

2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL

GENERAL

The main issue for the Parish Council, this year, has again been planning. There continues to be a number of large residential planning applications outstanding. This pre-empted another well attended extra-ordinary meeting which again highlighted to the Parish Council that in general the village does NOT want the proposed large-scale residential expansion in its present format.

The Parish Council continues to be of the opinion that there is not sufficient infrastructure in place to cope with such expansion, especially in relation to Highways, Healthcare, employment and Education, both primary and pre-school.

What is the Parish Council doing to try and stem this unwanted growth? Well, it continues with help of various professionals, to fight for the village and what parishioners have indicated to Parish they want. This was as a result of the poll conducted last autumn in the Parish Magazine.

We are able to report that at the Development and Control Meeting in February at Forest Heath District Council, the application for the proposed Development North of Station Road, of 375 dwellings, with the site for a school, was withdrawn. This was as a direct result of intervention by the Parish Council, following a Barrister's advice, as various environment and infrastructure assessments had not yet been carried out.

The current situation is that via the Secretary of State the District Council have at long last been requested to provide cumulative comment on the impact in relation to the environment, highways and healthcare that we as a Parish have been requesting since the third, of the current 6, major applications was first placed before the planners for consideration.

RAF COMMANDER LAKENHEATH

Squadron Leader Jerry Neild continues to be a regular attendee at monthly Parish Council meetings, fostering good relations between USAF Lakenheath and the village.

The village continues to benefit from voluntary work carried out by USAF personnel and for that the Parish Council have been grateful.

SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

PCSO Keith Chittock attends Parish Council meetings or provides a report when time permits.

FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillors Louise Marston and Colin Noble continue to represent the Parishioners 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 keeping the cemetery neat and tidy. The Parish Council also sought advice on tree management in the new section. It was decided to remove a large number of the limes in the avenue of trees. This will allow those that are left, to grow into mature trees, without the need for pollarding and less root damage will be seen.

PARISH CLERK / PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office is an integral way of bringing the work of the Parish Council closer to the residents of the village. The office hours continue to be 9:00 am to 12 Noon, Monday to Friday.

ERISWELL ROAD PLAY AREA

This is a very popular area for children of the village. After some vandalism, picnic benches have been replaced along with a complete refurbishment of the public toilets. The wet-pour surface has also been replaced and a fresh thick layer of wood chips put down.

WINGS ROAD CAR PARK TOILETS

These have been spruced up with a deep clean and new signage.

LAKENHEATH TIMES

An army of dedicated volunteer deliverers, continue to deliver the Lakenheath Times on a monthly basis to every household in Lakenheath, Sedge Fen and Undley. It's a brilliant way to let the village know what's going on along with views and ideas from residents. A big thank you again to all the dedicated deliverers that make it happen. Some articles of interest and relating to the village would also be appreciated.

LAKENHEATH PLAYING FIELDS

The Parish Council continues to support Lakenheath Playing Fields Association in a number of ways – management and maintenance of the toilet block and general tidying. The Parish Council was also pleased to fund the skate park repairs and the planting of new trees, helping to keep this a leisure area for the village to be proud of.

NOTICEBOARDS

With the support of Councillors Noble and Marston, all noticeboards in the village have been replaced. They now offer a drier and more user friendly surface for all organisations to advertise their upcoming events.

DOG FOUL BIN

After a request from residents in Maids Cross Way, the Parish Council have erected and now maintain a dog foul bin, situated on the cemetery boundary.

VILLAGE SIGN

The village sign will disappear over the next few weeks and will return restored to a freshly refurbished base.

WAR MEMORIAL

A grant has been successfully secured to clean the war memorial, ensuring that the lettering remains legible. The vases around the base will also be replaced over the next few weeks and filled with flowers.

SPEEDWATCH

Parishioners have raised their concerns about the increase in speeding vehicles through the village. A request for volunteers was published in the Lakenheath Times and after a number of residents came forward, a Speed-Watch operation is being set up. Thanks to all those that have offered their support, this will benefit the whole village.

To help the cause a number of 30 MPH wheelie bin stickers are also available in the Parish Office.

RED TELEPHONE BOX / ADOPT A KIOSK

After a number of reports of vandalism, BT decided to remove the red telephone box opposite Quayside Court. As an iconic part of the village, it has now been adopted. Although the telephone has been removed it will remain as an important landmark.

S. 137 GRANTS

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

- £150 - Lakenheath Good Neighbours
- £250 - The Voluntary Network
- £300 - East Anglian Air Ambulance
- £250 - Lakenheath Community Primary School

PRECEPT

The precept for the year 2015/16 was set at £137,497 and it has been set at £140,164 for the year 2016/17. Escalating costs include refuse collection, power, fuel, St Mary's closed churchyard and the responsibility for replacing deteriorating concrete lighting columns, MBFU lanterns and G39 issues (where electricity wires pass very close to lanterns).

The Parish Council has worked hard to keep forecast net expenditure to a minimum, £143,217 in 2016/17 against £143,602 in 2015/16. A reduction of £3,052 in the Local Council Tax Support Grant results in a small increase to the precept but again ensures a 0% increase to Council Tax bills.