

## Chairs report

Hello all, please find below my Chairs report for November. You will find this mostly reflects what I've prepared for the Newsletter due to go out in December.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

Each year in Wickham Market, All Saints Church collaborates with The Royal British Legion and has a remembrance service and then after, people go over to the War Memorial at the end of Chapel Lane where representatives of different groups, lay a wreath down. I was fortunate enough to be able to be part of this service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November, John H and Ray did some amazing bell ringing for the service and Dick J was there standing proud as a past serviceman.

It was a touching, moving service and I was incredibly proud to lay a wreath on behalf of Wickham Market Parish Council. Well done to everyone who has a hand in organising such a well-planned event to remember those that fell. I loved the story about the Starfish in the service, which demonstrates how we can all do a little that may not change the world, but can make a difference just for 1 person, what a great sentiment! We can all make a difference.

#### *The Starfish Story*

*A young man is walking along the ocean and sees a beach on which thousands and thousands of starfish have washed ashore. Further along he sees an old man, walking slowly and stooping often, picking up one starfish after another and tossing each one gently into the ocean.*

*"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?," he asks.*

*"Because the sun is up and the tide is going out and if I don't throw them further in they will die."*

*"But, old man, don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it! You can't possibly save them all, you can't even save one-tenth of them. In fact, even if you work all day, your efforts won't make any difference at all."*

*The old man listened calmly and then bent down to pick up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "It made a difference to that one."*

### **Simons Cross Meeting**

On Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, there was a meeting held in the Village Hall about the Neighbourhood Plan and the effects that may have on Simons Cross. We thank the organisers of this meeting for being able to pull together people who care deeply about

Simons Cross and Wickham Market generally, it was great to see the community spirit in action.

The Parish Council (Dick, Kelvin and myself) were able to verify elements of the meeting by being there and what I was especially keen on, was explaining to the parishioners how planning applications work now, as parishioners are all welcome to be part of how the Parish Council (PC) deal with planning applications. When we get notified of a planning application, the PC have just 3 weeks to respond. Within that time, our clerk will publish the planning application on our notice board in the village square, and on our website, this will give parishioners time to view the application. We will then, in most cases, hold a Planning Committee meeting, to which all public are welcome to attend. If parishioners come along or write to us before that meeting, they can have their say on the application. It is then sent off to ESC who then process the application with our feedback.

We really look forward to working together with all our parishioners, we are committed to engaging with the people of Wickham Market and would love to see this happening more and more.

### **Floods in Wickham Market**

It was certainly a very trying time for far too many properties in Wickham Market, and surrounding areas, when Storm Babet came to visit us and cause havoc.

The rain was relentless and we had between 75mm and 100mm during the course of the Storm. After the rain had stopped falling, we then had the River Deben growing out of its banks and causing a lot of flooding in the High Street and along the River on Spring Lane. There were other areas of Wickham that had flooding issues, such as Broad Road, Orchard Place and Chapel Lane/Mill Lane.

On the Friday night, along High Street and Spring Lane, Anne, who was out helping, informs us that there was a great showing of community spirit in Wickham Market. Farmers, our district councillor Sally Noble and many residents all came out to help get people out of their flooded homes to safety, to get compost bags around and fill up sand bags.

On the Saturday morning, we were given 30 sand bags and 80 hessian sand sacks from Travis Perkins in Martlesham to protect the properties there from possible further river rises that afternoon.

Melissa, who helps to look after the campsite on Spring Lane, got straight to work creating a bank of supplies from cleaning products, to old towels, furniture, food donations and much more. This has been incredibly appreciated by many who needed help. Notcutts delivered some biscuits for residents and Morrisons donated a lot of cleaning equipment and items.

I spent quite a lot of time supporting residents through this period, attending sessions set up to assist the flooded and working together with Sally N and Sam Kenward to bring the

best support we could. I met so many lovely residents when door knocking to check in on them after the flood, who despite having lost so much, still managed to be lovely people.

I cannot thank our community enough for supporting each other. ESC were a great help, removing ruined items for people so they could start drying their homes out.

The Parish Council will be discussing making an Emergency Plan which we understand, ESC will be helping all parishes with. Nearly 2 weeks later when we were expecting heavy winds and rain, the Parish Council organised sandbags and sand that could be collected from the Village Hall to help people prepare, Simon H, Mike H and Pauline filled up lots of bags for people, and then we also delivered some out. If Parishioners reported flooding on the Highways reporting tool, they should be contacted about the possible grants for flooded properties. If they have not reported their flooding via the Highways reporting tool, they really should.

