

Annual Report from Chair of Wickhambrook Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting gives an opportunity to look back over the previous twelve months activities.

Meetings:

The Parish Council has held:

- 7 Ordinary meetings
- 4 Extra-ordinary meetings
- 5 meetings of the Estates Committee

Finance:

Made 265 payments for services to the parish, including:

- Transferring £2559.10 to Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre (recycling grant)
- Grants to local organisations:
 - Carnival Committee (Fete & Flower Show) £450.00
 - Repairs to Memorial Clock £680.00
 - Warm Winter Wednesdays £ 63.50
- Supporting local organisations (MSC, Outdoor Bowls and Tennis Club) through in-kind grants as part of its grounds keeping
- Donated £450.00 to the following Charities
 - Brave Futures
 - Headway Suffolk
 - St Edmundsbury Newstalk
 - BSEVC and
 - Royal British Legion

And has received the following grants:

- Locality Funding for development of Neighbourhood Plan £9,997.00
- Locality Funding from West Suffolk Councillor Sarah Pugh £ 350.00

The cost of maintaining grounds and assets in the parish last year included:

- Grounds Contract £12,470.00
- Six Acres £ 545.79
- Tree Surgery £ 660.00
- Cemetery & Churchyard £ 871.82
- Play Equipment £ 1,278.90
- MUGA & Skate Park £ 1,697.93
- Greens £ 687.08
- Bin & Dog waste £ 775.15

Projects:

Our major project over the past year has been preparing the [Neighbourhood Plan](#), which has included:

- Evaluating responses from the first Household Survey, and Housing Needs Survey in March last year
- Feeding back findings from those surveys at the Fete and Flower Show in July

- Responding to West Suffolk's consultation on Preferred Options, which included their identification of the site at Bunters Road for (an anticipated) 40 homes and mixed use
- Commissioning a Landscape Appraisal and Site Masterplanning through the grant funding
- Undertaking a further consultation on the draft proposals coming out of Site Master planning.

Thanks go out to Cllr Tracey Turner for leading the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, Secretaries Richard Byers & Roger Merry, and the group members, Diana Carroll, Emily Bayman, Jamie Green, Maro Limnios, Penny Bayman, Sandra Law, Sue Sternberg and Tara Hayden.

Highways:

Unfortunately, despite a traffic survey commissioned by the parish council, we have so far been unable to convince Suffolk County Council Highways that there is a case for reducing the speed limit at Wickham Street from 40mph to 30mph. Our County Councillor, Bobby Bennett, is still working to resolve this for us.

The proposed Quiet Lanes were designated last year, and installation of signage is planned for 10th June.

Planning:

26 planning applications were notified to and considered by the parish council over in the past year.

Other projects

and activities last year included:

- A street art workshop to paint over graffiti at the Skate Park
- Ongoing transcription of historic cemetery records (thanks to Anne Shaw)
- Works to the banks of the drainage ditch at Coltsfoot Green
- Installation of two new benches (at Coltsfoot Green and Six Acres)
- Marking up of reserved spaces in the Cemetery
- Planting of seven new cherry trees at the cemetery to as part of the Queens Green Canopy
- Commissioning a new Senior Wooden Goal End and Basket Ball Hoop at the Multi-Use Games Area
- Identifying additional funding through Wayleave

We collaborated with a wide range of groups and individuals to bring about further improvements to the parish, including:

- Suffolk Public Rights of Way, with Roger Medley leading a group of footpaths volunteers to map the footpaths and work needed to improve them;
- A team of ladies in the parish who put on Warm Winter Wednesdays in January and February, hosted by the WI; and (although strictly speaking this year)
- The WI and their supporters, who very kindly refurbished the Little Lending Library at the BT Call Box at Shop Hill.
- Mary Jolland leading the Cemetery Tidying days and volunteers Sally Welsh and Roger Medley

Thanks go out to our lay members on the Estates Committee, Mary Jolland, John Norton, Roger Medley, Cllrs Paul Couzens and Sandy Thwaite, our County Councillor Bobby Bennett, District Councillor Sarah Pugh, and especially our retiring Councillors Jeffrey Claydon, Kerry Merritt, both of whom served for many years on the parish council, and Simon Moy.

Thanks also to our Web master, Maria Sumner of Mdsign, and the Trustees at Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre, without whom our lives would be much harder!

Please forgive me if there's anyone I've missed!