

Campsea Ashe Parish Council

Chair's Report 2020/1

It has been an unusual year as a result of the situation re Covid -19. Most PC meetings have been virtual meetings although we did get a window for a face-to-face meeting in September. However, PC meetings are now no longer allowed to be virtual and public meetings are permissible (under relevant guidelines from May 17 2021). This situation over the last year coincided with the need for research and attendance at meetings to comply with the timetables set out by PINS for the major energy projects in East Suffolk. Consequently, there has been much learning-by-doing by councillors in the use of various virtual platforms and understanding the framework re Relevant Representations etc in the PINS process.

The Covid -19 situation in the village is expertly documented in the Village Recorder's Report for 2020. I will therefore not provide a detailed report other than to thank all those who have volunteered to help others. Communication has been essential in order to arrange support for villagers who may be in need of support as a result of lockdowns. Arrangements were originally made in conjunction with Station House and I thank them for all their efforts in this respect; both Station House and the Village Shop (and The Duck when permissible) have remained open for villagers during the pandemic. It has been much appreciated. The ongoing situation resulted in much co-operation and offers of mutual support by villagers. Hopefully this community spirit will be maintained and the PC are happy to help organise and support a village event once social distancing is lifted.

On general issues there has been some frustration over the year but some momentum in other areas. 2020-21's Annual Review was pleasing and once again action was taken on the minor points raised. Close relationships with village organisations have continued although due to the situation over the year the applications to the parish council for funding was limited. The budget will allow for this process to continue into the future.

The relationship with the Village Hall Committee has continued although the Village Hall was unable to operate during the year and has only just re-opened. They have been fortunate in receiving grants to cover shortfalls in revenue due to closure. Hopefully past bookings will be renewed and new bookings arranged. The main objective of the VH remains to fund new toilets and as a result of grants applied for this work should commence in the near future. Other plans are also in discussion. The PC has planted trees on the land between the Play Area and the Playing Field. 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 aims to reduce the overall balance over the next couple of years whilst establishing earmarked funds for e.g., towards Highways and the Village Hall projects. The Parish Council are grateful for the donation received from Clarke and Simpson. Both the PC and C&S continue to share land for parking to the mutual benefit of both.

There has been more progress regarding Traffic Orders for HGVs along ILR. An RTO has been approved by SCC (with funding from residents, the PC and our County Councillor). Hopefully this will be in place in this financial year (signage is presently being arranged but subject to legal constraints). The continued policy of the PC is to raise the increased traffic along ILR and the B1078, when planning applications for developments are made in neighbouring villages. Progress is being made via a joint approach with other PCs in the area to present a coherent group to Highways and Planning. Initial meetings have been held with ESC. The clerk has been instrumental in the efforts to push forward with this initiative; we think this approach is required to protect joint interests.

This same issue is also to be a key element of PC responses to consultations re EDF's proposals for SZC and other energy infrastructure projects in East Suffolk. There has been much work re Consultations, Relevant Representations etc in this respect. Again these have largely been within a wider group of local PCs to provide focus for specific issues such as the southern P&R for SZC. For e.g., CAPC has contributed funds towards a landscape report as the proposed site is likely to have a negative visual impact on the village. The overall approach of the PC is an attempt to mitigate the impact of increased traffic (both road and rail) through the village during construction. The SZC process is at the stage of Open Floor Hearings and Campsea Ashe will be represented by the clerk as an Interested Party.

The other ongoing planning issue is the Chantry Close site where, yet again, has been little movement in the registration process. Hopefully there will future reports of more progress. Other planning applications in the village have generally been non-controversial and in line PC views.

Another initiative re Highways in recent months has been a proposal (again with other local PCs) to designate certain roads in the village as "Quiet Lanes". Residents on the relevant roads were leafleted and asked for responses. An Extraordinary Meeting of the PC was called in April to allow residents to give their views and ask questions. There has been good support for the proposal which is moving forward to the next stage. More details are provided on the village website.

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 financial support to ventures. This is much appreciated.

Meeting of SALC have been virtual over the last year which has resulted in increased attendance. They have been informative and offer PCs the opportunity to share information and provide valuable insights into issues of common interest in the region. I hope there will be continued attendance by CAPC representatives in the next year.

I would like to thank Pat Hayward and Georgina Proctor who are standing down from the PC after many years of valuable service. Their contributions have been most welcome. Pat has been able to provide valuable information to discussions that newer members were unaware of. I would also like to thank all other councillors for their support in the five years of my tenure as Chair. In particular the efforts of the present clerk have been outstanding

and I feel we are better informed of issues. He has been instrumental in forging links with other PCs in the area on issues that are of common interest.

Richard Fernley, Chair 15/05/2021