

Playford Parish Council

Chairman's Report - 2009/10

It has been a busy but generally productive year for the council. Firstly however I regret to report the resignation of Dr David Lewis due to his increased other responsibilities. Replacing him was not easy, and I am delighted that Robert Coppillie has agreed to join the Parish Council and has been unanimously adopted.

Inevitably, the major activity on our agenda this year has been working to deliver actions proposed for consideration by the Parish Plan. As you will know, this was developed in collaboration with our neighbouring parishes of Great and Little Bealings. For reference I attach the total list of Actions Suggested. I must emphasise that these are derived from extensive consultation and are the product of expressions of need from our parishioners. We are duty bound, therefore, despite any personal views about feasibility or appropriateness, to consider all of them and the possibility of their application.

Parish Plan Progress

To facilitate the response to the resident and stakeholders; recommendations expressed in the list of Actions suggested, an overseeing group was appointed. This is chaired by Phil Holmes, supported by Carol Ramsden, and includes two representatives of each of the three parishes - in our case initially David Lewis, who I have now replaced, and Joan Metcalfe. This group began by reviewing potential activities under headings of high, medium or low priority; however, progress has allowed some consideration of all of them. This group also identified which bodies (eg individual or joint Parish Councils, District or County Councils, utility providers or others) whose responsibility it might be to consider and, if necessary, action them. Full details relating to each proposal are available on the website (www.playford.org.uk), so this is just a brief summary.

(Action 4) Communication within the Parishes has been greatly improved. The Benefice Magazine is now available on line and an electronic distribution system is available to all parishioners. Anyone in the Parish can sign up and submit their e-mail address.

All three parishes now have their own web sites.

With regard to support for individual parishioners in trouble or requiring services due to ill health or mobility problems **(Action 12)** it has been agreed to pilot the provision of *one* telephone 'Help Line' for all three parishes, In the light of experience of usage, consideration might be given to looking for one contact for each parish.

These improved communication systems are now capable of application to

(Action 17) 'improved knowledge of Road Reporting system'.

In response to concerns about building on the green field site on Kesgrave road **(Action 6)**, this has been formally opposed by our council and would appear no longer to be a problem as this site is not now on the recommended list of potential developments by the Local Development Framework Group.

Film Club development (Action 14) Playford residents will be aware of successful film events in Playford in the past. Our providers' experience is being shared with an expanded group for application in Great and Little Bealings, and new proposals are awaited.

We are assured that priority is given by Bealings School to local children (Action 22). However there are considerable unsolved problems with parking for delivery and collection of the children (Action 23). Vigorous discussions continue but no solution has yet been found. I am glad to report that the path from Playford to the school has had a major upgrade, with removal of kissing gates and fencing for protection from grazing cattle. We do hope that, weather permitting, Playford residents will use this path on a regular basis (Actions 25/27).

School buses provide service to Kesgrave and Farlingaye High Schools (Action 24).

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (Action 10) These have been intensively discussed in all three parishes and with the local police. It has been agreed that past schemes, which have now become inactive, have been replaced by much closer and more effective communication with the police as well as improvement in parish communications as indicated. It has been agreed, therefore, not to try and resurrect schemes which would provide no additional benefit.

Mobile phones (Action 15) The lack of signal in parts of the Parish is a major cause for concern shared by Gt and Little Bealings. We have now established that this is a problem in other nearby parishes and improvement is a must, especially for those who no longer subscribe to landline usage. A representative from SALC has undertaken to pursue this vigorously. Added to this are major concerns about Broadband signal weaknesses.

Efforts are being made to provide residents with simple guidance about grants available for home insulation (Action 3). Work is underway to improve the Church Lane/Bealings junction (Action 19), and we are pressing farmers to improve communication with local residents about times of crop spraying (Action 30) and the Commander of Bentwaters/Wattisham Regiment to reduce disturbance due to very low flying helicopters (Action 32).

With regard to proposals for co-operative diesel purchase (Action 1) and a car sharing scheme (Action 21) it has been agreed that these are best arranged on a person to person basis. It is not feasible for Council to organise a large system.

The proposal for provision of electric cabling underground (Action 8) or availability of mains services - gas and mains drainage (Action 2) would seem unlikely to be achieved as there has been no change in providers' attitudes, but this is being explored again.

The Council does discuss development planning policy on a regular basis (Action 5) and we support the proposals of the Local Development Framework that any major building programme should be located on their preferred site, ie the Martlesham proposal.

With regard to the suggestion of further review of housing need, Council considered this unnecessary. However, experience from other small councils suggests that demand may be underestimated, and I may recommend to Council in due course that we look at this again.

The suggestion that we should consider the development of a community developed village shop (Action 9) has as yet stimulated no interest in any of the three parishes. There is

however the possibility of consideration by external parties to provide a mobile shop in Bealings. I understand this to be very speculative and we3 await more information.

Exploration of timetable of local buses and links with Park & Ride are underway (**Action 20**)

Finally, **Actions 11, 16, 18, 26, 31 and probably 13** do not relate to Playford.

As stated above, I believe the progress made has been remarkable and much of the credit for this must go to Phil Holmes, very ably supported by Carol Ramsden.

Planning Application 2009/2010

On the whole, planning applications this year have been straightforward. There is however one notable exception, namely the proposal for a large burial site in Tuddenham, which would adjoin our Parish. I am sure that the history of this is well known but to summarize: we, like Tuddenham Parish Council and many individuals, have been strongly opposed to this proposal on grounds of unacceptable change of use of agricultural land, possible traffic problems on one of our main routes into Ipswich and general environmental reasons. The application was overwhelmingly opposed by Suffolk Coastal. This would appear to have been a significant victory for local democracy. It was subject to appeal but the appeal has been turned down.

Community Life

I am pleased to say that the Parish Hall continued to be very well used and we have been the beneficiaries of some very successful community events such as the Pub Nights and the Chocolate Fair. It is fully used throughout the week with provision of a Toddlers' Group, painting classes and a Bridge Club. On your behalf I would like to thank the Parish Hall Committee and all those who help to make these functions so successful.

Village Environment

One of our important functions is to oversee the maintenance of our environment. We do have problems with this. The main problems are persistent damage to roadside kerbs, in the main by large agricultural vehicles, and for example, failure to clear mud on the roads promptly and restore footpaths after ploughing. We are requesting information as to when crop spraying is likely to occur. Hopefully, recent discussions with those concerned will bear fruit.

Finally, I mentioned at the start of this report that recruitment of new councillors is not easy. There will inevitably be other vacancies in the future and while the need to retain experience is important, some turnover and new blood is healthy for the village. Otherwise the council can become very stale. If any parishioners are interested, do please let us know.

Finally I should like to end by thanking Sarah Cartwright for her continuing hard work and the excellent support she provides.