

## **CLOPTON PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015-16**

I should like to start by paying tribute to Cllr Peter Bellfield who died on 23 April after losing his long fight against cancer and whose memorial service took place last Monday. Peter represented Clopton both at County and District level for more than 10 years and his tireless efforts on behalf of all of his wider constituents have set a huge marker for those who follow him. His measured approach and wise counsel will be greatly missed, both in Clopton and throughout the Carlford ward.

Six meetings of the Parish Council were held during the year, as scheduled.

### **Changes**

There were no changes to the members of the Council during the year and I wish to thank all participants for their work and effort. I should also like to thank Tony Fryatt for his work as our District Councillor for the Grundisburgh ward and for the insight he gives us in all aspects of the planning process though his participation in the various planning committees.

### **Accounts**

Total receipts for the year amounted to £6,076.94, of which £3,700 came from the Precept, £109.74 from the Council Tax Support Grant, £1,544.94 as fête income, £234.00 for Transparency Funding and the remainder from sundry other sources.

Total gross expenditure amounted to £4,619.51, including £965.00 fête and charitable disbursements. The amount of £5,000.00 from the reserves was placed into Yorkshire Building Society Community Account at a slightly higher rate of interest than was otherwise available.

The precept for 2016/17 remains unchanged for the 4th successive year. Last year, I incorrectly reported that the last tranche of the Council Tax Support Grant would be paid in 2015-16, after which it would cease. In fact I was a year early and the last payment of £59.54 will be received in the current financial year. As the grant money has been added to the general reserves, it is anticipated that the precept can be held at the current level for a number of years yet.

### **Planning Applications**

Nine new planning applications were received during the year, eight of which were approved and one which did not require prior approval. In addition, there was one further application submitting details in order to satisfy a condition, which was approved.

### **Events, Topics & Issues**

Suffolk Coastal District Council has now finalised its Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies. The policy relating to the former Debach airfield site was extensively discussed at Parish Council meetings. This used to be considered as two separate areas, split between the respective ownerships. Under the new policy, the area is considered as one fully

occupied site with the area permitted for development increased from 8.95 ha to 10.89 ha to allow for gaps between refurbished buildings in order to meet modern fire regulation standards. Since any increase in HGV traffic is a concern, planning permission is limited to uses falling within Use classes B1, B2 and B8 and where necessary a transport statement or transport assessment would have to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority that the scale and type of traffic generated is acceptable in terms of impact on the local road network.

The incidence of flooding in Shop Road has largely been resolved following the work to the drains undertaken by SCC last year.

**Traffic Speed:** SCC appointed a consultant to study traffic speed and the incidence of accidents on the B1078 between Coddensham and Wickham Market. Following publication of their report internally within SCC, we have been advised by the responsible Cabinet Member that SCC is not proposing to take any definitive measures to change existing speed limits or road alignments, though they will continue to monitor developments. Despite requests, we have not succeeded in obtaining a copy of the consultant's report, or even an extract from it which refers to Clopton. Sadly, this is one area where a lack of active representation at County level has not been helpful.

After an extensive search it has been established that the Deeds to the village hall land have been lost. They were last recorded as having been sent to Suffolk Acre in 1995 for the preparation of the lease between the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee. The Parish Council now intends to apply to the Land Registry for a Voluntary First Registration.

Clopton handed over the management of the Speedwatch group to Westerfield Parish Council during the second half of 2015 and transferred the balance of Speedwatch funds to them from the ear-marked reserves.

Broadband speeds via landline are exceptionally slow over large parts of Clopton. Although not a Parish Council initiative, Fibre Wi-Fi has now bought Superfast Broadband to Clopton via wi-fi equipment installed on the mast adjacent to the village hall. This increases the options available to residents who are seeking an increase in their broadband speed.

The second village fête held at the Village Hall on 21 June 2015 was another success, with the £1,565 raised shared equally between EACH, St Elizabeth Hospice, the village hall and with a retention to put future fêtes on a self-funding basis. This was helped by the proceeds from a jumble sale in January which raised £386. Following the repeat success, the organisers agreed to hold the fête again this year on 19 June 2016 with Blue Cross as the nominated charity.

The Council remains most appreciative that Della Hughes continues to run the Clopton News email and the village website, which are highly regarded in the village.