*If you have experienced flooding to your property as a result of Storm Babet, you need to:*

Visit: <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk>

Click on: 'Report It'

Then click: 'Drainage and Flooding'

Then click: 'Flooding inside residential / non-residential property'

Please include as much information as you have, there is also an option to upload photos.

*Once your report has been submitted, Suffolk County Council officers will contact you to gather further information and prioritise those locations that meet the criteria for an official investigation.*

*Someone from the district or borough council will then contact you to arrange payment, if eligible.*

*For those who aren't able to submit their report online, please call 0345 606 6171.*

Well done to our community for coming together so beautifully when they really needed too. We are hoping to hold a debriefing meeting when things are a little more settled, to see how we can help each other better, and celebrate the helpers that came to peoples aid. Keep an eye out on our Social Media pages on Facebook, Instagram and on Nextdoor. If any Councillors want to help organise this, please let me know. I'll be glad of the help of the help!

### **Community Choir**

We are so pleased to be back after the Summer, singing our Wednesday evenings away. We are in the Village Hall between 8pm and 9pm Wednesday evenings, term time only.

We have had a great influx of new members and we are loving having a fuller sound. We are singing our Christmas songs at the Wickham Market Christmas Market at 12.30, I hope many of you will come and enjoy our performance!

Please consider joining us, this is a FREE choir and anyone from Wickham and surrounding areas, regardless of age or ability, is welcome to come and join us. The more the merrier! We always leave in good spirits having sung our hearts out and had a good giggle in the process. Please give our new Facebook page 'Wickham Market Community Choir' a follow!

I have applied for a grant from Magic Little Grants towards this, and Sally N is considering some funding for this, I am also working with Dick on some funding from the Community Partnership for this.

### **Climate Change working group**

We just wanted to let you know that you can now see the minutes of our meetings on our website, that way you can see what ideas we are having and what we would like to do, maybe you might like to come and join us? If you are interested in participating, please email on [gemma.dg@wickhammarketpc.com](mailto:gemma.dg@wickhammarketpc.com)

I'd also like to remind our Parish Council that all decisions we make, should have considered climate change and environmental issues, and be in keeping with the Climate Action Strategy we adopted. Please note that we declared a Climate Emergency, following in the footsteps of the higher levels of Government.

I was incredibly impressed to see ESC saying 'no' to Oil and Gas – more info can be found here

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/news/east-suffolk-council-says-no-to-oil-and-gas/>

### **Community Partnership**

I attended the last community partnership meeting back in October which was great. There are some great projects being worked on from lots of different parishes and groups contributing. I was very impressed with the Youth Opportunity Fund which will assist Cost Of Living Crisis. There is work happening on lots of projects. Public are welcome to attend these meetings. You can find out more information here -

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-partnerships/framlingham-wickham-market-kelsale-yoxford-and-villages-community-partnership/>

### **Christmas Market**

I will be at the Christmas Market this year again, manning our Parish Gazebo. Sally plans to join me for as much time as she can. I would love to have various councillors come and spread the joy of Christmas with Market goers and be a listening ear for anyone who wants to engage with us. Please let me know if you can take a few slots, I especially need over an hour covering between 12.15 and 1.45 for when the choir are performing.

I am hoping to offer mince pies and a drink of some sort but need to work on this years offering.

### **River testing**

I'd really appreciate some help with River testing in Wickham Market. After speaking with Ufford Parish Council Chair David, I think we've agreed that it is easier to do testing in the format like I reported previously, a River Safari, and have Ufford doing our testing for us, rather than buying all our own equipment. We will have to contribute to their costs for doing this, as they do not have the budget. We love working together and it's a great relationship we are building with Ufford PC. Please let me know if you are able to carry out testing.

### **Cross Parish Meeting**

When I last spoke to David from Ufford, I floated the idea of a Cross Parish meeting, sometime in the new year, that brings together councillors from the PC'S in Sally Noble's ward. This would be great for information sharing, best practices, new initiatives and building on our relationships and consistency. Please let me know if you'd be interested in participating.

Thank you all for reading and I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.