

OTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Parish meeting held on Monday 19th April 2010

Present: Chairman Mr Smith, Clerk Mr Treloar, Councillor's Messrs Cant, Jay, Childs, Moss, Mr R Ling, Mr A Ling, & Mrs Vaughan. District & County Councillor Peter Bellfield, PC Gilmore, Woodbridge SNT and 9 members of the public.

Apologies: Mrs Lincoln & Federation Headteacher – Jan Hubbard.

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th May 2009 – Approved and signed.

Matters arising – There were none.

Chairman's report – Mr Smith welcomed everyone to the 10th Annual Parish Meeting he has chaired. He expressed his thanks to the Vice Chair, Mr Jay and the other Councillors' for their continued support and the Clerk for his hard work during the year. There are 9 elected members of the Parish Council who have met regularly every 4- 6 weeks. There are three sub committees – Planning, Rights of Way and Finance. Planning have received 15 applications mainly extensions to properties. Mr Smith spoke of developments following completion of the Parish Plan. The survey had been extremely useful in highlighting a number of areas that had been progressed by the Parish Council. This had lead amongst other things to the implementation of Community Speedwatch, the development of the new Otley website, an Affordable Housing Survey which will be completed during the present year. Additionally following requests for further pathways, SCC have now agreed to extend the footpath in Church Road to the Church gates. Funding was also provided to the Bowls Club to assist with the construction of a car park to reduce congestion on Church Road.

A valuable spin off has been the establishment of Otley Green – a group set up by Tony Barrett – to address green issues. The group has established its own website and obtained funding to provide energy saving products via the Greener Homes DIY scheme.

We continue to maintain close contact with Otley College who have kindly agreed to work with the PC to maximise use of their facilities for the benefit of the village.

(A copy of the Chairman's full report is attached to the minute book Appendix 1)

Policing Policy – PC Vicki Gilmore of the Woodbridge Safer Neighbourhood Team presented her report. PC Dave Burrell is the officer responsible for Otley and Sally Anna Chatten-Berry is the PCSO. There are 30 Police Stations countywide with Neighbourhood Response Teams working out of 9 hubs. One of these is based at the Woodbridge station. The NRT's deal with 999 calls with the SNT's picking up the resultant enquiries and liaising with the public. The centres have an automatic vehicle location system (AVLS) which enables them to identify where every PC is thereby enabling a quicker response time. Otley suffered 40 crimes this year, 15 of which related to incidents at the College.

Otley School Report – There are currently 52 pupils on roll. At the end of this term we will be losing eight pupils to local High Schools and are likely to welcome six pupils to our reception class. As predicted in previous years, the anticipated roll is falling this being reflected in the low numbers attending Otley Under Fives. The school is pleased to report that staffing has remained the same this year as it was last year.

Accommodation has been a problem but a new classroom has been constructed and work is still to be carried out on a Special Needs Room.

ICT within the school has been upgraded and all classrooms have new computers. Focus this year will be directed to developing the field and playground to support the curriculum in greater detail.

(A copy of the Headteacher's full report is attached to the minute book along with a copy of a report from the Headteacher of Claydon High School Appendix 2)

District & County Councillor's report – Early in the year local council elections resulted in an increased number of seats for the Conservatives with 2 seats being taken by the Green Party and one by UKIP. For the first time the Liberals became the main opposition party. Continuing uncertainty over the Local Government Review has cost considerable time and money and resulted in a reduction in staff morale as officers do not know what the future holds. What happens depends on which party wins the forthcoming general election.

Generally the Council performed well during the recent spell of bad weather with A, B and a few well used C roads being gritted. In the end the Government took over responsibility for salt distribution which resulted in salt supplies being diverted to areas that were perceived to have a greater need. From 17th December to 11th January, the gritters drove 101,000 miles and the cost was approximately £1,150,000.

The Audit Commission have judged the Council *** and performing well. This was better than last year and the Council also received three green flags for excellence in particular areas – more than any other council in the country.

Press comment on the Council's pension fund indicated that employer contributions would need to rise significantly to cover the shortfall. As Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee, Mr Bellfield does not expect anything but a minimal rise when the fund is re evaluated later in the year.

The Council Tax rise was 2.45% this year – the lowest ever. However the future looks difficult with the Chief Executive talking of expenditure reductions in the region of 20 – 30%. For these to be achieved the various local government agencies including the PCT's, Police and Quangos will all have to work together to consolidate their overhead costs.

