

Chairman's Report for Brandeston Parish Council

April 2017 to March 2018

I have now completed three years as Chairman and was re-elected at the last council meeting.

There have been no changes to the Parish councillors.

Helen Buckingham is Vice-Chair.

Daniel Norman is the Parish Tree Officer.

Kathy Churchill is Village Hall Representative and footpath and Litter Officer.

Richard Mitson-Woods is our SALC Representative.

Kevin Duffy is responsible for Police liaison and Neighbourhood Watch.

Paul Kirton is responsible for traffic calming and road safety.

Mary Mitson-Woods is Clerk to the council and our Responsible Finance Officer. This role continues to develop and although it is now a salaried post, this does not cover all the time Mary spends on Council business and I am grateful for the extra hours of her own time that she spends on Council work.

Our District Councillor is Paul Rous.

Our County Councillor is Robin Vickery

We have, over the past year, had a lot of support and financial assistance from Our County Councillor and I would like to express our thanks for this.

The Parish Council is a member of Suffolk ACRE, SALC, and Suffolk Preservation Society.

There have been 7 Parish Council meetings this year.

We have discussed the following planning applications:

- Garage at Ponds Piece.
- Conversion of barn at Chestnut Tree Farm
- Classroom building at Brandeston Hall.
- Tree pruning at 35 The Street.
- Replacement window at Oakside, The Street.

We continue to keep road safety as a priority and Paul Kirton will be presenting some statistics from our speed indicator display equipment later.

We have also campaigned for work to be done to make the corner at the bottom of Manse Hill safer. Recently the chevrons that were knocked down several years ago were replaced. Ideas about widening the road on the corner were rejected as impracticable.

The Council has a working party to regularly clean the village signs. A survey is done of the signs at the time of cleaning and we are aware of the state of disrepair of some of our village signs. Unfortunately, the Highways Department do not see this as a priority and the costs of replacing signs is too great for the Parish Council to consider.

Helen Buckingham has been monitoring progress on Faster Broadband for the village. Some fibres have been installed but not connected. Apparently the next stage relies on BT making connections to individual houses with a target date of August 2018.

Helen has also been working on gaining ownership of the village triangles for the village in order to safeguard their future. We are currently getting legal advice which Holly Norman is kindly providing.

This year sees the 100th anniversary of Armistice day and the Parish Council is part of a team planning events for the weekend of Remembrance Sunday. We have also helped financially with renovation of the war memorial which has been organised by the Parochial Church Council and Chris MacArthur in particular.

We explored ownership of the memorial. As it stands on church land the pragmatic view was that ownership was not taken over by the Parish Council but responsibility for future maintenance would be.

There has been a lot work done to ensure we abide by all the necessary regulations. Our Financial Risk Assessment, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders have been updated. Compliance with GDPR regulations has been checked.

The amount of work Mary does for the Council as Clerk and Financial officer has increased so we have increased her salary but this will now include expenses. Other fees and commitments have increased so we have had to increase the precept from £2400 to £3000 in order to maintain an adequate amount of reserves.

I am hopeful that expenditure will remain steady in the next few years and further increases in the precept will not be needed for a while.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for the time they give to meetings and working parties and Mary who keeps on top of the ever changing Clerk and RFO duties.

C. W. Elson

30/5/2018.