

CLOPTON PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016-17

This year we were pleased to welcome Cllr Robin Vickery as our County Council representative and I congratulate him on his recent election success which sees his representation secured for the next 4 years.

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. Two vacancies continue to remain unfilled. I should like to thank Tony Fryatt for his on-going work as our District Councillor for the Grundisburgh ward and for the insight he gives us into the various aspects of the planning process through his participation in the planning committees.

Accounts

Total receipts for the year amounted to £7,754.55 but £1,975.31 of this represents a grant from SCDC for Playing Place Funding which was received during March and which sat on the account over the year end before being paid out. Thus the underlying receipts totalled £5,779.24, of which £3,700 came from the Precept, £59.54 from the Council Tax Support Grant (which has now ceased), £1,425.55 as fête income, £250.64.00 for Transparency Funding and the remainder from sundry other sources.

Total gross expenditure exceeded the income and amounted to £6,306.65 which included £1,355.32 fête and charitable disbursements. General Reserves at 31 March 2017 stood at £5,657.38, a reduction of £326.16 over the year.

The Voluntary First Registration of the village hall land with the Land Registry was completed at a net cost of £686.00 which was partially met from reserves as the cost had not been budgeted. As a consequence of the original deeds not being available, a period of 12 years must elapse before absolute title is granted.

The precept for 2017/18 remains unchanged at £3,700.00 for the 5th consecutive year.

Planning Applications

Thirteen new planning applications were validated during the year, eleven of which were approved, one was refused and one Listed Building Consent is awaiting decision. A further application lodged in the previous year was withdrawn. The most significant application was for the RDA move to Shop Farm, for which the construction of a new access road on to the Monewden Road, which appears well on the way to completion, will obviate any need to use Shop Road once the development work is complete.

Events, Topics & Issues

Following the finalisation of the new Area Specific Policy relating to the former Debach airfield site, a director of Clopton Commercial park presented the Parish Council at the

January meeting with an overview of the development so far and their vision for the future, which will focus on business units and starter units for smaller business, which should not incur HGV traffic. The Parish Council was encouraged by this presentation, given that a sympathetic development would improve the amenities for business in the parish.

It is hoped that the incidents of flooding in Shop Road has finally been resolved after the owner of an adjacent property put the matter in the hands of his insurers. A survey showed that roots for a willow tree were blocking a drainage pipe and remedial work to replace the section of affected pipe has been completed.

Engineers from SCC have recently attended Shop Road to mark out potholes scheduled for repair. SCC is also scheduled to replace a broken footpath sign adjacent to Pear Tree Farm at some point.

Traffic Speed:

The Parish Council finally succeeded in obtaining a copy of the consultant's report on the state of the B1078 between Coddensham and Wickham Market via a third party and duly enquired from SCC what their intentions were in respect of implementing the recommendations it set out for the link passing through Clopton. Despite chasing, there has been no response. It transpires that the report was commissioned by SCC at a reported cost of £30,000 as a trial process for a wider number of projects in the County and with no intention of implementing any proposals as there was no budget in place to fund them. This somewhat explains the initial response from the responsible Cabinet member before the report was sighted that SCC would be doing no more than monitoring developments. The Parish Council is currently working with SAVID for the possible use of a SID on appropriate stretches of roads in the parish subject to a 30 mph speed limit.

The third village fête held at the Village Hall on 19 June 2016 was another success with £600.00 being donated to the Blue Cross and £250.00 to the village hall. The fête committee subsequently decided that it was time for a 'breather' and no event is planned for this year.

The parish notice board on the corner of Shop Road and Rouse Hall Gardens has been subjected to repeated vandalism and the broken glass and Perspex presents a safety risk. At its forthcoming meeting this evening, the Parish Council will debate the permanent removal of this notice board.

Concerns over vandalism led the Parish Council not to proceed with a suggested installation of a defibrillator in the village, given alternative availability in Otley and Grundisburgh.

Once again, The Council would like to thank Della Hughes for her hard work in running the Clopton News email and the village website, which so many of us take for granted but which undoubtedly represent a significant contribution to our community.