Mr Barrett advised Mr Bellfield that he experienced difficulty in getting a response from SCDC Planning. He had emailed them but they had not responded. Mr Bellfield is aware of difficulties of this nature and confirmed that an external review is now under way to which the Parish Council have been asked to respond.

He emphasised that he was more than happy take forward any problems people had with either the District of County Council and they should feel free to contact him.

(A copy of Mr Bellfield's full report is attached to the Minute Book Appendix 6)

Presentation of draft Parish Council Accounts - Mr Treloar reported that balances at the start of the year amounted to £7,458 and at the end £6,774. The Council had budgeted for a closing balance of £4,500 but £3,000 of projected expenditure had not been used resulting in a higher than anticipated closing balance. The Precept remained unchanged at £4,000, equating to an equivalent cost of £15.09 per household. Audit costs had increased due to the funding for the Play Area being directed through the Parish Council's accounts but these would revert to their lower level this year.

(A copy of the Finance Officer's full report is attached to the Minute Book Appendix 5)

Otley Community Council report – The Village Hall was 50 years old on 13th February and to mark this anniversary the committee initiated a programme of repairs and replacements. Routine maintenance has been carried out and a planning application submitted for a new entrance ramp, steps and doors. The rear room and front stage areas have been redecorated and light weight tables and catering equipment have been purchased. In addition a large projection screen has been installed in the main hall.

A film evening was hosted in June, the fete in July and fireworks in November along with the Christmas Dinner Dance and the flower and vegetable show in September.

Further work has been undertaken on the Play Area – Goal posts, a basketball post and picnic tables have all been added during the year. Further grant applications are in hand for equipment targeted at the under 8's.

Total assets at the end of February amounted to £42,355.

(A copy of the Community Council's full report is attached to the Minute Book Appendix 3)

Otley Church Preservation Trust report – The Trust has been in existence for 15 years and has raised valuable funds for the restoration and maintenance of the Church fabric.

Funds presently amount to £14,258 of which £7,000 has already been committed to refurbishment of three windows in the Nave along with repairs to stonework on the tower and re-slating of the north porch roof. The distribution of the collection boxes has been reviewed and it is hoped in time this will yield additional income. The fabric is constantly under attack and costs a great deal to maintain. The little collection boxes which provide an ideal home for those tiny 5p pieces, provide a valuable source of income.

(A copy of the full report is attached to the Minute Book Appendix 4)

Any other business – There was none and the meeting closed at 20.15

Appendix 1

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting – 19th April 2010

Good evening to you all. I am Malcolm Smith, Chairman of Otley Parish Council in my tenth year. I wish to welcome you to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and would like to welcome Peter Bellfield who is our County Councillor & District Councillor who regularly attends our Parish Council meetings. Peter has supported us this year, as in all previous years, in relation to HGV's, highway and planning issues.

The purpose of the meeting tonight is to review the activities of the Parish Council since the last Annual Meeting in 2009.

I would like to thank our Parish Clerk Richard Treloar who again has worked hard this last year.

I would also like to thank my Vice Chair, John Jay, for his continuing support and also the rest of the Parish Council for their committed support throughout the last year and for their areas of expertise that we always call upon in time of need.

There are 9 elected members of the Parish Council and we have met regularly every 4-6 weeks with published dates and notes of the meetings displayed on our Parish Council Notice Boards. We have 3 sub-committees namely:-

- Planning - chaired by me
- Rights of way - chaired by Russell Ling
- Finance

Well what has been keeping us busy over the last year ?

The **Planning Sub-committee** has received 15 planning applications, mainly extensions to existing properties.

Over the past year we have focussed on the output from the Parish Plan. The plan raised around 86 issues that needed to be reviewed. It was hoped that a new Implementation Group would be formed to review and see these actions through but unfortunately no volunteers came forward so the Parish Council took on the responsibility.

Out of these 86 issues - 19 were deemed to be of High priority and 27 Medium priority.

Some of the actions were deemed by the PC to be outside of their control, such as Lack of Local dentist, Youth Club Activities and Community assets (Church, Chapel etc). So these were passed onto the relevant groups.

Other issues such as "Future development within Village" and "Roads" are part of the day-to-Day responsibility of the PC.

