

ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS - CLAYDON AND WHITTON
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
Monday 15th April 2013

As Chairman of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council, I am pleased to welcome you to this Annual Parish Meeting, which is held for the whole electorate in the parish. It gives me a chance to report on the Parish Council's work during the past year and is also an opportunity for those on the Electoral Roll to ask questions and raise issues of local concern with Parish Councillors and representatives from the County and District Councils.

The Parish Council aims to improve the quality of life and the local environment for the benefit of those living and working in the area. Where appropriate, we can influence other decision makers, enable things to happen and deliver a variety of services to meet local needs.

It has been another busy year; not a day goes by, it seems, without something cropping up that needs Parish Council attention. A highlight of 2012 was the celebration on the High School Playing Fields to mark The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, at which our stand proved to be a great success. We were sorry that Councillors Jon Studd and John Soar resigned during the year but very happy to co-opt Linda Glazebrook and Gail Cornish in their place. We still have one vacancy, so it would be excellent if we could co-opt someone else in the near future. Do talk to one of us if you are interested in supporting the local community in this way. I must thank all my colleagues for their support, in particular Councillor John Williams whose considerable experience of Parish Council work is most valuable and Councillor Nigel Gutteridge and Councillor Chris Studd as the Chairmen of our two Committees; Finance and Planning & Amenities. We also owe grateful thanks to our County Councillor John Field and to Mid-Suffolk District Councillors John Whitehead and Martin Redbond, for all their help, financial and otherwise. Special thanks go to our Clerk and Finance Officer, Mrs Suzanne Eagle, who works extremely hard to ensure that the Council runs smoothly and efficiently. We cannot thank her enough for her unfailing help, advice and support. We also thank Marian Chaplin and Mark Worby who assist with the cleaning of our streets and odd-jobs in the Parish on a part-time basis.

I will just pick out the main issues with which the Parish Council has been dealing in the past twelve months:

Highway and Transport Matters

Motor vehicles using Old Ipswich Road illegally or speeding through the village; the need for additional yellow lines, especially in Church Lane; improvement of road markings, especially at the zebra crossings and improvement of warning lights have all been given attention. The addition of brighter, flashing beacon lights at the crossing by the Co-operative store has been welcomed and we have requested similar crossing lights outside the Crown Public House. The Council continues to push for a 20 mile-per-hour speed limit through the village and to monitor the diagonal parking outside Claydon village shops.

Local Amenities

A large part of this year's budget has been spent on changes to the street lighting system, whereby most of our lights now go off at 12 midnight until 5.30 am. Though costly in the short term, this should produce financial savings over time. A possible new bus shelter outside Claydon Autos is under consideration, and the Council supported a proposal for a rail station at Great Blakenham, whether or not

the Snoasis development goes ahead. Dog fouling is a serious issue in various parts of the village and we have done all we can to make the public more aware of the anti-social nature of this, not least on the Recreation Ground. Residents have been unhappy with removal of recycling bins at The Crown, so we are actively seeking to site bottle banks elsewhere in the village centre. Complaints about the brightness of the lights on the chimney at the new Energy from Waste facility in Great Blakenham have been notified to SITA, and we await the outcome of talks with the MOD and Civil Aviation Authority as to whether changes can be made without causing danger to overflying aircraft. We did manage to stop the lights flashing, which is of some help.

We have supported local facilities by awarding small annual grants to a number of not-for-profit organisations within the parish. The transfer of the Community Centre from the County Council to the Parish Council has now been completed, with the Parish Council holding the property as 'custodian trustees'. We continue to oversee the wet woodland at our Conservation Area and are looking into repainting of the Parish Sign.

Neighbourhood and Emergency Planning

The first Neighbourhood Plan in the country was adopted in Cumbria in March, and a Parish Council Working Group, chaired by Councillor Williams, is exploring the feasibility of introducing one here. Communities in Suffolk are also being encouraged, through their Parish Councils, to write Emergency Plans, for activation in case of major emergency such as a serious aircraft crash, severe weather or flooding, major fire or vehicle accidents and so on. The Parish Council has prepared a draft Emergency Plan and will hold an Open Meeting for all members of the community, in the Village Hall on Monday 24th June at 7 pm, when it is hoped that the Plan will be adopted and put in place for the future. Please make a note and tell your friends of this date, which will be advertised on the website and in the 'In Touch' Newsletter, as we shall welcome a good attendance for that meeting.

Crime and Reassurance

In partnership with Great Blakenham and Barham, we are most fortunate to have the services of Police Community Support Officer Philip Brill, who works very hard locally, aiming to reduce crime and provide reassurance for victims of crime. This initiative is part-funded by the electorate. PCSO Brill is often to be seen out and about in the parish in his police car, funded in part by Sackers, and his attendance at Parish Council Meetings is appreciated. We are pleased that a new Service Level Agreement, giving continued PCSO support for the three parishes for the next two years, has been agreed with Suffolk Constabulary.

The Parish Council does all it can to listen and respond to matters that are of importance to people living and working locally. If there is an issue that you would like the Council to consider, do please tell us or contact our Clerk. Members of the public are welcome to attend our Council or Committee meetings and ask questions at the end, so if you have an interest in parish life in Claydon or in Whitton Rural, do be sure to come along.

Councillor Anne Dunford OBE
Chairman, Claydon and Whitton Parish Council