

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 8 MAY 2017

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarise the main activities of the council since May 2016.

Annual Parish Meeting (APM) – 2016

The APM held on 9 May 2016 was the first since the Parish Council's election. At the APM reports were either presented by, or received from, the Chair of the Parish Council, the District Councillor and County Councillor, St Andrews Church, the Pettiward Hall Management Committee, the Garden Club, the Allotment Association, the Editor of the Village Newsletter and the Woodpecker Hill Trust. At the meeting of the council afterwards Peter Turner was elected as Chair and Rob Nurton as Vice Chair.

Parish Council

The elected Parish councillors in 2016/2017 were:

- Peter Turner (Chair)
- Rob Nurton (Vice Chair)
- Simon Tarabella
- Robin Fisher

Archie Gemmell, Martin Burns and Sebastian Reeves. (All co-opted in 2015)

Parish Clerk

Paula Gladwell continued to ably serve the Council in 2016/2017 and will have completed 6 years' service this November.

Parish Council Meetings

Formal council meetings took place on:

- 9 May 2016
- 13 June 2016
- 11 July 2016
- 12 September 2016
- 14 November 2016
- 12 December 2016
- 9 January 2017
- 13 March 2017
- 10 April 2017

In addition, there have been emergency planning and work group meetings.

Responsibilities and Issued addressed in 2016/2017

Precepts, Budgets and Finances

The final accounts for year ending 31 March 2017 were approved. In November, the Budget Working Group provided a report that enabled the council to make decisions about the future investments in Estate maintenance, facilities and services for which it is responsible. In January 2017, the Budget Working Group recommended the budget for 2017/2018. It was resolved to approved the budget for 2017/2018 as recommended, which generated a precept requirement of £10586. This is a slight increase over the previous year resulting in an additional £2.49 per Band D household for the year. The precept was also set. I am grateful to the councillors who assisted me in assuring an effective process for the setting of the precept. A review of the effectiveness of the council's governing arrangements and systems of internal control have been carried out and the controls were effective.

Planning

The Council met regularly to discuss planning applications submitted to MSDC, to register its views on them, and to note decisions made by MSDC.

Village Amenities

Children's Play Area and Village Car Park

The children's play area continues to be a frequently used village asset, following the annual playground report an action plan was drafted and the agreed recommendations have been dealt with, which included replacing the swing seats.

Community Herb Garden has been created in the corner boarder of the car park, the council would like to extend our grateful thanks to all those volunteering their time and expertise to bring the project to fruition. Grateful thanks to the Garden Club for their generous contribution to the project. When the plants are established I hope we can all benefit from fresh herbs with our Sunday roast.

Valley Lane facilities

The council considered ways in which improvements could be made to the sports facilities at Valley Lane, the feedback from questionnaires issued to all households in the parish was extremely disappointing, (24 returns from 350 households) Due to the lack of interest it was resolved not to pursue this matter at this juncture.

The **wild flower meadow** was finally seeded last May and we hope for a good show this summer, there are several species that have been identified on the meadow, obviously not flowering yet as it is still too early.

New Picnic Table. A picnic table has been installed between the wild flower meadow and the 5-a-side football pitch. This was due to the kind generosity of the Garden Club.

New Fence and 5 Bar Gate. The council resolved to approve the erection of a post and rail fence between the Valley Lane car and the playing field. This was necessary to avoid cars accessing the football pitch and damaging the surface.

Allotments

The allotments are currently all occupied and being well managed. The tree line and hedge between Valley Lane and the allotments was coppiced last summer, financed jointly by the Parish Council, Garden club and Allotment Association. The Allotment Association have taken on the responsibility for maintaining the hedge at a manageable height.

Woodpecker Hill

The footpath that runs through Woodpecker Hill, adjacent to Pilgrim Court is continually wet for most of the year, despite laying a membrane and wood chipping the footpath last autumn. The problem has occurred due to lack of ditch maintenance, surface water outfalls flowing into the ditch that has no flow due to build-up of debris. Quotes were received to clear the ditch between Woodpecker Hill and Pilgrim Court. It was resolved to accept David Cook's quote being the most reasonable. The work is currently in progress.

Pettiward Hall

Pettiward Hall Management Committee, established in March 2015, continues to successfully manage the operations and improvements of the hall. The Parish Council nominated Mary Preece to continue as custodian trustee for a further 4 years.

Post Office Van Service

The Post Office van service has been successfully operating for a year, it is in the village car park on Mondays and Tuesdays between 1.30 and 2.30pm.

Public Access Defibrillator

The Parish Council is looking to source a defibrillator for the village and has recently acquired the redundant phone kiosk from BT to house it. The next step is to look at ways of acquiring funding to purchase and install the defibrillator.

The Village Shop

The village shop was registered with MSDC as a Community Asset last year and this was granted. The request by the owners of the shop to remove the listing granted to protect the shop as a community asset has been upheld by Jane Orton, solicitor at St Edmundsbury who was appointed to carry out the review. This means that the listing has been withdrawn.

Village Services

Newletter

The Council continues to provide a newsletter to all households in the village. Councillor Tarabella will be giving a report later in the meeting.

Litter and Litter picks

George Hogg continues to pick litter in the central areas of the village and does an excellent job. In addition, two organised village litter picks were carried out successfully in November and April. 21 people turn out to help in April, the most successfully supported litter pick we have had.

Estate Management of the Greens and other Parish owned land.

The Council continues to employ contractors for maintenance of our greens their trees, the playing field and associated footpaths.

Village Facilities

Community Speed Watch Scheme

The community speed watch is operational again this year. Councillor Tarabella will report on this later in meeting.

Streetlights

There are no current issues with the Parish owned streetlights.

Mid-point of the Councils term of office

This meeting marks the mid-term of the Councils term of office. There are Parish Council held meetings most months which are advertised on the Village web site and Village notice boards. We would welcome residents attending these meetings where an opportunity is given in the Public participation agenda item to express your views on Village matters.

In June, last year a very successful Queen's 90 birthday celebration party was held in the village. Although the main organisers were thanked at the time, it would be remiss of me not to mention again that without the organisational skills of Norman Vendittelli and Archie Gemmell this would not have been such a success.

Finally, I would like to extend a big thank you to Paula and all the Parish councillors for a most successful year. Let's continue to build on the success of this year for the remainder of our term in office.

Peter Turner

May 2017

