Lanes. Residents were surveyed about the possibility of seeking a 20's Plenty scheme within the village interior and following the 85% in favour outcome, a formal application is being prepared. In the meantime, the highly visible stickers on Wheelie bins are clearly having an impact! In addition to this, the Council is also exploring the feasibility of installing Speed Indicator Devices on Back Lane, Chapel Lane and The Street and has created a Speedwatch team of village residents who will be out on the streets with their high vis jackets and hand held guns shortly! Finally, we are also working with the Police safety camera team to increase the frequency of visits along The Old London Road and to update the data held regarding average vehicle speeds which would in turn enable further measures to be taken.

The potential development of a huge gravel pit and inert waste processing plant at Brockley Wood has been a major concern and the Council represented the massive opposition to this at the SCC Planning meeting in March. Despite this and the powerful opposition of Bentley PC and others, approval was given by a majority of SCC Councillors. It is apparent that there are a number of serious omissions and errors that potentially undermine the legality of this judgement and the Council is currently weighing up its options in its efforts to protect our community from this ruinous and unnecessary development.

Another matter of concern has been the persistence of anti-social behaviour and criminal road traffic offences being committed at Whights Corner by different groups of car drivers. The Council is working closely with residents, BMSDC and Suffolk Police in an effort to stamp this out.

Finally, the Council has looked closely at its own expenditure and has identified changes that will enable it to maintain its budget (precept) at its current level. Residents, therefore, will see no increase on the Parish Council element of their Council Tax bill for the coming year.

Council will continue to keep residents abreast of developments on all these matters via the communication channels covered at the beginning of this report.

Adrian Ward

Chair