

2013/14 ANNUAL REPORT OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL

GENERAL

The main issues for the Parish Council, this year, have been planning and Lakenheath Hall.

To take the latter item first, there continues to be a growing frustration within the village, that this, once splendid, site continues to be an eyesore for all to see.

Planning matters have caused some of the more recent meetings to be both lively and unusually well attended.

There are a number of large, residential outline planning applications currently with Forest Heath waiting for determination.

Lakenheath, like several Parishes within the Forest Heath area, feels overwhelmed by what is being proposed and Councils are of the opinion that there is not the infrastructure in place to cope with such expansion.

On 24th March 2014, there was a very well attended meeting called by Moulton and Kentford Parish Councils to discuss these issues and it is hoped that within the next week or two a “Forest Heath Rural Parish Alliance” will be set up in order that “a best way forward” can be found. Lakenheath will have a representative on this body, from the Parish Council.

RAF COMMANDER LAKENHEATH

Squadron Leader Jerry Neild continues to be a regular attendee at Parish Council meetings and continues to foster good relations between the base and the village.

The village has benefitted from voluntary work carried out by USAF personnel, primarily, litter picking and for that the Parish Council have been grateful.

SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

Keith Chittock continues to be the PCSO for the village and is usually able to send or present a monthly report to the Parish Council meetings.

Sgt Chris Chisnall has recently left Brandon SNT, although he will still have contact with the Forest Heath area in his new role at the West Suffolk Operational Partnership Team – a unit that specialises in tackling the most severe anti-social behaviour issues.

His place at Brandon SNT will be taken, temporarily, by A/Sgt Derek Gallagher.

FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillors David Gathercole and Colin Noble continue to represent the Parish at Forest Heath District Council.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Colin Noble continues to represent the Parish at Suffolk County Council.

CEMETERY

Steven Aldous continues to work hard to keep the Cemetery neat and tidy. The rare broom rape seems to be thriving and can be found in many areas of the “Old” Cemetery.

LAKENHEATH TIMES

Lakenheath Times continues to be delivered every month to every household - a brilliant way to communicate – more letters/views/ideas from residents would be welcome.

Once again very grateful thanks must go to the deliverers, thank you!

LAKENHEATH PLAYING FIELDS

The Parish Council continues to support Lakenheath Playing Fields Association in a number of ways – assisting with the management and maintenance of the toilet block and general tidying of the area.

VILLAGE GREEN

Enhancement works, a partnership with Parish/District/County, have been completed and together with the Spring bulbs it is a pleasant area in which to sit and watch the world go by. An increasing number of people seem to do just that on sunny days – summer or winter!

S. 137 GRANTS

This money is granted by the Parish Council, generally to Community and Voluntary organizations, for which the Council has no specific authority. The monies are granted to organisations which are considered to directly benefit at least some of the inhabitants of the Parish. The beneficiaries this year were:

FOLK (Friends of Lakenheath Library)	£450.00
Lakenheath Good Neighbours	£150.00
Avenues East (formerly OPTUA)	£100.00
Victim Support	£100.00
St Mary's Church	£170.00
Jubilee Committee (Tree plaques)	£305.70

PRECEPT

The precept for the year 2013/14 was £123,220.00 and it has been set at £144,220.00 for the year 2013/14. Again, the increase is a decision not taken lightly by the Parish Council but with ever escalating costs – e.g. refuse collection/power/fuel; the responsibility for i) the replacement of gradually deteriorating concrete lighting columns; MBFU lanterns and G39 issues (where electricity wires pass very close to lanterns) and ii) St Mary's Closed Churchyard, it was felt that it was a necessary decision. It amounts to an £18.00 per year increase on a Band D property.