

Cockfield Parish Council Meeting Report

The Parish Council met on Thursday 26th September 2013

The Parish Council welcomed the news that the School has started the autumn term with its new Headmistress in place. The Chairman reported that he has received an invitation from the Chairman of Governors to meet formally with the Headmistress and to explore how the Council could become more involved with the school

To recognise the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, the stories of those villagers who fell are being compiled and will be published locally

PCSO Jamie Fudge reported that since the last meeting there have been two domestic burglaries, two commercial or outbuilding burglaries, one instance of dangerous driving and two other crimes reported in the village. Two suspects are on bail for one of the domestic burglaries

The Police are encouraging everyone to be alert for suspicious vehicles in the area, and requesting that if spotted the registration numbers are noted and reported by dialing 101 (or 999 in an emergency). He also restated the need for making sure that property and vehicles are secure at all times

There is also a warning of distraction robberies in the Station/Roys/Waitrose area car parks in Sudbury. Motorists have been approached to change a note, only to find later that a credit card is missing from their wallets

The Babergh Safer Neighbourhood Team met in Brettenham on 17th September and agreed that speeding in Brettenham should be the current priority. The next meeting is on Tuesday 19th November in Lavenham

Cockfield now has an Emergency Plan – the Parish Council agreed to adopt the plan which will now be lodged with the County Emergency Planning authorities and will provide support to village residents in the event of an emergency. Key parts of the plan will be publicised in Green Links and on the village website

Our County Councillor, Jenny Antill, advised us that the County Council welcomes Ofsted's intention to intensify inspections in Suffolk schools. The authority has recognised the need for improvement and, through its Raising the Bar programme, is working with and challenging schools to drive up educational attainment. Early indications from the latest exam results indicate that schools are making good progress and this work will most certainly continue

Currently, 71% of Suffolk schools are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. 29% are below that level, and this is where the focus needs to be. The County Council is determined to do all it can to bring about improvements although it is clear that this has to be led by schools, governors and teachers with the help of parents and the County Council

The County Council has authorized a 12 week consultation on the provision of home care and community meals across the county. The current system is somewhat inflexible and does not always meet the needs of customers. The provision of care in rural areas

is a particular challenge. The aim of the Council is to encourage people to retain their health and independence for as long as possible and it will seek the views of providers and customers of the service, community groups and neighbouring local authorities to develop a policy to support this aim

Mrs Antill finished by advising that she will be holding a surgery in Lavenham Library on Saturday 23rd November between 10.30 and 12.30

Our District Councillor, Clive Arthey, congratulated the village on the Sport England grant for the refurbishment of the pavilion

The textile recycling scheme in Babergh/Mid Suffolk has, in the last year, diverted 800 tonnes of textiles from landfill to recycling. The aim of the scheme is to recycle 2000 tonnes per year. To help improve the situation, new style bags are being introduced which will make distribution by the waste crews easier, and, of course, bags will continue to be available free from the Post Office Stores

Mr Arthey concluded by noting that Suffolk Fire Service will hold a 'Thatched Property' meeting in Monks Eleigh on 30th October

Following a request from the Village Hall Committee, the Parish Council agreed to purchase a 'dog bin' to be installed at the Village Hall in addition to the two bins already agreed for Great Green and Old Hall Lane. A poll of dog walkers on Great Green regarding the siting of the bin has been inconclusive with a number of suggestions being put forward –the Greens Committee will make the final decision

A new bench will be ordered to replace that on Great Green which is beyond repair

Work on Earl's Meadow has been slow over the summer, but the area has been well used by families. The meadows will be topped in the near future

We still await a reply from Suffolk County Council regarding the footpath leading from Howe Lane to the Church. The other footpaths around the village are in good condition, although it was noted that a branch requires removing on the Abbey footpath

A timing plan is being set up for the refurbishment of the pavilion – a further grant application is being prepared for a second phase of improvements

The question of speeding has been discussed with County Highways Department and a number of speed checks have been carried out by the council and the Police. The first conclusion is that, with over half of the vehicles stopped for speeding coming from within the village, our first priority is to persuade ourselves to abide by the limits. Speed limits are not imposed for fun – they are to protect all road users and pedestrians – we, the residents, complain about speeding in the village, but it is us who are the main culprits!!! So PLEASE observe the speed limits wherever you may be travelling in the village

Highways have suggested various traffic engineering measures which could be used to slow traffic, and the Parish Council is considering which of these, if any, are appropriate

The new road maintenance contract commences 1st October and it is hoped that the various potholes around the village will be repaired in the near future

It was also confirmed during our discussions with Highways that the maintenance of hedges adjacent to the highway is the responsibility of the owners. The County has the power to request hedge owners to meet this responsibility (and charge for the work if the requests are ignored) and will support the Parish Council in any efforts to secure compliance

The County has come up with proposals to improve the safety of pedestrians waiting for Sudbury bound buses at Mill Corner. A site visit will be made to finalise these plans

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 28th November 2013

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

RJP