One outcome from the Parish Plan was people's concerns over speeding in the village. Well many of the surrounding villages feel the same way and as a result got together and established a Community SpeedWatch run by Clopton PC. Otley could not provide enough volunteers to be trained to use the speed gun but Otley PC contributed money towards the scheme and our area was covered by volunteers from other members of the scheme. Has anybody seen them about? Or been caught by them?

Another issue raised was access to information so Otley now has a web site hosted by OneSuffolk. You can access our site either through www.otley.suffolk.gov.uk or by going to the OneSuffolk web site and selecting Otley from the list of Parishes. We haven't finished yet but there is plenty of information on there including access to a copy of the Parish Plan and information on the Church and the minutes of the PC meetings. Another issue was the need for an Otley Newsletter – the PC is looking for volunteers to produce this.

Concerns were raised over the lack of affordable housing so Otley PC has teamed up with Suffolk ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) to carry out another Housing Needs Survey. This confidential survey will be carried out in May, with the completed forms being sent to Suffolk ACRE. If the results indicate sufficient actual demand then the PC will take steps to try and identify suitable land for development and work with a Housing Trust to build a limited number of houses that will be exclusively available to local residents.

Another output from the Parish Plan is Otley Green – a group set up by Tony Barrett to focus on ways of saving energy and moving towards renewable energy. This group has now established their own web site (www.otleygreen.org), their own email newsletter and have organised numerous Green Events together with the recent free energy saving items via the Greener Homes DIY Scheme.

The PC has also been working with Suffolk CC Highways to look at the feasibility of three additional footpath pavements. These were an extension to the path in Church Road from Moselle all the way to the Church, the installation of a path to the White Hart and a path from the Village stores to the School. A meeting was arranged with SCC and they have now provided quotations for the various schemes. Requests are scored on a points system based on the buildings that the paths serve. Thirty requests are received each year and the Council presently install about 8 or 9 new paths each year. The request for the Church ranks 25th in the list meaning it would take 3 years for the scheme to be considered for construction. This pre supposes it is not displaced by a higher priority new request. The cost is estimated at £17,000 and the Council would need to receive at least £8,500 for it to be considered for an early build. The path to the White Hart ranks 100th which means a wait of at least 12 years and is estimated to cost £70,000 and would require at least £35,000 for an early build. That to the school ranks 120th mainly because of the existing path on the other side of the road. The cost is estimated at £24,000 requiring a contribution of £12,000 for an early build. Other alternatives could be considered here including a drop kerb with tactile paving near the school gate. The high level of contribution to all the schemes was considered too high for the Parish Council to consider. In respect of the Church path alone it would require a minimum doubling of the present Precept. The PC has requested SCC Highways to add the Church path to their list along with a request for a dropped kerb to be installed opposite the school.

Limited Parking in Otley was partly addressed by a car parking surface in the Bowls Club. This car park is able to be used by the church. The PC donated £400 towards this project.

Additional waste disposal facilities have been requested in the form of a Clothing Bank.

Additional links have been established with Otley College and they have offered to work with the PC to maximise the use of their facilities for the benefit of the village.

Other actions considered, and rejected mainly on cost basis or being impracticable, were :-

- Allotments (deemed too costly by the Gardening Club)
- Village Green

- Designated Dog walking area

We continue to work with SCDC on the LDF (Local Development Framework) plans.

HIGHWAYS

We continue to monitor the state of the roads and we have had to report an ever increasing number of pot holes or edge subsidence. With continuing reduction in Council budgets for highway maintenance we will watch with interest on the impact of road repair in our area. B1079 due for resurface in this financial year?

RIGHTS OF WAY

Russell Ling has continued to drive the Rights of Way committee and work parties and I thank him for his efforts over the last year. The PC continues to arrange for the cutting of the footpaths and last year we managed two full cuts. This work is funded by the SCDC P3 scheme. A new local footpath map, including circular walks and local information, is being produced and will be available later this year.

BUS SHELTER at Newlands – It was suggested last year that we should investigate providing a bus shelter in Chapel Road near Newlands. Well we have and the official response from SCC Highways is that the shelter would be sited more into Newlands so as not impair the view of traffic. We have decided that this is not practicable.

SEATING NEAR NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT

– another suggestion from last year was to provide some seating near to the new play equipment. Well Otley Community Council has provided two new bench tables.

SORR

We continue to be heavily involved with SORR. SORR (Save Our Rural Roads) is a consortium of 13 or more local Parish councils and is opposed to the ever increasing impact of HGV's on our rural infrastructure and inhabitants.

