



## **STOKE HOLY CROSS ANNUAL PARISH COUNCILLORS REPORTS THURSDAY 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022**

### **Parish Council Chair's Report – 2022 Parish Meeting**

This last year has seen a welcome return to holding face to face meetings for the PC, as opposed to dialling in on a laptop for a zoom call and it feels good to have that contact again with everyone.

During this period, we've welcomed Katrina Nobbs into our number, she's been a long-term resident and has thankfully decided to turn her hand at being a Parish Councillor and is currently learning the ropes.

For those that aren't aware, the PC is made up of 9 councillors who effectively volunteer / work for nothing for the benefit of the village ensuring existing responsibilities are well managed and looking for opportunities on how the village amenities can be enhanced/overhauled.

### **Thankyou**

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of them personally for their contribution over the last year.

**Charles Bussey, Jim Hopper, Giancarlo Laccarino, Danny Thomas, Stewart & Sue Hull, Gill Jkinson and Catrina Nobbs.**

In particular, I'd like to draw your attention to those that have gone above and beyond:

Charles Bussey – our longest serving councillor, who along with former councillor Glyn Davies have dedicated yet another year and a serious amount of time to the 'New Pavilion' whilst others have been involved, it's fair to say Charles and Glyn have been a constant driving force on this project.

Gill Jkinson – Gill leads the playing field committee which covers the Long Lane Playing Field and also Carol Close play area. Her focus this last year has been to draft plans for a vision of what the play area could be with the creation of a pump park, new skate park and new play area/equipment for the younger children. She's been busy getting estimates (which aren't cheap) and soon she will be looking for volunteers to help start fund raising for these initiatives once ratified by the whole PC. She also checks the park equipment weekly and works closely with the contractors who cut the grass and hedges. In addition, she's picked up the mantel for turning the field between Harrold Place and the play area into a wild meadow with a circular pathway going through it so people as well as flora and fauna can enjoy. This is a long-term project that's likely to take some 10 years or so to mature.



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Stewart Hull – Has been our traffic ninja leading with the village speed watch team and SAM2 co-ordinator over the last year ably supported by resident Paul Dennis and a team of others from within the village who go out rain or shine to monitor the speeds of vehicles in the village and pass the intel to NCC and the police.

Giancarlo Laccarino – who took on the role of Finance Officer for the PC, this was a new role which strengthens our existing governance and supports our very able Clerk Anita Rose.

We couldn't forget to thank Anita Rose, our Clerk who currently is our only employed member of staff and quite frankly we could not manage without her, each year seems to bring another set of rules and regulations that PCs must adhere to and Anita helps us navigate through these changes as well as the day-to-day workloads that comes with a village.

In addition to the above I would like to thank the councillors who in the absence of a village caretaker, have over the last year gone round the village general waste bins (13 in total & does not include dog waste bins which are emptied by SNC) and emptied them on a weekly basis – you know who you all are – thankyou. It's a thankless job and eye opening as to what gets put into these bins!

Please note there is still remains a vacancy for village caretaker – please spread the word – it's very flexible. If you know anyone who may be interested, please get them to contact me.

And finally,. We can't forget to say thank you to our 3 District Councillors at SNC: Nigel Legg, Vivienne Clifford-Jackson & Jerry Francis (Vivienne is standing down due to ill health causing an election on Thurs 5<sup>th</sup> May) and Vic Thomson our NCC councillor.

### **Finances:**

On paper we have a healthy balance sheet able to comfortably meet our planned monthly expenses etc. Currently in our 'savings which includes cil monies, we have a credit of £362k – please note however this entire sum has been allocated to projects and the PC is actively pursuing grants and other means to fund the total estimated cost of these projects.

### **Review of last 12 months**

1. PC has started to include a column/insert in the 5+ community magazine, which is published quarterly, giving info about what the PC has been doing etc. Sue Hull is the co-ordinator for this.
2. Thanks to working in collaboration with the Stoke Football club (Glyn Baker in particular), the village now has a third lifesaving defibrillator which is situated on the wall of the Pavilion hall. All defibs are checked weekly by councillors to ensure they



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are in good working order. If you ever have to call emergency services and a heart attack is suspected, then emergency service will give you the code to key into the nearest defib holding box.

