

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015

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 project committees and consultation meetings at District Council and other venues throughout the year.

### FINANCE

**Precept** – the 2015/16 precept has been set at £54,800, a band D equivalent of £59.39 This is an increase of £1.70 (or 2.95%) above the band D equivalent charge in 2014/15.

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, Swavesey Youth Café, Community Warden Scheme.

**In the forthcoming year** we have budgeted for grants towards: Swavesey Memorial Hall Charity, Cemetery and Churchyard maintenance, SAY and other youth projects and the Community Warden Scheme.

**In the last year** the door-step collections of waste electrical products, organised by WISER Recycling of St Ives continued. We receive a donation of £40/tonne of waste collected, which goes towards community projects. Last year some of this was spent on plants and shrubs for the sheltered housing communal gardens and to help provide materials and activities for the Swavesey Social Circle, elderly residents, group.

- Local clubs can apply to the Parish Council for small grants from this community fund.

### HIGHWAYS and COUNTY COUNCIL

**Buckingway Road Cycle/footpath** – Opened in September 2014 and is being well used.

Thanks to volunteers from WI, Scouts and Parish Council plus John Burgess for planting hundreds of new daffodil bulbs along the route.

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

**Parking** around the Primary School and Village College entrances is still an issue for many residents and we are working with the Schools and Police to try to improve the situation.

Following the heavy rainfall at the end of August and the **flooding** of a number of houses around Ramper Rd junction, the Parish Council pursued the County Council to ensure that the blocked gullies, which made the flooding situation worse, were cleared.

We are also working with CCC Highways to resolve other surface flooding issues around the village including Over Rd, Black Horse Lane and Gibraltar Lane.

**Market St** – we have here tonight some options for improving the parking and safety in Market St – to be discussed in detail later on.

**Streetlights** – This has now been ongoing for a year and we still do not have all lights replaced. We continue to chase Balfour Beatty but it seems the underground electrical issues are proving difficult for them to resolve quickly.

**Speeding in Ramper road and Boxworth End.** We are still trying to address these issues working with police and speed watch. We now have a **volunteer Speedwatch Team** to address speeding issues around the village.

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

## **DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Swavesey Cllrs attend **Parish Forum meetings at SCDC** along with other Parish Councillors from surrounding villages, we try very hard to be heard and have made valid points this year, i.e. Article 4, The White Horse stemmed from Swavesey residents working together. We also attend training meetings to ensure the Councillors on the Swavesey PC are up to date with Planning policy for example.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Bus Services** – we are still discussing with the County Council, a community transport link, through 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. Unfortunately a route suitable to everyone has not yet been found, so it is still under consultation.

**Guided Busway Drop off area** – During March the area to the rear of the site was cleared to allow additional parking space for short-term parking, as well as drop off and collection.

## **DRAINAGE**

Last year I reported that the Parish Council together with Swavesey Internal Drainage Board registered 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.

Progress has been very slow and works which we thought were to take place last year did not and now we have been told will not take place, with a reduced solution being proposed.

In November last year the Parish Council issued a Vote of No Confidence in the Environment Agency and District Council, particularly with regard to lack of work to maintain and improve the flood defences for Mare Fen. This led to an interview on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and further meetings between the EA and Parish Council. We are still not satisfied with the responses and proposals for the work in Mare Fen and will continue to pursue this.

In the meantime work has started to install the new pump at Webb's Hole Sluice, to cope with the increase in flow through the Main Drain as a result of increased capacity at the Uttons Drove Sewage Treatment Works, due to developments at Cambourne and Northstowe.

## GENERAL

**Moat Way Play Area** – Just over £35,000 of funding was awarded to enable this project to be completed over the past year and we now have a larger children’s play area in Moat Way. This was opened in February and has proved extremely popular.

**Recreation Green** – Together with the football clubs a new programme of grounds maintenance to improve the green and pitch areas has started. However, this winter has seen the vast majority of football matches cancelled due to waterlogged ground and most of the Spartans matches having to be played in other villages (Fen Drayton and Elsworth). We are now working with the Clubs to see if we can provide a surface water drainage system on the green, to improve it for both football and community events. This will be a major project and will require significant grant funding, which we are investigating.

**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 continues to be 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.

**Northstowe Phase 2** – We have made strong representations around issues to do with Northstowe including foul and surface water drainage, roads and increased traffic along village roads (such as Ramper Rd). We will continue to raise our concerns throughout the development.

**Affordable Housing** – Following permission granted in 2014, the District Council is now to develop this site for social affordable housing and plans to start construction in May. The homes should be available from spring 2016. There will be 20 homes in a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bed properties, with one 4-bed house available for rent. These will be priority availability for those with a family or employment link to the village. Potential tenants must be on the District Council’s Home-Link housing waiting list to be eligible for the homes.

**A14 Improvements** – We have taken part in the recent consultations and the comments we put forward last year have been included in the latest plans, so there is a separate foot/cycle/bridleway bridge across the A14 and the new local road has been better positioned alongside the new trunk road.

**Section 106** Community Facility payments are becoming harder to secure and therefore income to the village is less than we would like. Funding we currently have has been put towards the Moat Way Play Area and we are now working with the football clubs to try to improve the drainage on the recreation green.

## 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. The Guides will again be pond dipping and helping us to keep a record of the wildlife in the ponds.

**Community Warden Scheme** – 18 months old now and going well, with an increasing client base and providing much appreciated help and support to elderly residents.

**FINALLY** – Please use the Swavesey Website, which will be re-designed later this year. 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](http://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.

The Parish Council also wishes to thank and acknowledge that Linda Miller has now been Clerk to the Parish Council for 20 years and as a thank you for co-ordinating all the many activities of the Council and Cllrs, the Council presents her with a bouquet of flowers.

Martin Johnston, Chairman, Swavesey Parish Council

April 2015

## **Additional short report from The Meridian Magazine Committee**

October 2014 saw The Meridian Magazine's 150th issue and also 25 years since it first appeared.

The Magazine Committee donated a bench to the village, which has been installed overlooking the Swan Pond for residents to enjoy.

We are also in the process of producing a noticeboard at the guided busway stop with information and a map about the village to encourage people using the busway and the cycleway to visit the village.

There will also be a leaflet available with details of how to use the footpaths which are shown on the map. It is hoped this will be in place by the end of May.

We have been awarded a grant towards the cost of these by the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

April Martin  
Editor, Meridian Magazine