THE YEAR AHEAD

The PC are looking for a project in the next year as we have a small amount of cash to spend.

Well that's enough from me, thank you for listening. If you have any questions please don't feel afraid to ask either now or after the meeting or in fact at any time - we are your Parish Council and are here to reflect your local needs.

Appendix 2

Otley Primary School - report to the Parish Council AGM -Monday 19th April 2010

There are currently 52 pupils on roll. At the end of this term we will be losing eight pupils to local High Schools and are likely to welcome six pupils to our reception class.

As predicted in previous years, the anticipated roll is falling, this being reflected in the low numbers attending Otley Under Fives.

I am pleased to report that our staffing has remained the same this year as it was last year; this is a positive sign that staffing is stable once again after the number of retirements that was seen at the end of 2006 and 2007. Mrs. Cheryl Tomany is deputy headteacher with Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Barnes and Mr. Harty being our other teachers. All classes are supported by excellent teaching assistants and a band of parent helpers. Mrs. Powley and Mrs. Liddell do a wonderful job in our office, tackling all requests and queries with a smile.

I reported last year that adequate accommodation was a problem and that Mr. Liddell, Mr. Dye (Chair and vice Chair) and myself were to meet with County Architects to address our accommodation issue. I am delighted to inform you that our new classroom has just been completed with work still to be done on a Special Needs room. Our year 5/6 pupils will be moving into their new classroom over the next couple of months which will give us a shared activity area to be used for drama, assembly and small group support. You are welcome to come and have a look at our new classroom which has blended in beautifully with our existing building.

The Federation with Witnesham Primary continues to work well; staff and pupils have been working together on various projects and will continue to do so during the next term.

ICT within our school has been upgraded. All classrooms have new computers and we are currently working on our Learning Platforms. All teaching areas have Interactive Whiteboards which aid the delivery of the curriculum.

Our outside area is going to be the focus of development during the coming year. I have applied for a grant from East Feast – Creative Partnerships to help us develop our field and playground to support the curriculum in more detail. Greater emphasis has been placed on getting children out of doors and learning from the environment and this will be a start for our children.

We continue to have our friends from Witnesham Baptist Church visit us each fortnight as the 'Open the Book' team. Rev. Catherine Beaumont and Rev. Jane Hall continue to visit our school with the 'Open the Book' team. We are lucky to have Mr Nigel Cooper, Mrs Rachel Chester and Mr Gordon Murray continuing to lead assemblies for us.

We have had many exciting projects this year one of them being The Healthy Eating day where all children and a number of parents learnt about the importance of healthy choices in our food and prepared a range of salads which were used for school lunches on the day.

Our KS2 pupils will be going on 2 exciting trips to support their work on Anglo Saxons. They have already visited Foxborough Farm where they had a Saxon day complete with cooking and pot making and they are due to visit Sutton Hoo within the next couple of weeks. The children and staff all dress in suitable attire which helps to make their glimpse into history more real.

We had a lovely Easter Hat parade on the last day of term, there were many innovative and some very traditional Easter hats.

We have our sports day, country dancing and maypole dancing to look forward to, all we need now is a long, hot summer!

We will finish with our leavers assembly on the last day of term which is on July 22nd.

Jan Hubbard

Headteacher.

Appendix 3

Community Council report to the Annual Parish Meeting – 19th April 2010

OTLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL-ANNUAL REPORT-FOR THE PERIOD 1ST

MARCH 2009 TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2010

The members of the management committee who served during the year were as follows:-

Elected: Ian Beaumont, Alyson Chilvers*, Diane Elmer*, Jenny Ellis, James Hall, Martin Hunt, Vanessa Ling, Yvonne Mouncer, Joan Parish and Chris Taylor.
(* Resigned during year)

Appointed: Michelle Boreham (FFY); Geoff Cant (Parish Council); Sue Courtney (TOPS); Christine Gilbert (Gym Club); Joddie Liddell (PTA); Marilyn Mackley (OtleyGreen)**; Peggy Munford (Chapel); Christine Page (Under 5's); Dennis Stratford (Neighbourhood Watch); Alan Taylor (Scouts); Karin Upson (Church); Brownies position vacant.
(** From January)

Appointed (Non Voting): Geoff Cant (Bowls Club & Short Mat Bowls); Kath Cant (Friendship Club); Nathan Cant (Junior TOPS).

