

FENSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
123RD Annual Assembly – Thursday May 3rd 2018

Introduction & Acknowledgements

Before reviewing the key issues that the Parish Council has dealt with during the period, I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for their diligence in dealing with the many issues brought before them.

Councillors contribute their own personal time without remuneration, often receiving complaints about decisions taken, or their failure to resolve problems outside their control. The latter often reflects problems which are the responsibility of other organisations such as District and County Councils, who themselves often lack funds and have to prioritise requests for funding across the whole County.

Fenstanton like most other villages has difficulty in filling Council vacancies and there hasn't been a need for an election for the last 13 years. During previous years we have been fortunate to have successfully co-opted the services of Councillors to maintain a full Parish Council. However, during the current period we have lost the services of Councillors Dockerill and Richards through resignations and Councillor Sally Lee, who after many years of service, has decided not to stand for the 2018 election.

We currently have 11 of the 13 Parish Councillors required for a full Council, so will continue to advertise for the 2 vacant Councillors positions during the coming year.

My thanks also go to the following, who have laboured on behalf of the Parish:

- Councillor Ian Bates for providing support and representing our views with County Council
- Councillor David Mead for providing support and representing our views with District Council
- Mr Martin Haywood for his work keeping the village and underpass tidy and well maintained and for his help with the Parish Office.
- Mrs Donna Butcher for looking after the flower bed in the Village at her own expense.
- Mrs Susan Atwood for planting the borders near the Rookery Place garages.
- Mr Chris Jablonski for organising the pond clearance with his wife and a colleague.
- Mr Nigel Tilbury for maintaining the Village website.
- All Councillors who provided coverage for PC matters whilst Clerks were changing.
- Mr Ivor Gorman for helping with the Accounts and acting as RFO whilst Clerks were changing.
- All Councillors and those Members who have represented the Parish Council, but specifically Cllr Lee for all her work (with Terry) on the Burial records and particularly for work on the HDC 2036 plan.

Parish Local Matters

As a backdrop to the period HDC has faced budget constrictions and as a consequence services have been cut and more work has filtered down to local Parish Councils.

The Parish Council has engaged in a significant amount of research into the installation of a new play area for Pitfield Close. An outline design has been agreed. Three quotations for the installation work have been reviewed and a Play area specialist installer appointed. Funding has been allocated and residents are currently being consulted as to the final design. It is anticipated that installation will be completed during 2018

In preparation for the retirement of our existing Clerk & RFO Mr Steve Dartford, the Parish Council advertised, interviewed and appointed a new Clerk & RFO to take over the role from our retiring Clerk / RFO. The retiring Clerk/ RFO worked closely with the new Clerk / RFO to complete a successful handover, but unfortunately she resigned shortly after training and handover was completed. The Parish Council subsequently re-advertised the position, interviewing and selecting a second replacement Clerk /RFO, which took several months. During the selection process various Councillors had to step in and pick up the Clerks duties to keep the Parish Office open for business and guide the Parish Council on various areas. A replacement Clerk/RFO Annette Eggett was employed and has now been in place for 8 months and she has achieved a positive performance review, and she is now a permanent employee.

During the period the Chairman made representation to Cambridge County Council Transport Committee to save the 1A bus service which serves the Village. The County Council accepted our concerns and extended the bus service by 12 months by awarding the service contract to DEWS. This service is due to be discontinued on the 12 month anniversary

of the commencement of contract. The 1A bus service retention decision will be taken by Cambridge County Council / DEWS based upon the commercial viability over the preceding 12 month period. This is an ongoing situation.

Highways England A14 Liaison attended a Parish Council meeting with Mr Mike Evans in attendance to give the Parish Council an update on progress and to discuss issues of concern. In particular the issue of potholes and general road surface degrading of Conington Road was raised. This was due to heavy vehicles using this road for access to the new bridge works. Mr Mike Evans confirmed that partial repair work on Conington Road has been completed and that other sections leading into the Village of Conington will be attended to.

Following representation for support received from Hemingford Abbots, the Parish Council invited Mick George to attend a full Parish Council meeting, to explain and discuss his proposals for building a waste disposal site on the 9 hole Hemingford Abbots golf course, which he had purchased for this purpose. Concerns over visibility, traffic levels, air pollution and site access were discussed and addressed by Mick George and his Planning Director at the meeting. The waste disposal site would be 4.5 miles from Fenstanton Village, access is proposed via the current A14 exit to the Hemingford Abbots Golf Driving Range. Some small concerns about the type of waste being processed and level of HGV traffic accessing the site, but no substantial objections were raised but the Parish Council reserved the right to review plans when they are submitted. Mick George agreed to provide Fenstanton Parish Council with his final plans for review, when they are submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council. Hemingford Abbots and Grey action group representative attended same meeting on observation basis only.

