

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014

I am pleased to report on another busy and productive year for the Parish Council. Councillors not only attend monthly council meetings here in the village but many other workshops and consultation meetings at District Council and other venues throughout the year.

CHANGES

2014 has been an election year for the Parish Council, however with 11 nominations for the 11 Cllr seats, a Parish Poll did not take place. 10 Cllrs re-nominated, we received the resignation of Steve Boylan, who had been a Cllr for 8 years and welcomed new Cllr Sandie Smith.

FINANCE

Precept – the 2014/15 precept has been set at £53,290, an increase of approximately 2% over last year's precept. There are copies of our Annual Report in your Agenda packs, which give more information on the accounts for the past year.

As usual our Parish Precept continues to include funding towards many village organisations.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING THE PAST YEAR was given to village groups and projects including: Swavesey Memorial Hall charity, Churchyard and Cemetery maintenance, Primary School Walking Bus Scheme and Swavesey Youth Café.

In the forthcoming year we have budgeted for grants towards: Swavesey Memorial Hall Charity, Cemetery and Churchyard maintenance, SAY and other youth projects and towards the community work at the Swavesey Venue.

In the last year we also saw two new door-step collections of waste electrical products, organised by WISER Recycling of St Ives. In recognition of help to promote the collection WISER give a donation towards community projects. From the two collections, we have received a total of £351. The Council has put this aside into a small grants fund for local groups to apply for project funding. We will also organise further collections from WISER to continue to receive this additional funding and help residents to recycle their waste electrical items.

HIGHWAYS

Buckingway Road Cycle/footpath – This much needed safe route along Buckingway Road is now almost complete and should be ready to use within the next month or so.

We are still pressing for the resurfacing and re-grading of **Boxworth End footpath** which floods badly in heavy rain.

The County Highways Dept continues its work to clear blocked roadside drains.

Double yellow lines have been provided alongside one side of Taylors Lane, to stop vehicles blocking delivery lorry access.

We continue to work with the Village College to try to ensure there is sufficient signage for College visitors to use all of their available parking areas, rather than park in Gibraltar Lane. The College has agreed to open up the rear car parks for visitors, using the coach access road from Fen Drayton Rd, which we hope will help. A sign to stop lorries using Gibraltar Lane as a through route is also to be installed.

Together with our County Cllr Mandy Smith, we are pressing for further repair work to Fen Drayton Rd which is suffering badly from increased traffic flow and lack of maintenance. We are also requesting that this road be added to the priority winter gritting route, as it is the main access for all of the student buses to/from the college.

Swan Pond – a group of local residents helped to clear Swan Pond of overgrown vegetation last autumn, which then enabled the drains and pipes to/from the pond to be cleared. The main overflow pipe under Station Road was also investigated and jetted. This has helped to stop the lower road from flooding (which was very badly flooded during winter 2012-2013). Thank you to everyone who helped with that project.

I would like to thank our County Cllr Mandy Smith for all of the work and help Mandy provides with the Highways issues.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus Services – we are discussing with the County Council, a community transport link, through other local villages, which will hopefully provide another link route to the Guided Bus stop, as well as a limited bus route back to Boxworth End. Hopefully in place later this year.

DRAINAGE

The Parish Council together with Swavesey Internal Drainage Board continues to register strong concerns regarding various drainage issues including: Plans for Northstowe foul water to Uttons Drove Sewage Treatment Works; additional foul water input from increased development at Cambourne; increased water flow through the Swavesey Main Drain; lack of maintenance by the Environment Agency to riverbanks, drainage channels and culverts.

GENERAL

Carters Way/Priory Avenue central play area – this is an area which the Council would still like to improve and turn into a useful public open space area. Input from local residents is essential to this and your comments and suggestions would be welcome.

Moat Way Play Area – the working group completed its consultation and a final design was agreed and quotes obtained. Grant funding applications have been submitted and we are waiting on decisions. Hopefully sufficient funding will come forward and the new play area will be provided during this autumn.