The community council is a registered charity, number 304805. It is regulated by a declaration of trust dated 15th July 1960. The primary object is to administer the village hall and its grounds "for the use of the inhabitants of Otley and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions, and in particular for use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants".

During the year the trustees have endeavoured to fulfil the charity's stated primary objective through administration of the village hall and grounds. In so doing the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and consider that the activities of the charity continue to provide benefit to the inhabitants of Otley and the neighbourhood and conclude that as trustees they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission.

There is to be an annual general meeting in April each year open to all inhabitants of the parish over 18. The meeting is to receive the report and accounts of the management committee and elect up to 11 members. Village organisations are also able to appoint members of the committee on an annual basis or to send non-voting representatives. The list of appointing organisations can be changed.

The management committee elects a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer and bookings secretary. During the year Ian Beaumont, Chris Taylor, Diane Elmer, Martin Hunt and Vanessa Ling held these posts respectively.

During the period of this report the committee has met six times with an average attendance of 13. Business has included:-

- a) The building – Routine maintenance and repairs have been carried out by various volunteers and contractors. Christine Gilbert continues to undertake a

daily inspection of the hall and we thank Christine for her efforts in keeping the hall clean and tidy. During the year a planning application was submitted for new front steps, disabled ramp and entrance doors; the rear room and front of stage areas were redecorated; new lightweight tables and further catering items were purchased; and a large projection screen was installed in the main hall. Routine electrical safety testing was completed. Incidents of petty vandalism have been minimal during the year.

- b) Events – The entertainments sub-committee successfully organised a film evening in June, the fête in July and fireworks in November. Separate groups organised the Christmas dinner dance in December and the flower, vegetable and craft show in September. Unfortunately, the entertainments sub-committee disbanded during the year. We are very grateful for the hard work both of the sub-committee and the separate organisers, whose combined fundraising endeavours contributed greatly to the income of the Hall. Continuing the work of the entertainments committee will be a priority for the coming year. Net event income was £3 274, a 15% rise on last year. Care must be taken to ensure that each event obtains in good time the necessary license for compliance with the licensing regulations.
- c) Money – Hire income continued to improve significantly on the prior year, showing a further 25% rise, whilst running costs and other expenditure decreased, resulting in a surplus for the year of £3 333. Income from other sources fell, principally a result of reduced interest on our cash deposits. We are grateful to FFY and the Gym Club for donations this year to the new play area. Suffolk Coastal and Suffolk County Council made further donations towards the play area's opening event. At 28th February 2010 our total assets are some £42 355 of which £10 471 is reserved for the play area (£5471 grants and donations received, £5000 OCC reserve) and £7500 against roof repairs. Net event income for the period was allocated to ongoing refurbishment of the play area and general improvement projects. An independent party reviews the accounts each year.
- d) Projects – Further work has been undertaken on the play area. A well-attended formal opening ceremony in conjunction with Suffolk County Council took place on 4 April 2009. Goal posts, a basketball post and picnic tables have all been added during the year. Further grant applications are in hand for equipment targeted at the under 8's. We are grateful to Chris Taylor for his continued hard work on this project. The Hall was 50 years old on 13 February 2010. To mark this special anniversary, the committee initiated a programme of repairs and improvements, both internal and external, in time for the 2010 summer fête. The Committee also reviewed the outcomes of the recent Parish Plan and noted that considerable progress had been made on many of the items tasked to the Community Council.
- e) Grounds – Concern at the ongoing wear and tear of the car park, including that caused by non-hirers (eg parents dropping children to school, visitors to the surgery) prompted the resolution that a proportion of hire income should be ring-fenced against future major repair work. The School noted that it pays for Suffolk CC to cut the grass on the field and this should be considered as a contribution to the car park maintenance. The Parish Council indicated that it would consider financial support of any future major work.
- f) Bookings - Our regular hirers have remained loyal throughout the year and we remain competitive among local village halls. Hire rates were unchanged after reviewing the principle that a surplus be generated from hire income over routine running costs.

- g) Reserves and Risk assessment - The Council holds the reserves noted under (c) above.

Risk assessment and health and safety monitoring are carried out on a continuous basis, partly by regular inspections of the premises, partly by use of the incident books, and partly by monitoring the check list held on file by the chairman. A review of relevant policies was initiated, broadly following the Hallmark scheme for community halls; this work will be completed during 2010. We have comprehensive insurance cover, both for the building and our public and employers' liability, through the agency of Suffolk ACRE.

