

LITTLE STAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Annual Report 2019/2020

Here is my annual report for the year of 2019/2020, which ends on the 31st March 2020.

The Parish Council in the village holds a posting for seven vacancies although we are currently running at full capacity. The next parish council elections are due to take place in May 2020.

The members of the current parish council are Garry Folbigg – Chairman, Mike Sargeant, Verity Hawkins, George Sweatman, Clive Birchett – Vice Chairman, James Hopperton and Kevin Head. The parish clerk is Mary Jordan.

The Council has met on 11 occasions during the year (March meeting postponed). At each meeting we deal with finance, highways, planning, speed watch, playing field matters and policing along with any correspondence received or matters arising outside the agenda.

At the first meeting the council adopted a series of working documents (which we are required to do) for the duration of the current council, including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Audit Measures, Data Protection, Information Access and associated documents.

During the year, Council members attended various external events/meetings representing the Parish, including: Highways Department meetings, School meetings, Ward Forum meetings with our district councillors and on occasions our local MP's, Training courses, Clerks meetings and Parish monthly meetings etc.

For the balance of the report I will cover briefly the areas of focus that appear on the agenda of the monthly council meetings.

Highways

During the past years the topics of Highways has been monitored by Mike Sargeant. We are still currently waiting for our slot as to re-surfacing the footpath on Spring Hill which we are promised will be done last year. Ke Mike is in regular contact with highways on matters such as drainage, road condition and signage. Keep up the good work Mike.

Speeding

The speed watch team under Clive who is doing his utmost in getting sessions organised and keeping up a physical presence for this summer season. Beds Police are also

occasionally assisting with these sessions which does make a difference. With the portable Morelock speed device we are seeing it help keep the speed down through the village. Information is being extracted from the device and used in our constant battle to see what alternate methods are available. Keep at it Clive!

Playing Field

The playing field is managed by the Parish council and workdays are held throughout the year to keep on top of hedge cutting and general maintenance etc. We keep on top of the equipment in line with the required ROSPA checks which we have annually alongside our own in-house risk assessment, the next one is due in May. Anything requiring attention from the report is taken in hand if not spotted previously.

The Pavilion again is due a coat of paint / stain this year to keep it tidy and prevent the timber building from rotting.

We have re-appointed Peter Bailey a contractor from Cambridgeshire to carry out this year's grass cutting services.

The Cricket Club use the playing field during the season, and support the maintenance costs incurred to ensure that the playing field remains a viable village asset.

Planning

We monitor all planning applications that are in the Parish area, and those in neighbouring areas that will have an impact on our village. We support reasonable applications that add to the village, but do oppose developments that are clearly unreasonable or excessive and create a negative impact on the environment.

The solar farm is now nearing completion and does not seem to have caused us too much in the way of grumbles.

This past year has also seen an interest in the airfield being used for a skydiving company and more recently an aviation engineering business looking to build a new hangar and workshops / offices etc. This is currently with Huntingdonshire Council and awaiting a decision.

Unfortunately as the airfield itself falls within Cambridgeshire we do not get anymore say than the individual so things can be awkward.

Policing

WPC Kerri Jones is continuing her cover between Riseley and Biggleswade. We have been to a few of the Police quarterly meetings at Kempston, but the format is changing somewhat and yet again the more rural areas appear to be a little overlooked we feel.

Village Website

We have had to replace the old village website with another version as the previous providers decided they were no longer going to carry on with the service. This was not just ours but many Parishes within Bedfordshire were using the same provider. We hope you find the new site a little easier to navigate around and as we learn more about it ourselves we will be adding more content to the site.



I would like to say a big thank you to all who have worked and supported the village during the past year and thank them for the hard work put in.

Borough Councillor Wootton. Tom has given us and myself great support over the past year and feeds our concerns back to the Borough Council, his support in fighting the corner for all of his small village wards is a credit to him. Tom updates us monthly what is going on at Borough level and holds a ward forum meeting on a quarterly basis with various Borough councillors attending for talks and questions. Tom also provides a ward fund which has been used in various ways around the village.

Many thanks to Vicki Airs for producing the monthly newsletter. Also thanks to Marion Davies and Mary Jordan for distributing copies each month and all the other areas you both cover without being asked.

Thanks to Roger Jordan for the continued free grass cutting services of the village green and church road.

Thanks to all the current councillors for their continued support.

Please don't forget there is an open forum at the start of the monthly council meetings should anyone wish to attend and raise any questions or concerns.

With the current situation regarding Covid 19 we have not had a March meeting this time and wait for further instructions as we move forward. Please check with the village website to see if the meetings are going ahead.

Best regards and stay safe.

Garry Folbigg

Chairman

March 2020