

Chair's Report 17th July 2023

We have had a busy couple of months since our last Full Council Meeting!

I have met with Ufford Parish Council and Sally Noble to start the process of adding to the River Deben data collection. I have sent round the results from the first tests we were part of to all councillors and will soon be showing some of the councillors where and how to conduct the testing. There is a meeting on the 14th July in Woodbridge that I will attend and feed back. Our outflow area is showing really high levels of E Coli, which are still really quite high 30 metres downstream. The safe bathing level is 900 colonies per 100ml and our outflow is between 30,000 - 35,000 colonies.

The community choir continues to flourish, we have had an outing together to support another choir recently and on Wednesday 5 July we had our practice at a choir members house with nibbles and drinks, we all car pooled there. It is fulfilling to see the choir achieving what it is intended to do, which is to tackle loneliness, improve mental and physical health and have no barriers for joining by providing the service for free.

We continue on with our bi monthly litter collection walks and am always astonished by how much rubbish we collect! Thanks to all volunteers for coming along, John D and Pauline from our councillors also came and helped.

We enjoyed our first community rounders match on Sunday 2nd July, we have purchased rounders and cricket sets and hope to do these monthly, on the first Sunday of the month. The kids and adults all very much enjoyed it and I am hoping over time this will grow and be something we all look forward to. Thank you John H and Pauline for attending and helping.

We have had a meeting with Sally N and the Village Hall CIO and I truly hope we are making some progress towards the hall modernisation. We appreciate it is a loved space in Wickham Market and that parishioners are frustrated with the lack of progress. The village hall is very keen for volunteers to become trustees and help with the running of the village hall.

Sally N and I went to meet with some residents of Parkway who are very concerned over the speed of travel and danger proposed to people due to the position of the 30MPH limit on Border Cot Lane. They are also extremely worried about the structure of their properties as when heavy vehicles pass they are experiencing vibrations. There is a letter that they would like us to support tonight on the agenda. They have obtained lots of signatures of concerned residents.

On Thursday 6th July, David (vice), John H and I met with two representatives of the allotment association and the plot holder of plot 39 to try and come to an agreement about the future of plot 39. We have a recommendation that the plot is divided into 3rds. This will allow one half site at the top of plot 39 to be brought into use again, and 2 smaller 3rd plots from plot 39 for people who would find a half or full sized plot too much work to handle, as we know that they are very time consuming. There were discussions about making sure that there are pathways around the sites perimeter as required, as soon as possible. We would help plot 39 move their shed into the lower 3rd that they would keep. The rest would need to be tree felled and roots removed to allow growing of crops and installing some raised beds. Quotations for these works would need to be sought.

We would agree to keep the bottom 3rd for the plot holder as long as it was regularly reviewed and maintained within a set of pre arranged dates and expectations. Ray is working on a timeline of events.

John H and I attended a 20s plenty webinar in June, that was so interesting and informative, it showed that when a 20s speed limit is in place, the average speed reduces to between 24 and 26 mph, which is much safer for residents and reduces collisions, it also reduces emissions and sound pollution. I think to summarise, Suffolk as a whole needs to, parish by parish, agree to support the 20s plenty scheme and then tell SCC and Alexander Nicholls that is what we want and work together to try and get it delivered. They sent out further information including all of the slides from the webinar which has been circulated to all councillors. There is already a petition going around Wickham organised by Arthur S with the Green party, campaigning for 20 MPH speed limits and that has got over 120 signatures so far. Al and I spoke with a County Councillor when they attended our market and they seemed very supportive of this project here because we have so many areas where people and vehicles meet and safety for pedestrians and cyclists should be our priority. We have this as an agenda item tonight, to see if councillors support us adopting a 20s plenty scheme which there appears to be a hunger for.

Al and I have met a few times now with ESC on the deliverance of schemes to utilise the 10k grant from the towns initiative scheme. Updates have been circulated and we discussed this further at the finance and general committee meeting. I would like to see some of the grant be used to upgrade our website to be more engaging and user friendly but easy enough for the clerk and dep clerk to update. We also discussed setting up a stakeholders meeting to try and bring all of the organisations and groups in Wickham Market together and working more cohesively.

David and I attended the Wickham Market Partnership AGM on behalf of the council and it was great to hear all of the hard work they are doing and schemes that they have watched come into fruition. We are hoping to work much closer together. Thank you to the WM Partnership for inviting us and to Philip Talent for his hard work on the new Archive Centre.

I sat in the new Parish Council office at the back of the village hall committee room, on 27th June as advertised in the parish council newsletter for anyone in the village to come and have a chat. I had one visitor and we had a great chat. I will be sitting there again in July on Monday 24th from 7pm - 8pm - an evening for people to come who would normally be at work during previous day time sessions. Any councillors are welcome to join me.

I have also had lots of emails and meetings with individuals on various queries which we are working on together or have pointed them in the right direction of who they should contact for assistance.

We have had a climate change working group meeting and all gone off with certain areas to look at, thank you to Jennie who has managed to get some bee friendly plants along the walk down to the church. We will meet again soon and will publish the date once organised.

Worth noting that Sally N when canvassing prior to her appointment of District Councillor fed back some points she picked up

- Lack of communication between the PC and Parishioners and a feeling that we do not listen
- The Village Hall is frustrating villagers
- Extreme worry about the safety of pedestrians and cyclists with the levels of traffic and speed

I really hope that through education of what we are responsible for, new methods of communication and more transparent communication, and trying to engage with parishioners face to face more often, we can improve our offer. The agenda points tonight with traffic concerns on border cot lane and 20s plenty scheme show we are starting to listen to key areas of concern.