Approved and adopted by the Council at its AGM on 22nd April 2010.

Appendix 4

Otley Church Preservation Trust - Report to Annual Parish Meeting

The Trust has been in existence for 15 years and has raised valuable funds for the restoration and maintenance of the Church fabric. Without it much of the work that has been completed could not have been undertaken. There are six trustees, three of whom are nominated by the Parochial Church Council and two who represent the interests of the Parish Council. We are grateful for the ongoing stewardship that is provided by the members under the capable chairmanship of Ian Beaumont. During the year one of the founding members Ann Baker, who was our Secretary, has stood down and been ably replaced by Tess Papworth. We thank Ann for all her hard work and her contribution to the work of the Trust. We have welcomed Izzy Lincoln as a new Trustee.

In the last year money received from the Church donation box, sale of guide books, Church boxes distributed to households and investment income amounted to £545 on a par with last year. Income from standing orders amounted to £1,790 and in total the Trust received income of £4,817, an increase on last year mainly as a result of generous donations from two memorial services along with funds from a concert given by the Suffolk Singers. Total funds presently amount to £14,258.

£7,000 has already been committed to assist with the cost of refurbishing three of the windows in the Nave along with repairs to the tower stonework which has suffered badly from acid rain. The demands are always ongoing and we are aware there is a pressing need for repairs to the bearers supporting the pews on the south side of the nave along with restoration work that is necessary to the east clock face.

We are grateful to Rose Rogerson for the work she has done on reviewing the distribution of the collection boxes and it is hoped that in time this will yield additional income. The Church is our oldest building the structure in its present shape dating back to the 12th Century. The fabric is under constant attack and costs a great deal to maintain. The little collection boxes which provide an ideal home for those tiny 5p pieces, provide a valuable source of income. If you haven't got a box and would like to have one, then please let me know.

Appendix 5

Presentation of draft Parish Council Accounts to Annual Parish meeting

Balance at start of year £7,458 and at close £6,774. Budgeted for closing balance of £4,500 but £3,000 of projected expenditure not fully used resulting in a higher than anticipated closing balance

- Precept remains unchanged at £4,000 equivalent cost of £15.09 per household
- P3 – payment for cutting footpaths. Cost £864 + £50 for Newlands cut
- Play Area Grant in 2009
- Clerks Salary – includes £250 in respect of Jan to March
- Rent relates to rental of the Hall for meetings – we have paid up to Dec this ¼'s bill to be received
- External Audit fee high because T/O increased as a result of Play Area grant. Will revert to old level this year
- Parish Plan expenditure now finished
- Notice Board refurbishment included £110 for replacement of glass in N/Board
- Play Area VAT refunded. Monies returned to Community Council in respect of VAT on purchase and installation of equipment
- Speedwatch – our share of the cost of the camera and equipment
- Donations - £150 to Youth Club, £400 for Bowls Club Car park, £60 to Disability Advice Service
- Litter Bin installed at Newlands

Appendix 6 (follows on next page)

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting by Peter Bellfield – District & County Councillor

The Election in 2009

Early in the year we had our four yearly election, the only difference this time was that we did not know whether we were being elected for one, two or four years because of the Local Government review. The result produced an increased number of seats for the Conservatives, 55 (45 at the 2005 election), mainly at the expense of Labour, 4 seats (22 in 2005), with the Liberals 11 seats (7 in 2005), 2 Independents (one in 2005) and for the first time I believe 2 seats taken by the Green party and one by the UK Independence party. This made the Liberals the main opposition party for the first time.

Local Government Review

This saga has now been running for the best part of three years since Ipswich Borough Council first requested Unitary status in response to the Government seeking the views on the future of local government in Suffolk. All seven councils have spent very considerable time and money, although no one knows how much as a record of officer time spent was not kept by any council, in compiling reports to the Boundary Committee and the Minister. It has also had a serious detrimental effect on Officer moral because they have not known what their future holds. In a recent announcement from the Minister he said that he had found widespread support for a unitary government in Suffolk, but that there was no consensus for a particular proposal. He has therefore suggested that a solution should be found through a countywide constitutional convention. We have asked civil servants in the Ministry what this means and we are told that they have no idea. Clearly no further action will take place until after the general election. What will happen after that depends upon which party forms the next government.

The bad winter weather.

