

Playford Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2012/13

Introduction and an apology

I am personally very sorry that I am not here tonight. It's really not good form for the Chair to miss this annual event and I regret that I am not here. I have, I'm very proud to say, a superbly able and dedicated ViceChair in Joan Metcalfe, who has stepped in a lot recently and led the Council in my absence and I thank Joan warmly for that.

Jubilee Celebrations

It's been an eventful year in Playford – beginning really well with the Jubilee Celebrations where the whole Village came together for an entire weekend of celebrations. There were so many people involved in putting on a great event and I'd like to thank everyone, but especially Charles Lofts for his huge generosity and Judith Dunnett, the Parish Hall committee and the WI for their great energy.

What the Parish Council has done

We've completed a Village review. We've represented the Village's views on the major planning challenges and completed a major internal assessment of our Village finances.

We've welcomed new Councillors and we've waved a farewell to one Parish Clerk and been joined by a new Clerk.

And, we've changed the way that the Village open spaces will be maintained.

Village Review and Finances

Our Village Review told us what's important to Playford residents. It made us look at how we were managing the Village finances. That's made us take some important decisions:

- To stop depleting the village reserves, we voted to increase the precept.
- To provide more transparency over expenditure, we present accounts, including a forecast out-turn for the year at each Council meeting.
- We looked at what we spend money on and made some critical adjustments to our donations.
- We also agreed to award new contracts so that the village open spaces would be kept smart and neat.

Our decisions, added to some changes in District Council Tax collection policies have meant that Council Tax bills have increased slightly. But, this trade off is worthwhile; it enables us to be financially confident, allows us to manage the village open spaces effectively and gives us some flexibility for the coming year, when seeking a precept increase might be harder to achieve.

Wind Farm cable corridor

Something that has taken up a lot of time this year is the uncertainty surrounding the Wind Farm cable corridor. It is a concern to all of us. The council is working with neighbouring villages; advocating a joint parish working group and submitting important consultation responses to the planning authorities. We've hosted two meetings of the Project team here in Playford and we've kept residents up to date with developments.

Thank You's

We are grateful for Peter Bellfield and Stephen Hudson's advice and support. The wind farm is still a concern to all of us and will inevitably take up much more council time in the coming year.

I'd like to pay tribute to everyone on the Parish Council – for your hard work, dedication and inspirational approach. I truly believe that there is a genuine commitment to get things done, simply and for the good of the village – and I thank you all very much for that. I'd also like to thank those residents who devote so much time in supporting the village and its Council; to The Chair of the Village Hall and its committee, to Ted Herrington, Brian Seward, Judith

Dunnett, Eric Metcalfe, Liz Bennett, Charles Lofts, Tim and Astrid Llewellyn, Len - who have all, at one time or another during the year, provided me and the Council with helpful and welcome advice; suggesting how we could do things and telling us when we've got things wrong. And I apologise for forgetting to mention anyone else who deservedly merits a mention. The Village would be poorer without your contributions and I thank you unreservedly for them.

I'd also like to thank Stephen Hudson for his help and contributions form Suffolk District Council and to Peter Bellfield for his fantastic support form the County Council perspective. And I wish him well for his election tomorrow.

I'd also like to formally record the huge contribution Marian has made to the Council since she joined us as Clerk. It's as if Marian's always been here such is the testament to her ability and strength. Thank you. And, I'd like to put on record the great amount of work Marian's predecessor, Sarah did for Playford during her time as Clerk and I'd like to thank her for that.

The future

Next year will present new challenges. Our roads and roadsides, our footpaths, BOATS and bridleways, the wind farm, the planning applications that will inevitably arrive and everything else. We welcome the help of the Village and the help and advice from our District and County Council. I hope that we continue to achieve as much support and in such good humour next year that we have in this one.

Thank you.

Simon Hanson April 2013