3. The footpath between Harrold Place and the play area has been overhauled with concrete curbing replacing wooden ones and infilled with tarmac making it much more accessible for wheelchairs /pushchairs and walkers etc.
4. The old smelly concrete open waste bins have been replaced with covered plastic ones around the Stoke park and some of the dog waste bins around the village have been replace where the old ones were corroded and leaky.
5. The rest of the regular PC activities go un-noticed, leaving some to question 'what does the PC do & where does the money go....so to give you a flavour of what else goes on ...

Upkeep of playing field area, mowing, trimming hedges, cutting down trees when necessary. Supporting /funding the meadow project. Maintenance of play equipment, carpark, bus shelters, defib machines, village signs, sam2 machines, additional mowing of trod paths on Norwich Road and Long Lane. Provides a grant to support the local outreach post office at the Church Hall. Reviews & passes comments on local planning applications, Insurances, general admin costs, staffing costs and much more.

### **What Next?**

This year the PC wants to throw a party to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It's being called 'picnic in the park' and will take place on Sat 4<sup>th</sup> June. Whilst there will be a bar, pizza van and ice-cream van amongst other stalls the main aim is to bring people / families together and not worry about the cost etc so were asking residents to bring their own picnics and blankets, we'll provide music with local bands and other events such as a dog show, Viking and Saxon demonstration fighting and more... The church hall will also open as a cream teas room.

There will also be a 2.5km /5km fun run taking place on the morning of the celebrations and a scarecrow competition with a royal them – so hoping residents will join in the fun an put on outside their house for a week leading up to the event. Again, if anyone wants to volunteer their time to help it would be much appreciated.

Regards  
Sandy Collins  
SHX PC Chair

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### **Planning Committee Report – 2022**

Throughout the lockdowns, there has been a steady flow of Planning applications. As in recent years since the major developments, the applications have been mainly for



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extensions, Garages, and a Tennis court and Swimming Pool.

We have been involved in a major application for a battery storage facility on Stoke Lane. We have and are continuing to object to this development on 25 acres of prime agricultural land and the development encroaches onto an undeveloped area. We have suggested that the Storage site should be repositioned on the west side of the A140 adjacent to the existing substation complex to which it will be attached. We have no objection to the principle of Green energy and in a more suitable position, we will support the application.

Any major applications that we are made aware of are always discussed by the Council and a special public meeting is held if there are issues that affect residents. All applications are discussed at the normal Council meetings.

Report written by Cllr C Bussey (Chair of the Planning Committee)

### **Report of New Pavilion Working Group to Parish Meeting April 2022**

- The New Pavilion Group, which is a sub-committee of the Parish Council, has met regularly throughout the last few years of covid, by Zoom and recently at round table meetings.
- We have been advised that a planning application has been submitted on the draft Local Plan allocation site off Long Lane for 19 dwellings. This application has proposed a substantial but presently undisclosed financial contribution towards a new community hall for the village in recognition of the acknowledged need for a replacement for the existing pavilion, and purpose-built accommodation for the pre-school.
- A business plan has been prepared for the new hall to demonstrate its viability, and to support requests for grants and additional funding. This has been updated to take into consideration the 20% increase in construction and running costs since 2019, when tenders were first sought, and the increase in available funds since that time.
- A meeting has been held with the preferred contractor, to discuss the cost of the new hall. It is now likely that the new hall will cost at least £740,000, taking into account the construction cost increases. The business plan has therefore been redrafted to reflect this revised figure. The total cost, which including a contingency for further inflation, extras, and professional fees, has now been reset at £800,000, up £120,000 from the previous business plan based on the original tender price.
- Despite the unfortunate increase in costs for the new hall, the NPWG is still confident it can deliver a replacement hall for the Pavilion, particularly if additional developer and grant funding can be found for the project. This is actively being sought at the present time.
- The existing planning permission for the new hall runs out on 15<sup>th</sup> May. In order to



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preserve the planning permission, a short section of footings trench will be dug on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, which will then be formally inspected by Building Control to confirm the start. Hence the new village hall will officially be commenced on this date – a significant milestone for this project!

- There is still a very realistic possibility of the construction work for the replacement for this pavilion being properly started later in 2022, which would be a splendid way for the Parish to end Jubilee Year!

