

Campsea Ashe Parish Council

Chair's Report 2019/20

I would like to give a vote of thanks to our clerk, Klaus Fortmann. It was a relief to find a replacement for Barry Cable and Klaus has had to learn on the job but has done sterling work in his first year in the job; much more than could have been expected at such short notice. Having had to cope without a clerk for a number of months the change made organisation much more straightforward. I would also like to thank all councillors for their support over the year. We have welcomed Ed Berger as a new councillor and have now just one vacancy.

There has had to be a major change of focus at the end of the financial year as a result of the situation re Covid -19. The March meeting was only just quorate before lockdown and this meeting is the first attempt at a remote meeting. Initially communication within the village was essential in order to arrange support for villagers who may be in need of support due to the lockdown. These arrangements have been made in conjunction with Station House and will be adapted on a regular basis; information will be provided via the website plus other outlets. The situation has resulted in much co-operation and offers of help from the public.

Prior to this I do think that in the last year momentum, mentioned in previous year's report has continued. Unfortunately, the start of the lockdown has made the future a little uncertain. Last year's Annual Review was pleasing and once again action has been taken on the minor points raised as detailed in previous minutes. Closer relationships with village organisations have continued to be developed and the annual procedure for applications to the parish council for funding has once again had successful outcomes. The budget has allowed for this to continue into the future.

The relationship with the Village Hall Committee has continued and fortunately there are now sufficient trustees for the Village Hall to remain an independent body and the PC did not have to pursue the procedure to become sole trustee. PC members have agreed to sit on the Village Hall Committee to ensure there are sufficient numbers to function effectively. Bookings and hence income have remained at last year's level although it is uncertain how long the Hall will remain closed in the present lockdown although at the time of writing grants have been applied for to make up the shortfall of income. The main objective remains to fund new toilets and I'm sure that this is feasible in the future. I would like to thank all those on the Village Hall Committee for their efforts over the year.

The Parish Council accounts indicate a healthy financial position and budgeting has aimed to reduce the overall balance over the next couple of years whilst building earmarked funds e.g., for Highways and the Village Hall. The Parish Council are grateful for the donation from Clarke and Simpson. Both the PC and C&S continue to share land for parking to the mutual benefit of both.

There is finally progress regarding RTOs for HGVs along ILR detailed within previous minutes. The continued policy of the PC is to raise this issue i.e., increased traffic along ILR and the B1078, when planning applications for developments are made in neighbouring villages. The

objective is to gain funding for RTOs. However we all must continue to report such issues with Highways. Progress is being made via a joint approach with other PCs in the area to present a coherent group to Highways and Planning. This issue continues to be a key element of PC responses to consultations re SZC and other energy infrastructure projects in East Suffolk. We await the outcome of EDF's proposed DCO for SZC which is likely to require a response in Autumn. The other ongoing planning issue is the Chantry Close site where there has been little movement in the registration process. Hopefully there will future reports of more progress. Other planning applications have been limited and generally in line PC views. Tentative steps have been made towards work on a Neighbourhood Plan now a clerk is in position. It will need involvement from a wider cross-section of the village.

I would like to thank Cllr Nicoll for his support from the County Council and Cllr Poulter for her support from the District Council. Both have given invaluable advice and promised financial support in ventures.

As for Village life, in the last year the pub has re-opened (successfully), Station House continues to be a real focal point and the shop is once again beginning to prosper. A defibrillator has been installed at the Village Hall (thanks to Allonsfield House and the District Council) although it still requires a heated cabinet and training to be arranged (not possible at present). I would like to thank all those involved in the above, and many others for offering to help the village particularly in these challenging times. Support for other residents has been important in recent weeks and friendships with neighbours have developed (seen in the Thursday clapping).

I still remain Chair, having previously said this would only be until a new clerk settled in. However, it is still my intention to stand down as Chair at the end of 20/21.

Richard Fernley, Chair 18/05/2020