

# 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
- 2 Extra-ordinary meetings
- 5 meetings of the Estates Committee

## Finance:

Made 230 payments for services to the parish, including:

- Transferring £2334.03 to Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre (recycling grant)
- Grants to local organisations:
  - Wickhambrook WI £ 170.00
  - Carnival Committee (Fete & Flower Show) £ 220.24
  - Local History Society £ 300.00
  - Repairs to Memorial Clock £ 350.00
- In Kind Grants (as part of parish council grounds keeping):
  - Wickhambrook Outdoor Bowls Club £ 459.88
  - Wickhambrook Tennis Club £ 270.00
  - Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre £3010.08
- Donated £250.00 to the following Charities
  - Royal British Legion
  - East Anglian Air Ambulance
  - HeadwaySuffolk

And received the following grants:

- West Suffolk Council – Communities Capital Fund £2250.00
- West Suffolk Council – Locality Funding – supporting volunteers £ 500.00

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

- Grounds Contract £11,738.35
- Six Acres £ 400.00
- Tree Surgery £ 3,135.00
- Cemetery & Churchyard £ 3,832.00
- Play Areas, MUGA & Skate Park £ 4,015.05
- Greens £ 580.70
- Bin & Dog waste £ 905.88

**Total: £24,606.98**

## Projects:

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

- Reporting on feedback from the parish council's consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, including a draft list of policy changes arising from this
- Applications for Technical Support for
  - Strategic Environmental Impact assessment and
  - Habitats Regulations Assessment

- Submitting further comments and engaging representation from its planning consultant at West Suffolk's Local Plan Hearings
- Submission of draft Neighbourhood Plan to West Suffolk Council in March of this year

This has been a massive and detailed project, and 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.

In January, following a letter to our new MP, Nick Timothy wrote to Suffolk County Council Highways supporting our request for a reduction in the speed limit. This was followed by a site visit from Nick Timothy MP, with our County Councillor, Bobby Bennett to Wickham Street followed by a meeting with concerned local residents. We are fortunate to have the full support of both our MP and County Councillor, and the profile of this issue was subsequently raised by a number of articles in the local press.

Our County Councillor, Bobby Bennett, has kindly agreed to fund two new tube surveys of speed at Wickham Street, and the parish council has allocated funding to commission a full report by Suffolk County Council on which both it and Suffolk Constabulary will be consulted before a decision is reached on whether a reduction in the speed limit will be agreed.

This spring, we successfully recruited a team for Community Speed Watch, who have now completed all their approvals and training with Suffolk Constabulary. Ten sites have been approved by Suffolk Constabulary, and the group has now completed its first Speed Watch survey, with more planned through the spring.

### **Planning:**

20 planning applications were notified to and considered by the parish council over in the past year (including one appeal to the planning inspector).

### **Other projects**

and activities in the past year have included:

- Ongoing transcription of historic cemetery records and plotting of Memorials (thanks to Andrea Grimes) – all our burial and deed records have now been uploaded to our new cemetery software
- A stand at Wickhambrook Fete and Flower Show
- Repairs to 11 memorials in Wickhambrook Cemetery following testing the previous summer
- Eight volunteer mornings tidying the cemetery and play areas
- Three litter picks (with thanks to Mary Jolland and Barbara Merritt of WMSC)
- Work to negotiate transfer of parcels of land at Bury Road Pocket Park to the parish council, which maintains it (the parish council took the decision in July not to proceed with the transfer on the advice of its appointed solicitor).

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

- With Suffolk Climate Change – Keep the Heat. With thanks to Cllrs Andrea and Kevin Grimes, sixteen properties in the parish benefited from a Thermal Imaging survey, with advice on how to interpret the images and grants that could be accessed to make improvements. We hope to run this project again next year.
- With Suffolk Public Rights of Way team, to investigate ways to improve the surfacing of BOAT 31 and reduce the impact of surface water flowing onto the track at Coltsfoot Green (ongoing)
- With Wickhambrook MSC – to improve security at the Recreation Ground and Six Acres through the purchase and installation of a height restriction barrier (two further barriers to be installed at the eastern end of Six Acres)
- A team of volunteers in the parish (coordinated by Amanda Lavelle) who put on Warm Winter Wednesdays in January and February, hosted at the WI Hall; and
- Mary Jolland leading the Cemetery Tidying days and volunteers, Kathy Cordy, Andrea and Kevin Grimes, Mel Karunaratne, Mike Lavelle, Roger Medley and Tim O'Donnelly.

Thanks go out to our lay members on the Estates Committee, Mary Jolland, Roger Medley and David Di Giulio, our Councillors, Paul Couzens, Andrea and Kevin Grimes, Mel Karunaratne, Linda Smith and Tracey Turner, our County Councillor Bobby Bennett and District Councillor Sarah Pugh.

Thanks also to Peter Vince, who looks after the Defibrillator at the Fire Station, 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!



Mike Lavelle – Chair of Wickhambrook Parish Council.