On the whole the Council performed well with the clearing and gritting of priority 1 roads (A and B roads plus a few well used C roads), but priority 2 roads were less well covered after the first week or so. This was because the forecast became "a prolonged spell of snow and ice" and the salt supply position was going to become critical. We started the Winter with our salt bins full and orders to replace used stocks as necessary but the Government took over the distribution and our replenishment supplies were diverted to areas deemed to be in grater need. If you did have any major problems in the parish please let me know and I will pass your comments on so that we can ensure that there is not a repeat in future years. The weather has also played havoc with the road surfaces. Please report potholes to East Area Highways at Saxmundham giving as precise a position as possible and the depth of the hole, over 5 centimeters will be dealt with as a priority. The teams are working as quickly as possible, particularly with temporary repairs but the weather continued to disrupt and damage the work being done. From the 17th December to the 11th January the gritters drove over 101,000 miles and the cost was approximately £1,150,000.

Council Performance

Last month we had the result of our first Comprehensive Area Assessment (the latest name of performance judging by the Audit Commission) and received

***and "performing well". Although this is one star down on previously we were told that we had done better than last year but that the Government had raised the criteria for attaining four stars. In fact they said that the "Council has a strong track record in delivering significant savings and continues to take positive action to manage and reduce costs." We also received 3 green flags for excellence in three particular areas, more than any other council in the country. In addition, the Council has been short-listed for awards under the headings of "the Greenest County" and "e-government", becoming the winner in one case. We must be doing some things right, or at least better than many other councils!

Pension Fund

There has recently been general comment in the national press, and specific to Suffolk in the local press, about employer pension fund contributions because of the deficit on most funds and the effect it will have on Council Tax levels. While the local press comment has been correct when it has said that the employer contribution would have to rise from 19% of salary to 31% when using the valuation criteria of three years ago, part of that criteria is now believed to be inappropriate. As Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee I do not expect more than a minimal rise at worst when we have the result of our next valuation later this year and which will have to be applied from April 2011. I think, therefore, that pension fund cost will not have a significant adverse effect on the council tax level from April 2011.

2010/11 Council Tax rise

As you know the rise in the council tax has been set at 2.45%, the lowest ever and below the pension rise of 2.5% and the consumer price index rise at that time of 2.9%.

The future looks very much more difficult, the Chief Executive has talked of the possibility of having to reducing expenditure by between 20% and 30% in future years. To achieve this level of saving ideas will have to take on a much broader concept. The state, through all its agency's, spent £4.9 billion in Suffolk in the last financial year, including £1.3 billion by local government, £750 million by the PCT and £100 million by the police. The balance of some £2.6 billion by the government directly and quangos. The Council is looking at ways of working with these agency's so that savings in partnership working can be achieved.

April 2010.

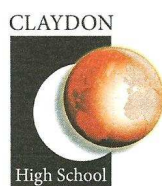
Suffolk Coastal District Council

Council Tax + 2.9%

Partnership with Havering D.C. progressing - Cabinet joint meetings

L10 Forum agreed

Agreed with parts of the Planning Department



Parish Council Report March 2009

Introduction

As a new Headteacher it has been an exciting and interesting first two terms. The students, parents, staff and Governors have made me most welcome to Claydon High School. We are in a very exciting time of transition with the school losing its sixth form and the opening of Suffolk One and many changes to the curriculum with the introduction of Diploma courses. Our School Council has once again been very active, working hard on fundraising events and making decisions around key aspects of school life. Our Sports Council have also been busy and they have been working with the members of the PE Department and our SSCO to organise tournaments and events for our primary students. We also now have a Green Council who are looking at ways that we can become more environmentally friendly as a school. We believe that student voice is a crucial aspect of our work and encourage students to participate in making the school a better place. We have had so many events organised by the staff that we have been able to publicise our students and their good work in the press, celebrating success is essential if we want our students to strive to reach their potential.

We had a very successful Open Evening which was very busy, we changed a few aspects of the evening and introduced a quiz for the year six students to complete on the evening. We were delighted with the feedback about the school and the students.

We had a very good PD Day in October where we focussed on active learning with a particular view to activities that may inspire and interest boys and those less motivated. On our January PD Day we looked at positive behaviour management I have visited every Primary School and have taken an assembly with the whole school with year 5 and 6 parents invited. Despite the fact that it was a terrifying experience it was very enjoyable and I anticipate taking an assembly each term. Our Open Mornings each month have been popular and it has provided me with an opportunity to promote the school, take parents and students on a tour and allow them to see us in action. We had a lovely Presentation Evening. We invited Beth Soule back as the guest speaker and had a very enjoyable evening celebrating the success of students.

