

Annual Parish Meeting of North Elmham 26th April 2022

Chairman's Report

Our last APM was on the 23rd June 2021, so this report covers a slightly shorter period than usual. Thankfully, the worst of Covid now appears to be over, and we have been holding meetings as normal in the Pavilion for the whole of this period. I know we all hope that we have seen the last of the restrictions, necessary though they were.

In no particular order, I will address the significant issues that the Parish Council has been dealing with since last June.

The Brookside Development appears to be making good progress, albeit that there was a pause in the building work for approximately five weeks in the spring. The developers have confirmed that they will install a small number of electric charging points in the car park.

Following its housing needs survey, Broadland Housing's article calling for sites for affordable housing was published in the Elmham News in February. So far, the PC has not received an update and is unaware of how many landowners have responded.

In February, three members of the PC attended a meeting at Breckland Council's offices with representatives of Mid Norfolk Railway. The purpose was to discuss the proposed amendment to the Transfer Deed between MNR and Breckland Council regarding the railway footpath. It was agreed by all parties that the path is not permissive, and that the new wording of the Deed will reflect that. Once this is finalised, MNR will amend its notices. I would like to thank MNR for its cooperation in this matter and Michael Rayner for taking considerable responsibility for this issue, and for the affordable housing project.

The survey for village facilities was published last summer and the results collated and discussed in August. The overall response was disappointing, but Tom Fitzalan Howard undertook a lot of work investigating the cost and feasibility of each suggestion. The PC is hoping that Breckland Council's appointment of someone with specific responsibility for local villages will advise on locations where gaps in facilities exist.

A review of the Community Plan was undertaken, led by Paul Grainger and taking account of what had already been achieved and what is yet to be done. The review was discussed at the November meeting, and it was felt that good progress has been made overall.

Thank you, Tom and Paul.

Highway matters, including flooding and road surfacing, require continued diligence from Paul and from John Labouchere. At the time of writing, most of the problems appear to be solved, though Holt Road will again be closed towards the end of May for further resurfacing work.

As for sport in the village, we were sad to say goodbye to the cricket club, which has joined forces with Brisley and will now play all its home games there. We wish them well, and continued success for the coming season. The silver lining is that there is now enough room on the recreation ground for the football club to run all its team games and training sessions in one place. The PC congratulates Chris Reeve and his colleagues for making such a success of the club.

The tennis courts have been resurfaced, which necessitated the laying of a track on the grass to

support the contractor's vehicles. The work on the courts will be completed by the first week in May.

Two new benches are to be installed in Millennium Wood: one in the central clearing in memory of a parishioner and funded by his family; the other in the south eastern corner providing a view over Cathedral Meadows. The Meadows continue to be expertly managed by Tom, under advice from Brown & Co.

We are due to join in the national celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee between 2nd and 5th June. Most of the arrangements have been agreed, and will link with the national celebrations.

Much diligent unsung work is done in and around the village, by PC members and by indefatigable volunteers, and for this we are all extremely grateful. The only blot on the landscape is the continuing low-level vandalism, which is disheartening for all those whose hard work and dedication contributes so much to our village, costly to repair and frightening for those whose peace of mind is disturbed. We hope that the increased police patrols will help to reduce this problem.

My huge thanks to Martin Phillips for his support and for what must feel like never-ending work keeping the PC's accounts in order. The online banking is working well, and makes payments of all invoices efficient. We appointed a new internal auditor this year who will no doubt continue the good work previously carried out by Di Dann. I would also like to thank Kevin Webb for his diligence and support of us all, as well as Gordon Bambridge and Bill Borrett for representing our interests at District and County level so conscientiously.

We are fortunate to live in such a lovely part of Norfolk and we hope that the village will continue to thrive.

Thank you everyone.