

Walberswick Parish Council

Report to Walberswick APM – May 2022

I am pleased to be able to report a relatively smooth time for WPC since the last time we met and I reported on behalf of WPC (which was September 2021) but looking back on the six months we still seem to be moving an awful lot of stuff along, which is obviously great.

One of the big areas making progress at the moment is the Neighbourhood Development Plan, of which you will hear more later on in the meeting from Rebecca and in particular the upcoming Housing Needs Assessment, which will be getting hand delivered to every house in the village on the weekend of 11th June, so watch out for that. The NDP is owned by the Parish Council but is being driven by a working party, like quite a lot of other elements of village life and anyone can be on a working party, you don't have to be on the council, so if you hear the words "working party" this evening and it is a subject that you would like to get involved with, please let someone know! Another advisory group working with the Parish Council is PAG and we remain very indebted as a Council and a village to them for the ongoing excellent work they do to help us with the many planning applications we receive and we sincerely hope the NDP will help strengthen the impact of their input.

So what has happened since we last met? Well the Council has set its budget for the 22/23 tax year and we were very proud to be able to hold the precept completely flat year on year, despite the inflation all around us; however you will have seen that your bills have still gone up very slightly, and we believe that is because there are more holiday let properties being configured as businesses in Walberswick who therefore do not pay council tax. There is nothing WPC can do about this and it is a problem in many other tourist destinations around the country.

We have also had a smooth year end accounts-wise so far, mainly due to being blessed with both an excellent Clerk and an excellent RFO after splitting the role a couple of years ago; a decision that continues to be proven to the right way forward for us

All the details of the Council budget, meetings and decisions can be found on our website at: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-parish-council/>

The Parish Council has also continued to deal with some of our "legacy issues" from previous times, including the removal of the Pavilion (which was entirely made of asbestos!) and the removal of both large and small Pirate ships which comprehensively failed their last ROSPA safety assessment...when that happens we are duty bound not to ignore it. We are hoping to replace the Pirate ships in due course with something even better and we are saving funds towards that end now.

Many of you will also be aware that "past and present" Parish Councillors Jon Winyard & Lee Sutton are undertaking a charity bike ride this month from Lands End to John o' Groats with a view to providing upgraded playing facilities on the common playing field...so please

get behind them and sponsor them...it is in all our interest! In the meantime, those of you who use the common will see that we have new, custom-made goal nets in place on both football pitches, which should last for many years to come.

Speaking of past Parish Councillors, it was at the September meeting that we announced that Jon Winyard was stepping down from the Parish Council and I am delighted to be able to announce that in the meantime we have been able to secure the services of Vanessa Tucker to replace Jon, so we are "fully staffed" once again. Please join me in welcoming Vanessa to our team and thanking my other fellow councillors of Rebecca Whiting, Josie Bassinette, Jane Sutherland-Rogers, Esme Richardson and Lee Sutton for all they do on a purely voluntary basis for the village.

Part of that work over the last year has continued to fall in particular to Josie Bassinette and her tireless work to represent the views of the Parish Council regarding Sizewell. This long journey look like it is coming to an end before long, but the work will not stop (unless the government says "No" which looks increasingly unlikely) as our emphasis will inevitably then have to shift to mitigating the impact of this immense project on our way of life and our village.

Lastly I want to draw people attention to a day in which the Council is playing just a part, alongside WCLC, the PCC & the Village Hall, which is the organisation of festivities for the Queen's platinum Jubilee which will be a chance for the whole community to come together once again on Sunday 5th June; again you will hear more on this matter in the meeting.

Thank you

Andrew Lewis

Chair, Walberswick Parish Council