HGV parking on the A14 slip road has been a continuing issue, much to the concern of the Parish Council and residents of Oakland's. The Parish Council established last year that this is a police matter as police are empowered to move vehicles on. Residents have been encouraged to continue registering complaints with the police to ensure they give this issue the necessary priority and take action. However, with the commencement of The Park Development, Kier Living have been working with the Parish Council, CCC & HDC to identify a solution which will accommodate existing and new residents. I will cover this topic under Planning Matters.

Planning Matters

The Review of Planning Applications has continued uninterrupted throughout the period. A total of 47 Planning Applications (31 at previous Assembly), were reviewed by the Parish Council, the majority of which were conservatories and extensions, which has caused some controversy, which needed to be addressed under our capacity of consultation.

Essential bridge repairs to the Low Road Turnpike Bridge were successfully completed during the period, following a delay caused by the removal of asbestos from the bridge infrastructure and a broken drill which caused the bridge to be redesigned. An excellent outcome has been achieved and the Parish Council has retained the original Keystone, which will be installed within the Village.

During the period plans were approved and work commenced on both the Dairy Crest (Morris Homes) and The Park (Kier Living) developments. A significant amount of time has been contributed working with Kier, CCC and HDC to ensure the A14 Dairy Crest Slip Road is designed to be a safe residential access road and to discourage HGV overnight parking through the introduction of a cycle way, a 30 mph speed limit, road narrowing through a central hashed reservation, double yellow lines and a pedestrian crossing. Discussions are continuing with Kier Living and will be picked up with Morris Homes for their Section on the A14 Slip Road.

A significant amount of planning time was required to review and comment on the HDC 2036 Plan, which is an ongoing concern for the Parish due to a lack of provision for burial space and the proposal to build homes on the current Allotment space. The Parish Council have lodged objections with HDC who have discounted our objections and opinions. We will now raise objections with the independent Planning Inspectorate and have engaged with the Diocese of Ely who are the owners of the current Allotments facility.

A street naming exercise was conducted by the Parish Council for the Kier Living Park Development on the A14 Slip Road. The street names: Park Close, Gardener Crescent & Burgess Walk, have been based upon Capability Brown, his gardens and a former Village Land owner.

Office Matters

During the current period the Parish Office has been decorated, equipment updated and software upgraded. Historic records have also been evaluated and a large amount of files have been sent away for secure shredding in accordance with the new Document Retention Policy.

I would like to recognise the significant amount of work has been contributed by the Clerk and Cllr's Caswell and Buchanan to review all existing records and determine which documents to retain in accordance with the Retention Policy.

During the period the Parish Council approved the move to on-line banking and the move towards this method has now commenced.

The Transparency Guide for Councillors was issued and examined.

Burial Board Matters

Much time and effort was spent on trying to clarify the position of the closed graveyard, advice is still awaited from CAPALC on interment of cremated remains in what is effectively a closed graveyard. Responsibility was a Gazetted and was transferred to the Parish Council based on an Order in Council dated 28.1.1958.

It has been necessary to review and organise all Burial records, creating an accurate representation of existing plots and those available for the future. A plan of the Graveyard has been produced to assist with the identification of additional plots and areas where burial space can be created.

There is some work outstanding to memorials stones and one collapsed graveyard for repair.

Investigation work has been progressed to resolve the issue of lack of space in the graveyard. This an ongoing concern, in respect of which consideration is being given to removing the footpath. A boundary hedge has now been trimmed to free up space.

Policing Matters

Police represented by Sgt. Street attended several Parish Council meetings during the period. The proposed high visibility initiative has not been implemented in Fenstanton, because in general crime level in the village appears to have lowered significantly, with most current incidents being car accident related.

There have been the usual concerns raised over inconsiderate parking in the Village, which was raised with Sgt. Street. The police have agreed to place ad hoc notices on incorrectly parked vehicles in the Village.

Police recommended that the Swavesey Village College bus pick up point in the Village should be moved back to its original site opposite Oakland on safety concerns.

Matters for Consideration 2018/19

- Formation of elected Parish Council
- Co-option of additional Councillors
- Vehicle parking in the Village
- Village meeting promoted by Parish Council
- CIL plan for monies to be for invested in the Village
- Discontinuation of 1A bus service
- Completion of Dairy Crest & The Park Development
- Design & implementation of A14 Dairy Crest Slip road improvements
- New A14 road development & local impact
- Route 51 Cycle Pathway
- Creation of additional Graveyard space.