

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting on 7th May 2014

This is my first Annual Parish Meeting as Chairman after taking over the chairmanship in September. I would like to thank the rest of the council for all their support and help during the last few months. In September Simon Hanson resigned both as Chairman and as councillor but in his place we were very happy to welcome Tim Llewellyn who was co-opted on to the council at the November meeting.

Finance

As in 2012/13 we have again had to operate within a very tight budget and will have to continue to do so this during the coming financial year. After increasing the precept by £500 for 2013/14 we have managed to keep it at £4500 for 2014/15 despite increasing the Clerks hours from 4 to 5 hours a week. For the start of the last financial year, we agreed to reduce the amount of money donated to projects outside the village, agreeing to concentrate on keeping the village hall grounds and outside areas for which the Parish Council is responsible for, managed and cared for.

Planning

The Parish Council has had a larger than normal number of planning applications to deal with, especially in the last six months. This has mostly been due to several houses being sold and their new owners wanting to bring them up to current standards. There have also been the new developments at Badgers Bank and Sevenoaks, the latter coming back after the original plans had been rejected by SCDC. I would particularly like to thank Tim for all the time he donated to this. The Parish Council reviews any planning application on its merits and on the impact it will have on the village and its inhabitants. However, it also strives to be impartial until the plans have been scrutinized and discussed.

Earlier in the year, we discussed and were also invited to attend several of the public meeting regarding the route and implementation of the cables from the East Anglian Offshore Windfarm project. This is now being reviewed by the Secretary of State. The main cause of concern for Playford was the siting of the depot at the top and to the right of the junction of Butts Road and Tuddenham Road. We made our concerns known to the planning inspectorate and we await the outcome with interest.

Highways

The issue of the verge and hedge cutting on Butts Road and other roads around the village is still ongoing. The county council will only take responsibility if the trees and hedges are growing on the verge, otherwise it is the landowners' task to keep their hedges and trees cut. Despite letters asking for them to cut their trees and hedges, several of the landowners have not replied or carried out any pruning.

The landowners and farmers were also contacted with regard to the erosion of the verges during the winter due to the encroachment of the large farm vehicles. As with the other correspondence some of the letters remain unanswered but we do have to thank Kiln Farm and Nacton Home Farms for their prompt and helpful responses. We will keep these problems under review and if necessary ask the highways department for help in getting the necessary action taken.

Future Projects

The village sign and notice board as well as one of the benches is in need of renovation and the Parish Council is actively seeking quotations so that we can discuss how we go about refurbishing the triangle.

Concluding Remarks

I would like to re-iterate my thanks for the help, commitment and support of my fellow Councillors and also to Marian who keeps us on our toes. The support they have given me since taking over as Chairman has been tremendous.

Thank you