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Results

Our results in August were fantastic and we were delighted to be able to celebrate with our students on their wonderful successes. Our A level students achieved a pass rate of 96% with 22% of passes at grade A and 38% at grade A or B. Sixteen of our A level subjects had a 100% pass rate. All our students achieved a place at University without having to go through the clearing process.

Our GCSE students also achieved very well. We had 69% 5 A*-C pass rate and a 54% 5 A*-C pass rate including English and Maths. We did have a gender gap that is not dissimilar to the National trend with girls out performing boys. This is an area we will be working on in this coming year.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the staff for all their hard work and extra efforts to get the students to these results.

Changes this academic year

As you would expect with a new Head there have been some changes introduced this year. We have a new school logo that we think reflects our Humanities status and this was designed by our Head of Art, Mr Stearn. The students like the new look and we are now incorporating it into their uniform. We have a new prospectus and website which we feel reflects us well, if you would like to take a look please go to www.claydonhigh.suffolk.sch.uk. We have been working hard with the students to improve the litter around school and develop the learning environment. We are currently trying to seek further funding to develop new areas of the school.

14-19 Developments

This September will see the start of the new Diploma courses. We have offered these to our year 9 students to select as one of their GCSE option choices. The option choices available from this September include; Construction and the Built Environment, Creative and Media, Environmental and Land Based, Hair and Beauty Studies, Information Technology, Society Health and Development and Travel and Tourism. These students will be taught off site for two days a week and complete the rest of their studies with us on the remaining three days. All the schools in the SWISS partnership will be offered these courses. We continue to be able to offer a broad range of courses in school and so our students have the widest choice than ever seen before. This broad curriculum will allow us to ensure students are following the courses that best suit their interests and learning styles.

Enhancement Activities

We continue to be incredibly lucky with the extension and extra curricular activities offered by staff. Every lunch time and after school there are a number of clubs running in a wide range of activities and interests such as Technology, Languages, Sport, ICT, Maths, Chess, Music, Drama, Art, Photography, Sailing, Quiz Club, Humanities plus many many more.

We continue to have a wide range of trips and competitions. The Third Reich trip departed just before February half term for a 10 day trip. History and RE and English worked together to strengthen students understanding of the Holocaust and the trip

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was interesting and deeply moving for the students. We have a Maths revision weekend about to depart as well as over 40 trips for different year groups since September.

Maths Challenge students competed well as did our competitors in the Book Mastermind Final. We entered the British Schools Karting Championship for the first time this year and came 16th in the East of England Final. This week we competed in the BBC News Report Day and one of our students read the weather on BBC Suffolk! We entered our year 11 students into a Holocaust competition and their presentation stunned the audience and judges to take them into first place.

Fundraising

The students have worked hard with fundraising this year. We raised £579.30 on Genes for Jeans day, £309.83 was raised for the Save the Children Haiti fund, this was achieved by the students organising a cake sale and £400 was raised for Children in Need with our Talent Show! Our PTA have also been hard at work and have organised a Boot Sale, Disco and Indulgence Evening resulting in over £1500 for the school and students.

Community

Community life is important to us at Claydon High School and two local care homes benefitted from our GCSE Drama students visiting to perform their Christmas Panto. The students were wonderful and highly entertaining. We have had our feeder primary schools visit us for a singing concert and they will be coming back in a fortnight for our matinee performance of 'Back to the 80's'. Our Sports Leaders have been coaching year 5 and 6 students during their PE lessons and I received some lovely feedback last week from a member of the public saying how well behaved our students were whilst on a trip.

Christmas hampers were possibly the greatest success of the Christmas term! Students were asked to bring an item for a class hamper as their 'ticket' for a non uniform day at the end of term. I tried to encourage students to be creative with their hamper box and wrap it up and decorate it etc. I could not have anticipated how fabulous they would be, we had reindeer, sleighs, huge presents, a coca cola delivery van and many more. In all 26 hampers were collected by a local charity to distribute to the homeless and those less fortunate. A fantastic effort that is now established as an annual event.

If any of you would like a tour of the school please feel free to book into one of our monthly open mornings – I would be delighted to meet you



Sarah Skinner
Headteacher