

# ICKLETON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council 23 May 2018

Our finances remain sound. In the year to 31 March 2018 income exceeded expenditure by almost £17,000 and we had £59,487 in the bank at the year end. Copies of the draft financial statements are available this evening (or on request from the Clerk), and we hope to get them on the village website soon. Our strategy is to maintain a solid reserve, but the position was distorted by the receipt of £7400 in contributions from developers, most of which is earmarked for refurbishment of the Play Area. We also had a couple of substantial items arising in the year, but the bill came after the year end, such as the £5000+ repairs to the skate park and £3500 for a vehicle activated speed sign. Taking these factors into consideration we probably had a small surplus for the financial year. We increased our annual precept, the amount collected for Ickleton via Council Tax bills, from £24,000 to £24,500, an increase of 2%.

In the year we had the misfortune to lose the services of our Parish Clerk for several months, after she suffered a much greater personal misfortune as a result of an horrific accident in the home. Her return to duty, which some might describe as miraculous in the circumstances, was very much welcomed by all on the Council. I would also like to thank our former Clerk Jos Flitton who stepped in to help keep Parish Council business going, and who supported Peta until she felt able to carry on by herself.

Traffic continues to be a major concern. The innovation in 2017 was that our Community Speedwatch Group became active, and is growing. I will give a more detailed update later.

On planning matters the focus has been on the three very large potential developments, all capable of having adverse impacts on our locality, especially traffic volumes – a possible new settlement near Great Chesterford, the definite expansion ambitions of the Wellcome Genome Campus, and SmithsonHill's AgriTech Park on the A1301 opposite Hinxton. I will say more about these later on when I will update you as far as I can.

As regards the minor planning applications, the general trend seems to be to extend rather than move. With both extensions and new builds, we do look at issues such as overlooking, impact on neighbour amenity, impact on the conservation area, and on listed buildings. We support far more applications than we oppose.

I said last year that there was an impression that Parish Councils' views on planning matters were carrying less weight with the District Council. This turned out sadly to be the case. A recommendation of refusal by a Parish Council used to mean automatic referral to Planning Committee if Officials supported an application. Now we can only object, and an internal decision is made on whether the application goes to Committee. As a result of me asking for the information, it seems that only 6% of cases where Parish Councils objected were going to Committee. The procedure is now subject to a review, and we are hoping that there will be a strengthening of grass roots' influence on planning applications.

We have made representations in the Local Plan process for the Village Green and Driver's Meadow to become designated Local Green Spaces. The Green has remained in the Plan, but Driver's Meadow has LGS status removed. We have objected to this, and await the decision of the Planning Inspector.

A solution emerged for those Frogge Street households who had been denied access to Superfast broadband. Even better this is being funded by BT via Connecting Cambridgeshire, to whom we flagged up the issue. A fix should be in place by the end of this year.

We were pleased to buy the classic red telephone kiosk from BT to preserve it as a feature of the village conservation area. We accepted the Ickleton Society's offer to refurbish it and then lease it for displays of archive material. It now looks splendid.

I thank the other Parish Councillors for the work put in over the year. As ever, Lewis Duke has given unfailing support as Vice-Chairman. It almost goes without saying in view of what I said earlier that I am grateful for the invaluable assistance to the Council and to me as Chairman from Peta Stevens, our Parish Clerk.

Our District Councillor Mick Martin was obliged to take extended leave of absence owing to ill health, but I would like to record the Parish Council's gratitude for his past services to the Village and wish him well for the future. District Councillor Tony Orgee nobly stepped forward to provide us invaluable advice on the large planning issues, to keep us up to speed on District Council matters, and not least to alert us to the possibility of borrowing Speedwatch equipment from Little Abington. I thank him for all of this and more.

I also thank Clare Driver for organising the annual Litter Pick, supported by the Parish Council and the Ickleton Society.

I want to thank all those who support the work of the Parish Council. John Williams for editing *Icene*, and the distribution team led by Hilary Rule. Pam Fearn and Viliami Mila for managing the Village Hall. Our internal auditor Ken Worthing. Andrew Shepperd for the website. Glynis Hammond for running Neighbourhood Watch.

Elaine Statham for welcoming new residents. Gerry Birch for looking after Coploe Hill Pit and the War Memorial. Dilip and Sunita Odedra who help in numerous ways. Charles Frankau and Dominic Pallet our contractors. Albert Pavelin who emptied the Recreation Field bins and carried out routine safety checks on play equipment. David Lilley who keeps an eye on the cemetery for us, and checks the headstones there and in the Churchyard. Jos Flitton for liaising with the police and maintaining the Burial Books. I apologise for any omissions, which are entirely my fault. – Thanks are due to all who contribute to our community.

In the recent election Jess Bloomfield and Lewis Duke decided not to stand for the Parish Council. I thank them for their past services, particularly in Lewis' case, given that he was the longest-serving Councillor, I think he must have been Vice Chairman for most of the time, and he also had a spell as Chairman. The Parish Council has two vacancies on it, and we would be delighted to see them filled as soon as possible. Don't leave it to someone else!

I announced before the election that I wish to step down as Chairman, although I intend to remain on the Council to help provide continuity and carry on with unfinished business. I feel that eight years is a long enough stint as Chairman, and in the long run the change will be in the Council's interests.

I always like to end my report on a positive note, and any review of the past year would be incomplete without a mention of Icklestock, and the Festival last year that raised more than £8000 for the Play Area refurbishment project. I naturally managed to miss the Festival much to my regret, but there was a lot of positive feedback. The Parish Council nominated Lucy Davidson and Katie Crawford in SCDC's Annual Community Awards Scheme representing the Icklestock organisers. Not only did they win an Award, they were given a Special Award to reflect what SCDC described as their fantastic achievement in bringing together individuals from throughout the Community to make the event a massive success.

Very well done indeed!

Terry Sadler