Recreation Green – Together with the football clubs a new programme of grounds maintenance to improve the pitch areas and drainage of the land was agreed. We also have a new ground maintenance contractor who is helping to advise on what is required and carry out the work.

Police – The Parish Council continues to work closely with our Neighbourhood Police Officers and NHW Co-ordinator with regard to reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour issues and in supporting the Neighbourhood Policing Panel meetings.

NHW – the NHW Scheme in the village is very successful and I would like to thank Polly Wilderspin, our Scheme Co-ordinator for all the hard work put into running the scheme.

Youth Café – The Parish Council is pleased to continue its support of the work of Swavesey Action for Youth and the Youth Café based at Bethel Church on Friday evenings, which is extremely popular.

PLANNING / CONSULTATIONS

Many local planning application consultations were received and commented on. The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications within the village, received by South Cambs District Council, including tree works in the Conservation Area, however the Parish Council has no powers in relation to applications. The District Council is the deciding authority.

Affordable Housing – Permission was given earlier this year for an exception site development of 20 affordable houses on land to the north of Fen Drayton Rd. Discussions are still ongoing between the developers and the District Council as to how the development will proceed and we have no start date yet. The homes will be restricted by a S106 agreement to those with a direct link to the village. In order to be eligible potential tenants need to be registered on the Home-Link housing list.

Northstowe Phase 1 – The Parish Council continues to attend relevant Northstowe forums.

A14 Improvements – We have taken part in the consultations recently and put forward comments on the proposals for the new junction at the Trinity Foot and the local access road.

Trinity Foot site – an outline application has been consulted on for a Truckstop, with associated fuel station, utility and accommodation buildings on the former pub site. Comments have been returned with concerns over the junction layout, highway arrangements and other items. Plus the way such a site would fit into the proposals for the A14 improvements at the junction.

VILLAGE GROUPS AND NEW INITIATIVES

Constable's Rood & Village Ponds

The Parish Council continues to support the maintenance work at the village ponds and in Constable's Rood. Volunteers continue to give their time to help maintain these areas and we would like to thank them for this.

Swavesey Guides will be doing a pond-dipping project in Moat Way and/or Swan Pond later this month, to survey what insects and wildlife there is.

1st Swavesey Sea Scouts will be carrying out some gardening work for the residents of the Sheltered Housing in Thistle Green this month. Using some of the electrical collection donation funds, plants and shrubs will be purchased which the Scouts will be planting in the community garden.

Festival – The Parish Council would like to congratulate the Steering Group and everyone involved in the recent Festival, which was a huge success. So many events, exhibitions, scarecrows and history trails plus an excellent Gala Day to finish it all off. Well done.

Community Warden Scheme – Launched in October last year, this has provided an enormous help to the residents and families the Warden helps. Funded by the Parish Council, Galon Trust, South Cambs District Council, Bethel Church and Mr Jonathan Barker (from a local family), and managed by AgeUK, the Warden visits and contacts elderly residents on a daily basis.

The White Horse Inn – Following concerns from local residents over the future of our last remaining public house, as Will (current landlord is retiring), an action group was formed to look into the possibility of a community buyout of the freehold, should it go up for sale. The Parish Council supported the project and the building has been listed on the District Council's Assets of Community Value list. We are also discussing with Planning Officers other ways to help protect the future of the pub.

FINALLY – Please use the Swavesey Website - Excellent point of information for the whole village – Parish Council page includes copies of Minutes and Agendas together with articles on current topics of concern and interest. www.swavesey.org.uk

Thank you to all our Parish Councillors for their time in the many activities of the Parish Council. And to the many volunteers who join our working parties to discuss and help formulate ideas and proposals around various projects.

Thank you to the Clerk, Mrs Linda Miller, for co-ordinating all the many activities of the Council.

Thank you to Alan Morris for all the time he puts in to maintain the Website and also set out the Meridian Magazine.

Martin Johnston, Chairman, Swavesey Parish Council

June 2014