

SOUTH LOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Annual Report to Village
Meeting held on Friday, 13th April, 2012
at 7.30 p.m. at the Village Hall

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for coming to this double meeting of the two Villages. My name is Robert McCaw and I am Chairman of the South Lopham Parish Council. Mike Cox, the Clerk, will chair the North Lopham meeting in the absence of a permanent Chairman. We have distributed an outline of the programme this evening and you will see that there is plenty to get through, so I am going to keep this report as brief as possible bearing in mind that we should allow the maximum time for questions and comments from yourselves.

We commence proceedings with the Village Meeting of South Lopham. As a formality I would mention that I have the Minutes here of last year's Village Meeting which, if there is no objection, I and Mike Cox shall sign at the end of the Meeting. There is a copy available for anyone who wishes to read them.

People

During the year we were sorry to lose Lynn Perry as Parish Clerk who resigned for personal reasons. We thank her for her work in what was a very busy period of office. We were lucky that Steve Reynolds took on the job on a temporary basis (he already looks after our website). Caroline Philips has agreed to be the Clerk for a trial period of a few months. Tim Frizzell kindly agreed to be co-opted onto the Council to fill the place vacated by Steve Morley. I am very sorry to inform you that after 8 years' service (including 4 years as Chairman) Peter Coster has given notice that he will retire from the Council at the AGM next month. He will be sorely missed and, on behalf of the Council, I would like to pay public tribute to him for his long and valuable service. Naturally, we shall be looking for a replacement and I would be pleased to hear from anyone who would be interested in becoming a member of the Parish Council.

Finance

Many of you will have noticed that our precept has been increased to £2,900 from £2,500. This is the result of exceeding our budget over the last year or so by virtue of unanticipated expenditure, e.g. the addition of Ralph Bowell on the War Memorial, the increased cost of The Lophams' News, the increase in the Clerk's fee, the purchase of another grit bin and donations to the Jubilee fund and Lopham Links (the last to be returned). We also receive reduced revenue from Breckland Council relating to the bottle bank in the White Horse car park.

Planning

We have now heard from Breckland Council that the Settlement Boundary in the village has been abolished. This means that there is a strong presumption against granting planning consent for most forms of development other than certain excepted categories e.g. low cost housing.

Highways

There has been the usual crop of maintenance issues. More importantly, Peter Coster has managed to persuade Norfolk County Council to paint a "SLOW" sign on the A1066 entering the village from Diss where traffic tends to speed down the hill to the hazard of the residents. Unfortunately we could not persuade the Council to move the 30 m.p.h. sign further back up the hill close to the village sign.

The Malson Legacy

Most of this has been used in erecting a new notice board outside St. Andrews Church. We are indebted to Nigel Martin for his work on this. There is a residue of approximately £160 from the legacy. Ideas for its use would be welcome. One proposal is to use it to prepare a map of the rights of way around the village; another is to spend it on maintaining the organ in St Andrews Church.

The Telephone Kiosk

As many of you will have noticed, this has been used as a book exchange. This will shortly be replaced with a display celebrating the upcoming Diamond Jubilee of the Queen. Any other ideas would of course be welcome.

Website

As mentioned earlier, Steve Reynolds is now in charge of the website and I believe he is making a very good job of it having expanded its scope. Here again, ideas and participation would be welcome.

Jubilee Celebrations

Preparations are now at an advanced stage for the two villages' event to be held at the Village Hall on Saturday, 2nd June commencing at 2 p.m. We are indebted to the Jubilee Committee, Chaired by Granville Horan, for all its efforts in preparing what promises to be a very entertaining programme and interesting attractions. We hope that there will be a good turnout on the day. Further volunteers are required in the setting up, running the event on the day and subsequently dismantling the equipment, tents, furnishings, etc. Could anyone prepared to help please get in touch with Granville on 01379 640355 or granvillehoran@hotmail.com.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I should like to thank my fellow Councillors and Stephen and Caroline as Clerk for all their work over the last year and thank you all for attending this evening.

Robert McCaw, Chairman

QUESTIONS?

