

STIFFKEY PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIR'S REPORT 2015/16 (May 2015 – April 2016 inc.)

This was a year of some change, the Election in May 2014 saw 4 members returned with 3 vacancies.

A new Chair was elected in May but subsequently resigned the following month. 3 members were co-opted and a new Chair elected who resigned in December 2015. A new Chair was elected in January and one co-option place currently remains.

To support best practice governance the Council established and agreed policies for Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Budget for 2016/17, Action Plan 2015/16, Equality Policy, Grant Awarding Policy and Planning Policy. This represented a lot of work on the part of our Clerk and we would like to thank her for this and her valuable support across all areas of the Parish Council's activities.

We have conducted a parish asset survey and completed an asset register.

A great deal of hard work was done to go through all of the records/SPC minutes being stored in the Village Hall which were in some disarray and beginning to deteriorate. A digital record was made of these records, and some of the originals have been taken some to the Archive Centre at County Hall for safe storage. Our thanks go to Rocky Hussain, Alex Jones, Steven Bashford, John Wright, Geraldine Green and Di Dann for undertaking this important task.

Roads, Footpaths and Travel

The Council went out to public appeal for the SAM 2 (Speed Awareness Message sign). This achieved 50% towards cost from public support with 50% being awarded as a grant from Norfolk County Council. SAM2 was delivered and set up in November 2015. We do need more volunteers to, manage SAM2 as its position in the village has to be moved every 4 weeks (there are 4 sites for SAM2), which had to be agreed with NCC. We also need more help with the Speedwatch Group as there are currently not enough volunteers to make this possible.

We submitted a successful grant application to Sheringham Shoal for conversion of our streetlights to LED. This money has to be spent by March 2017. The council is currently looking at similar projects already carried out in neighbouring parishes (e.g. Upper Sheringham) to assess their suitability.

We attended a footpath seminar in Kettlestone to find out more about the legalities of footpaths.

We arranged with NCC to cut back a hedge on Church Street to improve road safety and restore ownership to NCC. We had a site meeting with NCC Highways to see what improvements could be made to pedestrian safety in Church Street. Unfortunately the project costs are prohibitive.

We have arranged clearance of the Bangay Footpath and send our thanks to Mr White for his help. We have liaised with Community Pay Back to maintain the footpath. They will also be repainting the War memorial Rails (May/June 2016)

Communications

We submitted a successful grant application to government for over £1200 to assist with the legal transparency requirements. This will enable us to set up a Village website, buy a laptop and undertake necessary training. A proposal for the website has been discussed and is being reviewed.

Resources and Facilities

We submitted grant applications to the Big Society Fund for Play Equipment on the Playing Field and for fencing on the new allotment site. Outcomes should be known in June.

In line with our commitment to support the Village Hall Committee in its efforts to take the Hall forwards we have provided financial support in the understanding that this is a 'one-off' and that a sustainable plan will be developed.

We have purchased four new dog bins, they were installed and old dog bins were removed. We have said that we will work with the NT on their Car Park Project and empty a further bin of theirs on the car park.

Action and Development

We are consultees to planning applications and have considered 14 applications in 2015/16.

We are consultees to the new Local plan which currently being drawn up.

We attended a planning seminar at Wells to find out more about planning and the Local Plan.

We have met with the NT to discuss their car park project.

In recognition of the need to develop a medium-to-long term set of goals for the Parish Council, we have conducted an informal working party in April 2016. This was based on the views expressed by residents in the 2009 Village Survey and it allowed us to assess our priorities for the next few years. We will incorporate this into an action plan and validate it with another Village Survey to be held within the next 12 months.

