

Little Waldingfield Parish Council - Annual Report 2016 / 2017

Your council

We were at full strength throughout the period, with ten (six scheduled and four additional planning) meetings during the period, keeping councillors busy.

Actions on planning during the year

Most planning applications, of which there have been many, were for non-controversial tree pruning work or minor extensions with which your council had no issues. Some of the more significant and / or controversial applications responded to were as follows:

- *Brookwood Manor: Variation to agreed planning condition re existing sewerage plant*
Requesting that the condition associated with an already agreed planning application be changed to “prior occupation rather than pre-commencement”, thereby considerably delaying installation of a modern ‘fit for purpose’ sewerage system. Despite objections from two near neighbours and your parish council, BDC planners approved the request; since then foul effluent has been discharged into the neighbouring brook on multiple occasions, necessitating implementation of temporary overflow measures and monitoring by the Environment Agency.
- *The Cottage: Front wall*
Requesting variation of planning permission to incorporate alteration to the front boundary wall.
There was much objection from both neighbours and your council to the new wall, which mainly comprised new bricks with a flat top, out of keeping with the original comprising old bricks with a sloping top. BDC planners have not yet determined this proposal, which dates from Nov 2016.

Other actions during the year

- *Litter pick*
The annual litter pick was again successfully undertaken on Saturday 18th March.
- *Free dog poo bags*
This well received initiative was continued during the period by your council, so free dog poo bags remain available to all dog walkers from the telephone box.
- *New dog poo bins*
As flagged last year, two further dog poo bins were provided; on the footpath beside The Priory and on the footpath opposite Wood Hall, helping to reduce dog fouling in these areas.
- *Community Defibrillator*
With funding from Suffolk County Council (Colin Spence) we have installed a defibrillator and purpose heated fitted cabinet to the porch wall of the Parish Room (with the kind permission

of PR trustees). The defibrillator has been commissioned by the Ambulance Service, who should in the first instance be called if someone collapses in the village, who will release the access code where deemed necessary. A number of information signs have been placed around the village, including on the side of the pavilion; relevant awareness training will take place early in May.

- *Neighbourhood Planning*

Following public meetings and consultation with villagers, your council has agreed to pursue a local Neighbourhood Plan. The NP area has been formally agreed by BDC, following a month long consultation exercise, and your council will soon establish an NP committee specifically to run this exciting project. In the near future, offers of villager assistance will be followed up so that the next stages of the project may commence.

Issues Facing Your Council

Your council has a range of responsibilities from the burial ground to footpaths, street lighting to planning, along with many others; some of the more significant issues to be dealt with over the coming year are likely to include:

- *Speeding / Speedwatch*

An issue raised by Parishioners last year, a revitalised Speedwatch Team was established by Alan Wells during the year. They undertook many "watches" during the period, with speeding drivers advised to the police when exceeding the statutory limit, which was often by a large amount; repeat offenders are written to by the police, and in extremis they call on drivers to reinforce the message.

- *Footpaths / Grass cutting*

Your council achieved twice as many footpath cuts following assumption of responsibility from Suffolk County Council; we have renewed the contract with D Gotts.

- *Closed Churchyard Trees*

A further expert survey of potential subsidence to the end wall of St Lawrence concluded that Lime trees in the closed churchyard (at the front and side of the church), for whom maintenance is the financial responsibility of the council, were not the cause and did not require removal. A separate survey of the trees did however conclude that a fair bit of surgery was required, for public safety reasons; sadly we still await approval from church authorities, who control all churchyard work, before we may go ahead. Your council has advised the Church / PCC that they must now accept responsibility in the event of injury / damage caused by falling branches.

- *Closed churchyard 'tip test'*

Conducted during the year; no headstones required any remedial work to ensure public safety.

- *Front Churchyard Wall*

An incident with a motor vehicle earlier this year damaged an end pier of the wall by the

church pathway. Following agreement with church authorities and BDC heritage, the work necessary to appropriately repair the wall has been costed and a contractor agreed; work will commence once the vehicle driver has agreed to pay for the repairs.

- *Mobile Speed Indicator Devices*

Another issue of concern to parishioners last year, your council is currently in negotiation with SCC Highways over a legal agreement to operate a scheme, in conjunction with Chilton and Great Waldingfield councils, to temporarily erect a "SID" on each approach to the village (one in Church Rd, two on the Street) for two weeks out of every six. The SID devices are expensive pieces of kit which Suffolk County Council (Colin Spence) kindly heavily subsidise for villages.

- *Council Budget*

Your council has increased the parish precept by just a tiny amount so that Band D council tax payers will see a rise of only 21p per month with other bands rising proportionally; the following reserves have been earmarked:

- £500 for future asset replacement;
- £2,500 for expenditure relating to the closed churchyard;
- £600 for new street lighting;
- £600 for future parish council election costs;

- *Clive Memorial Funds*

This fund was set up many years ago by the children of Harry and Pat Clive to commemorate their parents by doing good works around the village. During the year, £350.00 was spent on installing the community defibrillator with a further £500 set aside for the cost of establishing the SID scheme. The balance of the Clive Memorial Funds currently amounts to £1,950.

Other Matters

- Dave Crimmin has decided to step back from his clerking duties and will retire from duties with two local councils at the end of June and from your council at the end of December.

Your council will shortly commence the process of recruiting a suitable replacement.

- *Risk Assessment*

This was reviewed and updated throughout the period.

- *Police Matters*

The village happily continues substantially free of crime though villagers should remain alert; the issue regarding a lack of reporting of crimes by the Police remains unchanged.

- *Roadside Chevrons by Bells Drift*

LWPC reported the missing chevrons to Highways, who have replaced half of them - we continue to press the case for the others to be replaced.

Asset Register

Your council holds the following assets on its register, all of which are appropriately insured:

- Telephone Kiosk
- War memorial
- Village noticeboard
- 5 Dog bins
- 3 street lights
- 1 defibrillator

New policies, procedures and protocols formally adopted during the year

The following three policies / procedures were formally adopted during the year, completing the catch-up exercise we inherited:

- Document Retention Policy
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Grievance and Disciplinary policies