

Chairman's Report to Playford's Annual Parish Meeting 4th May 2022

This is the first face to face APM since 2019 as last year we had the APM via Zoom.

During the year Adrian Melrose stood down as a Parish Councillor and we thank him for all the work he did during his time on the council, particularly pressure washing the bridge! In May we welcomed Ben Evans of Hill Farm to the Council.

Precept

In January 2022 the Parish Council voted to raise the precept by £500. This increase again reflects the increased costs in the upkeep of the village. These include increases in the cost of grass and hedge cutting and the keeping of the drainage ditches and culverts clean.

Projects

During the last year, there have been various improvements made around the village.

The drains on the C324 have again been unblocked. There has also been a great deal of discussion regarding the traffic priority scheme. To change the system drastically would cost a great deal more than the Parish Council could afford so at the moment the plan is to move the signage to make it more obvious that the road narrows, the project is now back with the highways department.

The bare rooted oak trees which were planted in March and December 2019 and subsequently died have been replaced and the new tree is thriving. The councillors now have a rota for watering the tree and we are hopeful that we will be 'third time lucky'.

Over the last few years the Parish Council has been a member of the SAVID scheme - the 'Safer Village Driving' scheme. In May 2021 it was first installed outside Clematis Cottage for two weeks and subsequently outside the village hall. It is shared with several other villages so on average we have use of it for a month about every three to four months.

During the Autumn, Keith organised a working party which cleared up the village green and cleaned the benches and post box, It made a huge difference so thanks to everyone involved.

Grass Cutting

Norse is continuing to cut the grass and hedges and doing it well. The daffodils we planted in 2018 have really increased in numbers and this year there was again a lovely display.

Planning Applications

Over the last year we have had seven new planning applications. We supported six of them and objected to one. Four of the applications were given planning permission by East Suffolk Council the remainder were turned down.

Footpaths

There have been the usually problems with the footpaths around the village especially in the wet weather when springs in the area add to the flooding problems. As always if any new problem areas arise please do not hesitate to contact Marian.

The application to Suffolk County Council to recognise the footpath between Butts Road and Church Road which is on all the maps but not accepted by the farmer or by SCC is still ongoing. The application was submitted in 2016. SCC regards the application as medium priority so applications of a higher priority are slotted in above, meaning that our application will never reach the top! In July 2021 an appeal was made to the Secretary of State as this seemed to be the only way to move the matter forward.

Neighbourhood Plan

In the middle of last year a dispute arose between the council and Planning Direct who had been charged with developing the village neighbourhood plan. As a result, Planning Direct are no longer involved in developing the plan. In November Ian Poole was engaged as the new developer and has done a sterling job. Last weekend he put on an exhibition in the village hall and will be shortly producing the plan in printed format. There are several steps which now have to be taken before it can be submitted to the village as a referendum.

Thank you all for listening. As always a copy of this report will be posted on the website together with the minutes of this meeting.

Joan Metcalfe
Chairman, Playford Parish Council