

Little Waldingfield Parish Council - Annual Report 2018/2019

The Parish Council has met eight times during the last year, keeping councilors busy. Throughout the year the Council has operated with a complement of six councilors, which is one under strength. Members of the Parish Council are up for reelection this year at the Local Government elections on Thursday 2nd May. I am happy to report that five of the current councilors are standing for reelection. Should anybody wish to stand for election on 2nd May, speak to the Clerk, Simon Ashton, and he will be able to explain the process.

Actions on planning during the year

The Parish Council considered seven planning applications during the year, ranging from building a ménage, erection of a holiday lodge, a garden shed, a greenhouse, conversion of a piggery to a dwelling, reducing the crown of a tree and changing the nature of an access road to a new barn conversion. The majority of the planning applications were supported apart from the access road, which was opposed by the council. There were also several notifications to discharge previously agreed conditions.

The Parish Council also facilitated a public presentation of the plans for the redevelopment of the Swan Public House and associated outbuildings and land, by the owners and their appointed architect. This was well attended by members of the public. The plans for the redevelopment have recently been submitted to Babergh DC and were considered at the PC meeting prior to this APM.

Other actions during the year

Litter pick

The annual litter pick was undertaken on Saturday 23rd March. As usual a large number of rubbish bags were filled.

Free dog poo bags

Although this initiative was cancelled by BDC, the PC resolved to maintain it at its own expense and as a result dog poo bags remain available to all dog walkers from the telephone box.

Defibrillator

Following installation of the defibrillator in Jan 2017, it continues to be regularly inspected to ensure it is always in working order. The defibrillator was reported as accessed earlier in this period.

Closed churchyard 'tip test'

In September, Parish Councillors carried out a 'tip test' in the closed churchyard, for which the parish council is responsible. There were no unsafe headstones found.

Accidents within the village

Following the accident that occurred by Haymarket Cottages in September 2017, the following actions previously agreed were completed by SCC: Add 'bend warning signs' and 'Slow' road markings to both sides of the bend; Renew the road centre white line; Paint 30 mph 'roundels' to the road and Increase the reflectivity of the matt black bollards in front of the Haymarket cottages.

A van reversing out of a property on the Street destroyed the Post Box. Following suspension of postal collections for a period of time a new, freestanding, metal post box has been installed. The PC are pursuing this issue with Royal Mail as it is not in character with the village conservation area and it is felt that a replacement should be in the style of the previous brick housing.

An accident on the entrance to the village near the village sign resulted in the 'gate' being damaged. The PC has agreed to fund the repairs to the gate and its reinstallation.

Council Budget

The parish council agreed a budget of £8,415 for 2019/2020, which is unchanged from last year.

Clive Memorial Funds

No monies were spent from this fund during the period and the balance remains at £1,950.

Mobile Speed Indicator Devices (SID)

The triple SID sharing scheme with Great Waldingfield and Chilton continues to operate, for two weeks out of every six. The devices are set to flash up your speed so you can see how fast you are going. If it flashes red you are going too fast. LWPC pays a small administration fee to GW. This helps towards the costs of maintaining the devices, keeping the batteries charged and moving them from location to location.

Issues Facing the Parish Council

The PC has a range of responsibilities which include maintaining the closed burial ground, several footpaths around the village and the street lighting. It is also consulted on planning applications within the village and can either support or not the plans submitted. The PC is not, however a planning authority and cannot refuse planning permission. That is the responsibility of Babergh District Council who is our local planning authority.

Speed watch

The voluntary team, under the guidance of Allan Wells, our local speed watch coordinator, regularly monitored the speed of drivers through the village. Those drivers caught exceeding the 30mph speed limits were reported to the police. In some cases letters were sent and in extreme cases offenders were visited by a police officer.

Footpaths/Grass cutting

The PC continues to be responsible for the grass cutting of several footpaths around the village and that of the closed churchyard. The contract with D Gotts was recently renewed and the footpaths will be cut six times during the growing season and the closed churchyard cut five times. In addition the paths in the closed churchyard will be treated with weed killer three times.

Neighbourhood Plan

The steering committee comprising both councilors and villagers, chaired by Councilor Tim Sheppard has continued to meet. Good progress is being made towards the ultimate goal of having a LWNP and the next Village Consultation is due to take place on Saturday 4th May. A more detailed update will be provided later on.

And finally

Notification of meetings, agendas and minutes of all meetings are posted on the village website and also on the PC notice board opposite the telephone box. Members of the public are always welcome to attend and raise any issues about which they have concerns.

That concludes this annual report about the work of the Parish Council in 2018/2019. I am happy to take questions if there is anything you want to ask.