

Chairman's Report April 2023

The last year has been much more business as usual following the 2 years dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The council has been able to move back to holding all meetings in person in the Welborne village hall. Two events were held in the parish to commemorate the Queen's platinum jubilee – a tea party at Welborne church and a community event at the Runhall Recreation ground. The council were able to obtain small grants from South Norfolk Council to support both events and the council would like to thank the organisers of both events.

Planning

We continue to review all planning applications in our parish that are relevant. During 2022 we had 13 formal applications all of which were approved by South Norfolk.

The Parish Council was supportive or neutral on all the applications. It is helpful for any planning discussions at the council if the residents who are making the planning applications decisions attend the planning meetings.

Highways

We continue to work with the County Council Highways department to resolve problems within the parish and to ensure we get our fair share of general maintenance. This year we have seen:

- issues dealt with in terms of signage and ditches
- ongoing work on potholes of which there are many across the Parish

In addition we have continued to be involved in the consultation process on the major highways developments around dualling the A47 and completing the Northern Distributor Road.

PROW's

All the PROW's are reviewed on a regular basis by our three PROW wardens and any issues raised with Norfolk County Council who have responsibility for them. The PROW's have remained generally in good condition throughout the year, with only occasional issues caused by heavy rainfall. However there are still issues caused by dog fouling and some litter that adversely impact them.

Litter

All of our four villages currently have volunteer Litter Wardens in place. They work throughout the year removing litter from the local area and thus improving the environment. The roadside verges remain the main problem areas. Whilst the council is very grateful for the job they do, it is important that everyone in the parish takes care of the parish to ensure it remains a pleasant living space.

Parish Amenities

The main facilities in the Parish are Welborne Village Hall, the Runhall Allotments, the Runhall Play Area and the Exchange (in the Old Phone Box in Runhall). These continue to be well used and the details are covered in their own separate reports.

Budgets

The council has run a balanced budget over the past year but unfortunately a number of items in next years budget have risen due to inflation. The council has had to increase the Parish Council precept by 5% in order to cover these increases and may need to do so again next year to maintain a financially stable position.

Police Updates

We get a regular update from the police as to what is happening within the Wymondham neighbourhood of which our parish is part. The neighbourhood has a low level of crime and disorder. The main priorities for the local police in our neighbourhood are Road Safety, Anti-Social Behaviour (person) and Anti-Social Behaviour (Vehicle).

We also get regular reports on rural crime across Norfolk under Operation Randall, again which is still relatively low. Up to date details of police activity can be found on the Norfolk Constabulary website.

Communication

The newsletter has been distributed following most council meetings – thank you to the team of volunteers who do the distribution. The parish website is kept up-to-date but is not used much by parishioners.

Footpath Investigation

Some initial work has been undertaken by Mike Webb on the Parish Council looking at creating a new footpath from Wellbore to Barnham Broom. This project has been stopped due to a lack of support from the Barnham Brook council.

Future Activity

The council will continue keeping on top of business as usual whilst supporting parishioners in any extra activity.

There is one village event organised to celebrate the Kings coronation. The Runhall Community Group are organising a Paint & Picnic in the Park on Monday 8th May at 10am. People are invited to take part in local volunteering projects in their local community as part of The Big Help Out initiative. Runhall CG are inviting people to roll up their sleeves to help renovate our fence with a clean and a coat of paint - followed by a community picnic (please bring your own picnic and join us).

The elections on 5th May will be uncontested as we do not have enough candidates for the positions. This is disappointing as local democracy depends on people in the community volunteering and fulfilling these roles that are part of the governance of this country. We shall be seeking to fulfil these roles by co-option as soon as possible. The roles are not onerous from a time viewpoint as we seek to run this council in a simple way – the focus being on fulfilling our regulatory requirements, helping to maintain the environment and supporting local groups who want to run events.

Finally I would like to give thanks to some people. In particular I would like to thank our parish clerk, Bev Long, who has continued to provide excellent support to the council.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for the time they give up and the support they provide across all the issues we deal with. In addition I would like to thank our local councillors Margaret Dewsbury (Norfolk County Council) and Richard Elliot (South Norfolk District) who have continued to provide guidance and support throughout the year.

I would also like to thank all the different groups who operate within the parish and all parishioners for enabling our parish to thrive.

Simon Guest

Chair Brandon Parva, Coston, Runhall and Welborne Parish Council 12 April 2023