

Cockfield Parish Council Meeting Report

The Parish Council met on Thursday 29th November 2012

The meeting opened with the Chairman welcoming the new co-opted councillor, Dr Norman Kelly

Under matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, it was reported that the placement of a 'dog bin' on Great Green has been discussed with Babergh District Council who have to agree its type and preferred siting. The Greens Committee will now consider the best place for installation. Dog fouling remains a main cause of concern in the village with complaints having been made about the footpath between Howe Lane and the Church, as well as Old Hall Lane. **It is still clear that some among us refuse to take responsibility for their dogs and continue to make the environment more unpleasant for the rest of us.** We now understand that the Babergh Community Wardens have the authority to take action against persistent offenders and they are currently being trained in the use of that authority

The other item from the previous meeting involved road safety, particularly speeding, in the village. We await the results of the recent speed monitor which was installed in Howe Lane – we have been advised that the next monitoring action will take place on the A1141 and will be in conjunction with traffic monitoring loops. A further meeting will be held with the County Highways Department to review progress on a number of road safety items which were identified earlier in the year

The provision of bus services to the village has been an issue for the Parish Council for some time now. In response to complaints from ourselves and neighbouring villages regarding the inadequacy of the existing Wednesday service to Bury, the County have now advised that a second supplementary service will commence on the 12th December – details can be found elsewhere in this edition of Green Links

A number of letters of thanks have been received from various attendees of the Village of the Year awards ceremony, and Mr Pembroke, our County Councillor, added his congratulations on our achievements. The consensus was that the event was a success and it was noted that the representatives of some of the other award winners stayed on after the official presentations had finished. A letter has been sent to our American Lord of the Manor outlining our recent successes and drawing his attention to our website. He has asked that he be kept informed regarding future events in the village

Congratulations were also passed to Green Links for its Magazine of the Year award

PC Ruth Horton advised us that there have been four crimes reported in the village since the last meeting – an attempted workshop break in, two thefts of oil from the school and a theft from an insecure vehicle. She noted that oil thefts are becoming common in the area and also that there have been three recent burglaries in Lavenham. **The message from the police is that we should all continue to ensure that our property is secure at all times and that we are alert to any unusual activities or vehicles.** Notwithstanding this, Cockfield was identified by the Babergh Safer Neighbourhood Team, at its most recent meeting, as the priority area following the oil thefts, and the police will be increasing their presence in the village

Our District Councillor, Mr Arthey, sent apologies for his absence, and has advised us that the Babergh Core Strategic Planning document has been approved by the Council and will now be presented to the Secretary of State

Mr Pembroke advised us that the County Council will be freezing council tax and are awaiting the spending plan for the four years starting in 2014 – this, he believes, will require further substantial savings. He reported that 16 council owned care homes have now been sold to Care UK, adding that levels of dementia in Suffolk are amongst the highest in the country which in itself is a major concern for the future

The County is deciding to put its highways activities into the private sector and consultation in taking place on combining the fire service with Cambridgeshire to create a new stand alone authority

It was reported from the most recent SALC meeting that actions are in hand to improve broadband access throughout the county. This meeting also had a presentation on the Suffolk County Council budget which outlined the £26 million savings to be made in the coming year and reflected the concerns expressed earlier by Mr Pembroke regarding future spending

The Greens Committee reported that the verges around Great Green have suffered from the building work that has been undertaken lately – it was agreed to approach the companies concerned to obtain their assistance in reinstating the verges

The diseased trees on Great Green have now been removed and the chippings have been used to restore the surface of the play area. It is intended to replace those removed with young virus free Elm, Alder and Lime trees. In view of the recent public safety issues regarding falling tree branches it was agreed that all trees on council property will be inspected annually

Timber has been acquired to repair the benches on Great Green

Mr Williams expressed his pleasure at the award received by the Earl's Meadow project as part of the VoY process. He also noted that there had been a successful visit and bulb planting by all the pupils at the village school, their teachers and some parents. It is planned to install fencing around the open end of the culvert and a working party will be arranged in the near future

The cemetery will be 90 years old in February. It requires a tidy up, one of the gate posts needs attention and the path needs resurfacing. These issues will be referred to the Cemetery Committee

The pavilion Committee is looking at the need to replace the green external changing room doors

Following an initiative from the Government, County and District Councils, the Parish Council will establish a committee to formulate emergency plans for the village in the event of adverse weather, floods or any other occurrence. This will be a long term project and further details will be publicized in due course

The agenda included the setting of the Parish Precept for 2013/14. This has now been deferred until the January meeting as the District Council awaits guidance from the Government on council tax policy – this will not be available until the Autumn Statement due on 5th December

The next Parish Council meeting will now be on Thursday 24th January 2013

The Council may be contacted through the Clerk, Alan Morgan on 01284 828072

RJP