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### **TRAFFIC WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021-2022**

The village has had a successful year in combatting speeding and has an active Community Speed Watch team comprising 14 members. They have been operational since May 2021 and in that time have conducted an average of 2 x 1hour sessions a week all over the village. The response from village residents has been extremely positive and it is quite common for the Team to receive praise and thanks from passing motorists and pedestrians. Having said all that there is still an ongoing problem, especially on a stretch of the Norwich Road between leaving the village going North and entering the village from Cais-tor. The team stands outside a house called Marshlands and regularly finds 20 or more speeders going in both directions. So, partial success, but still a work in progress.

We now have new gateway village signs at various points as you enter both Lower and Upper Stoke and these sharpen the appearance of the village as you both enter and leave it.

We have 2 portable speed monitoring machines (called SAM2s) which are moved around the village at regular intervals. The data captured by these machines is very informative and indicates to us where the hotspots are and therefore where we need to concentrate our Speed watch efforts.

I would like to thank all those members of the Speed watch Team who have given their time to do their duty and help the village, sometimes in freezing conditions by the side of the road. Without such volunteers we would have no presence in the village and I'm sure the whole village is grateful for their efforts.

Finally, a word of thanks to all of you who have helped to make our village a safe and pleasant place to live; remember to drive safely and that SPEED KILLS.

Thank you everyone and best wishes.



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Stewart Hull

Chair of the Traffic Working Group and Community Speed watch Team leader

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### **PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021-2022**

Last year was our first year of managing the verges by allowing some verges to grow and cut by hand at the end of the season the purpose of this is to increase biodiversity and provide a longer season of food and shelter for pollinators. We even had frogs in some of the longer verges we will continue to develop and learn how best to manage leaving the verges longer. Lee Cozens tree warden who is leading on the longer verges

Thank you to John Shreeve and Geoff who dug the top border near the carpark, which was planted with sunflowers last year. John has dug two further borders around the carpark which we plan to plant with sunflowers again this year. Please plant some sunflower seeds and bring your little sunflower plants to be planted. (Sunflower planting day to be arranged).

We know our play equipment needs updating and we continue to plan how we can develop a more exciting play experience. The play equipment is checked weekly and inspected yearly by a ROSPA certified inspector. On the Long Lane site, we will look to replace the embankment slide with a double width slide with safe surfacing. The wooden play equipment in the small fenced play area will be treated with some wood stain to brighten it up - the new Pavilion building will mean the small fenced play area may be impacted and once the new pavilion is built, we will have a clearer picture of what monies are available to develop play equipment. We do have some quotes for developing the cinder track into a pump park which we will be fundraising for this year.

We've replaced the open bins with covered bins around the site and installed notices for dog owners to encourage responsible dog owners in this shared space. Dog fouling continues to be an issue despite the majority of dog owners picking up after their dogs and using the dog bins provided.

We have a bi annual Tree inspection to highlight any works/ management of the trees.

At Carol close play park, a new set of swings have been installed and purchased new football goal.

The football club secured funding towards a new defibrillator that is installed at the Pavilion Hall. We now have 3 defibrillators throughout our village!

### **Wild flower meadow**

The village has been gifted a piece of amenity land to the Parish Council from John



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Ingrams developers, this is about 1 acre in size, situated between Harold place housing, park and the skate park.

Lee Cozens SHX tree warden and Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) and SHX wildflower meadow working group has been helping make plans to develop a wildflower meadow with mown paths and seating areas for the village to enjoy. We are at very early stages but over the winter we planted native hedging along one edge of the area. The next stage is to make a survey of the plants we already have growing on May 27th NWT will hold a community day to record which plants we are growing.

There is a draft plan for the area and we will be holding community days to get your ideas for the wildflower meadow - details to follow. You will see there are different areas which will be left to have long grass which is perfect Barn owl hunting territory. The land is quite uneven at the moment and in two weeks' time we have an agricultural contractor visiting the site to advise about preparing the land and sowing wildflower seeds. The grass will be left to grow throughout the summer and then cut and taken off prior to the land being prepared and sown in August. SHX wildflower meadow is part of the NWT clay land wildflower project. Wildflower meadows do take several years to establish so it may be a while before we see the results of all this work but we hope it will be a lovely area for everyone in the village to enjoy. Thank you to everyone in the wildflower meadow group for all your ideas and help. If you would like to be part of this wildflower meadow group, please email [gill.jinkerson@gmail.com](mailto:gill.jinkerson@gmail.com) we welcome everyone who would like to join.

Gill Jinkerson  
Chair of the Playing Field Committee