

# Little Staughton Parish Council

## Chairman's Annual Report 2010/2011

Once again we come to the end of another year, and this report gives a review of the work and support that the Parish Council has given to the village during the past year. This year is the last year of the current council and elections are due to take place at the beginning of May 2011.

I would like to say thank you, to all of you for your support during the year. It is very gratifying to know that our work is recognised, and achievements supported through the life of the village. I also include all those who contribute to life in different ways, and are not mentioned by name—you all help to improve life within the village, thank you.

I think it right to recognise those who make a visible contribution to village life. Firstly, I would like to thank Jeanette Atkinson who edits and collates the newsletter on a monthly basis. She does an excellent job.

Another unsung hero who is not recognised for all the work he does for the village is Paul Feneley. Paul as you may notice cuts the grass on the playing field and Grays Grove green. That is the visible piece of his work. Every year he maintains the mower and gives it an annual service, as well as storing the machine. We have had some problems with mower recently, as part of its normal working life, Paul has managed and expedited repairs and re-builds. I thank him for all this work he willing undertakes. This will ensure that the mower will work for another few years.

I am thankful to all who supported the rubbish collection day on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Fortunately the weather was good as the previous two Saturday's it had rained!

The work of the council has followed a consistent pattern, which is broadly the same each year. This year we have continued to develop the playing field and facilities. We have spent time discussing and meeting with the Planning team for the continuing review of the Settlement Policy Area around the village. This is still in progress.

The precept for the coming year starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April has been maintained at the same level as last year. This is the third year that we have kept precept unchanged. Again this is a reflection on good financial management, exercised by the council. In particular I would like to thank Judy Llewellyn and Paul Atkinson for their continued work in this area.

On an annual basis we have reviewed and accepted the Financial Regulations, Risk Management and Assessment, the Code of Conduct and the Council Standing Orders and the Local Audit of our finance systems.

In December last year the Little Staughton First Responders team was launched which is a team of people from our village who have been trained to respond to

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medical emergency in advance of ambulance/paramedic attendance. Thanks go to Mike Sargeant who has pioneered this project from the start.

During the course of the year, Council members attended external events/meetings representing the Parish, including: Highways Department meetings; Planning Workshops and Forum; Bedfordshire Police Authority and our Local MP's forum; Bedford Partnership meetings and meetings of the planning committee. We also participated in the Joint Action Group Meetings run by the local Neighbourhood Policing Team in particular thanks go to Mike Sargeant who has represented the council at these quarterly meetings.

In the village we have installed more waste bins to take rubbish and dog mess. If you have a dog please use the bins provided, continued failure to do so will result in further action, being taken. It is good to know that many dog walkers do use these bins, but they are not filled to overflowing yet!

We are re-visiting the idea of developing Grays Grove green area and I have already received some feedback for which I thank you. Further news will follow in the next few months, but if you have any ideas please let us know—contact details below.

For the balance of this report there are series of topics that I referred to earlier and appear on the agenda on a monthly basis and I will review these subjects in turn. Many subjects have been covered in my monthly column in the newsletter in greater detail.

### **Highways**

During this past year the road surfaces have been patched as required, in particular after the bad weather. We experienced a period of bad weather in late November and early December, fortunately there was no shortage of salt this time. But I do have reservations that a further sustained period of bad weather, in the future, may well expose weaknesses in the Borough Council's plans for salting and gritting. After many enquiries it appears that little has changed with regards to support for the rural area.

We have requested that the salt bin at the bottom of Spring Hill should be moved more back into Spring Hill, but this was declined. We have requested additional salt bins for different areas around the village, especially for pedestrian routes. These were also declined.

The Speed Indicator Device (SID) has been used in the village for one week. The second planned week had to be cancelled as the device was unavailable. This does act as a deterrent to speed and broadly indicated that on average 74% of vehicle drivers observe the different limits through the village. We will continue using the device during the next year. We have further investigated alternative

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means of measuring speed of vehicles through the village. This will continue during the coming months.

### **Playing Field**

Further new equipment was installed during the past year. We do now think that we have provided equipment for all ages! The funding for the new equipment was from the 200 Club. I am particularly indebted to Mary Jordan, who runs the 200 Club, she has put a significant amount of work into the development of the playing field.

Thanks are due to Mary supported by Roger for their work on the playing field, in particular the maintenance of trees and shrubs that has led to clearly defined bridleway that runs across the end of the playing field, and the development of the hedge boundary.

I know that many people do use the Keep Fit equipment at different times during the day. I would encourage all to "have a go" and see how you progress.

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

### **Web Site**

The domain name is [www.littlestaughtonvillage.co.uk](http://www.littlestaughtonvillage.co.uk) and is owned by the Parish Council hosted locally on a voluntary basis. If there is any other links you would like added than please let us know though the contact details on the site. Thanks to Judy for keeping the site updated on a regular basis. We will continue to lodge relevant documents on the site for public access.

### **Planning**

In planning terms this has been a quiet year, with not to many applications coming before the council. Additionally there have not been a great number of changes introduced from National Government. However, we have the new Localism bill progressing through parliament - this promises changes in many areas of local management.

As mentioned the process for the review of the Settlement Policy Area that surrounds the village was started in 2008. This will take many months to complete and we are now expecting further specific meetings to take place during this year - that is what I wrote last year, and the process is still not complete. We have had meetings and discussions with the Planning Team about our SPA. We do expect that further reviews and consultations will be necessary before the matter is finalised. I will keep you posted through the newsletter.

### **Policing**

During the past year we welcomed Kerry Jones back from maternity leave, as our local (SNT) police officer with excellent support from PCSO Paul Jones.

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Generally crime is not growing, but we should still be vigilant to strange or abnormal goings on - even if they are in Cambridgeshire!

We have taken an active roll in the Joint Action Group Meetings that the Neighbourhood Policing Team has organised. We will continue to support this event.

If you see anything suspicious call the police on 01234 841212. It is important to do this, and the police will respond to all calls. These calls provide intelligence about what is happening in a given area.

### **Parish Clerk**

We welcomed Diane Robins to the role of Parish Clerk. She is an excellent member of the team and has readily taken on board the role and provides excellent support to the Council.

### **The Council**

During the course of the year Martin Banks resigned as a member of the council, I thank him for all the work that he has contributed over the past years and wish him well for the future.

For each Parish Council meeting - they are held on the third Tuesday of each month in the village Hall - we do hold an open forum where any member of our community is welcome to attend and put questions to the council.

If there any ideas or thoughts that you would like us to consider then please feel free to contact me or the Parish Clerk..

The full council is:

Mary Jordan

Louise King

Judy Llewellyn

Paul Atkinson

Michael Sargeant

Diane Robins - Parish Clerk

Finally - my thanks go to my fellow councillors for their support during the past year, and for the many extra activities that they willingly under take outside of the monthly meetings, working to improve life in the village. We continue to try to ensure that we have a pleasant and reasonable life in the village for all residents.

Anthony Moss

Chairman

March 2011

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