

Little Bealings Parish Council: Chairman's Report 2022-2023

This is the last annual report before the District, Town and Parish elections in May.

Matters dealt with in the last year include:

The possibility of the purchase of The Admirals Head car park to support the school, church and ACH was considered, but, after consultation with residents, the Parish Council decided not to pursue this. One of the reasons being that the cost would fall on the parish, but the main benefit would be to people visiting the village. The minutes relating to all matters dealing with The Admirals Head will remain 'confidential' until such time as the building / site is sold and the sale completed.

The effect of East Suffolk Council's Local Plan, adopted in 2020, began to be felt, especially the impact of the new policy allowing housing development in the countryside, outside the settlement boundary, known as 'cluster' development. This has caused much discussion within the Parish Council and subsequently we have objected to a number of planning applications some of which have been upheld whilst others gained approval. ESC has now issued supplementary guidance on this policy which we hope will control development in the countryside more appropriately.

One outcome of the new policy permitting new dwellings is that the Council has received its first payment from the Community Infrastructure Levy, known as 'CIL money'. This is a charge levied on new development, which, broadly speaking, is not 'self-build' and is payable by the developer to ESC. The PC receives a part of it and we have received a payment this year of £1,854.75. Further payments may follow, dependent upon future development. The money is to be spent on the "provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area". The Chairman and the Clerk are attending ESC training on CIL later this month. It will be for the new Council to decide how it wishes to spend the payment.

Many Parish Councils within ESC have become concerned with the Planning process within ESC and a survey was undertaken by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils which has resulted in a report going to ESC to facilitate dialogue and in communication, transparency and consistency.

The Parish Council returned to face-to-face meetings and these are now mainly held in the Angela Cobbold Hall as the main hall at the Village Hall has another booking for Monday evenings. Post-Covid, the Parish Council does not consider the Village Hall Committee Room large enough to provide a safe meeting environment.

In addition to the six planned parish council meetings, there have been an additional four meetings primarily to discuss planning applications.

The Parish Council tries to ensure that neighbouring properties associated with any planning application are advised and aware of the date of the parish council meeting that will consider that application. Delegated powers have been used, as and when necessary and appropriate, to ensure ESC deadlines for submitting the Council's views are met.

One planning enforcement issue has been satisfactorily resolved.

The Parish Council continues to support the Safer Village Driving Initiative and Little

Bealings has use of a Speed Indicating Device (SID) for 6 months of the year. This device is primarily employed within the 20mph area of The Street but was used in Playford Road during November 2022 to support Road Safety Week.

Sinks Pit. Community Liaison Group meetings are ongoing and the Environment Agency issued a 'new' non-compliance following a site visit on 27 November 2022. Further Voluntary Improvement Plan has been requested and action required by TRU to mitigate noise and vibration. It is hoped that at an updated report from the CLG Chairman, our county councillor Elaine Bryce, will appear in the Fynn Lark News soon. The work of the Group has resulted in the submission of a new planning application, which will be considered at the Council meeting later this evening.

The fiasco with Bealings Level Crossing closures has been progressed with Network Rail and our MP, Dr. Dan Poulter has been fully informed. Network Rail refused three times to replace the damaged grit bin to the north of the crossing but have now accepted that this will be replaced as a token of goodwill!

The refurbishment of the War Memorial has been undertaken and was completed in time for the 2022 Remembrance Service.

As you have heard the project for the installation of a main sewer in The Street is now making real progress. The PC first made application for the sewer to Anglian Water in 2014 and has worked hard to reach the point we are at now. We are in regular contact with Anglian Water now and we have added a page to our website for their information to be published.

The Parish Council remains a member of ESC Community Partnership, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk Preservation Society and the Police/ESC Tier1 community.

The ESC Community Partnership programmes has supported the warm rooms initiative, environmental care, wellbeing programmes as well as road and traffic safety. School initiatives are being undertaken to promote road safety and this area was identified as one of the top areas in the country to support the national Road Safety week.

Our thanks to Colin Hedgley, our District Councillor for his attendance, advice and guidance and to Elaine Bryce our elected county councillor. Their support is invaluable.

Our thanks also to Jenny Shaw our webmaster and Francis Mutimer and John Wittgreffe, our footpath wardens and their band of willing volunteers.

My personal thanks to my fellow councillors and it would be wrong of me not to mention our Clerk, Carol Ramsden. Her knowledge and support are invaluable.

The Council continues to work on behalf of all villagers in order to promote a community in which we would all like to reside and will support where possible initiatives that provide our villagers with facilities they can make use of.

I will take this opportunity to remind you that the Council will be in purdah from 16 March and I hope that, if there is again to be an election in the parish, that all candidates will conduct positive campaigns, for the benefit of the community.