

BREDFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – CHAIRMANs ADDRESS

This is the Annual Parish Meeting. I should explain, that although this meeting has been arranged by the Parish Council, it is not a PC meeting. The Local Government Act of 1972 specifies that a” ... *meeting of a parish shall assemble annually on some day between 1st March and 1st June...*” and furthermore proceedings must not begin before 6pm and that the Chair of the Parish Council must preside – which is why I am here.

It gives the opportunity for the Parish Council to report on its activities over the last twelve months and is an opportunity for parishioners to raise any subject which they consider to be important to the village. It also allows local groups and organisations to update the parish on their activities and plans.

For the Parish Council, then I can report that we have held our usual bi-monthly meetings, and we have discussed a range of subjects – we are consultees on Planning Applications, so we consider and report on every application received. We must agree a budget for the forthcoming year, the money coming from the Precept, a sum of money allocated by East Suffolk Council, taken from the money you pay in Council Tax. Last year we requested and received £5,437.96. These funds are largely allocated to paying for things like the Clerk’s pay, insurance, website and asset maintenance, waste collection, audit fees and the like – the things we are required to have as a Parish Council. We did find room to pay for some extras – these including the production of a local walks leaflet, a ‘village of the year’ sign and more recently funding for a new footpath waymark post.

Other tasks have included undertaking a short review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, to ensure that it was still relevant; regularly taking part in a local road safety forum, organised by East Suffolk Council, and contributing to several surveys on behalf of the Parish Council and the Clerk and Councillors had attended online training sessions on CIL.

The Jubilee last year saw the planting of an oak tree, and to mark this year’s royal event, a post has been commissioned which will both mark the start of several local walks, but also serve as a more permanent reminder of the coronation. For this latter, I must thank County Councillor Elaine Bryce who kindly allocated funds to support the project and especially thank Councillor Hilary Harker who designed the crown, and Councillor Vince Buckman and Mr Harker who have worked hard to prepare and install the post.

I mentioned the walks leaflet, and this has proved very popular, and this is largely due to the efforts of Mrs Anne Ackerley and Councillor David Leyland, who worked with the County Council to develop the walks and the leaflet.

We lost Councillor Stewart Belfield during the year but found a replacement in Mrs Lynn Taylor. At the recent Local Elections, David Leyland, who had kept an eagle eye on our finances, decided not to continue, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank both David and Stewart for their valuable help and contributions to the Parish Council.

I should mention one other important aspect that affected us last year, which was the first of our Community Infrastructure Levy payments. This is the money paid by developers to local authorities to improve local facilities where there are developments. We have produced an Infrastructure Investment Plan, to help us allocate the money, and so far, we have approved payments to the Village Shop, to fund the purchase of a new storage refrigerator and to upgrade the lighting. The Village Hall will be carrying out refurbishment work on the flat roof area soon, and this will also receive money from the CIL payments to help the funding.

I must also thank Linda Buckman, our Clerk, who works hard not just producing agenda and minutes, but fielding numerous emails and letters, dealing with a range of outside authorities on behalf of the council, supervising our finances and preparing us for the all-important annual audit.

I will conclude by saying that our meetings are open to the public; that we have a website on which all our policies and procedures may be found, along with minutes and perhaps most importantly, our finances – you can see exactly how much money we have and how we are spending it.