**Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 23/04/2024**

Good evening, everyone and welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. As always your Parish Council has been kept busy dealing with issues as they arise which includes checking planning applications and this year there has been 50 on the planning portal for Harling. A number have been for tree works and the remainder have been for extensions and 8 new dwellings and if necessary site visits by the Planning Working Group take place and observations/recommendations are put to the full Parish Council before our comments are sent to Breckland.

**Speed Watch.**

Unfortunately, due to the retirement of the co-ordinator Tony Long and no new volunteers coming forward we no longer have a speed watch and the radar gun and signs etc has been returned to the Police, so a grateful thanks to Tony and the team that worked with him which made it a great success.

**Street Lights.**  The phased upgrade of redundant light fittings to LED,s continues and as the old lamps fail, they take priority for immediate replacement. The energy cost for the 101 street lights the Parish Council own has not increased as our fixed price contract is valid until May this year.

**Memorial Green.**

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank David Boggia for cleaning the War Memorial in time for Remembrance Sunday last year and hopefully David will be able to do the same for us this year, and also for changing the various flags when appropriate.

**Market Street/Church Road**

The Parish Council have had many meetings with Highways regarding the safety of Valentines Corner and have agreed to their recommended solution which involves electronic signage to warn large vehicles from either direction that they may meet on the corner, whilst this will not remove all dangers from the corner it will protect the footpath and bollards outside the bakery. This is a expensive project and is to be funded by a 50/50 Parish partnership, Total cost for this project in excess of £18.000 but thanks to our District Councillors generous offer of funding 25% from his annual County allowance the Parish Council will only have to fund 25%

**Phase 3. Three Squirrels**

The construction works are continuing at quite a pace with many already inhabited and many more sold. The Parish Council have agreed to take on the maintenance and upkeep of the open public spaces and play areas. Our costs for this will be fully covered by funding for 10 years of S106 money from Abel Homes, in addition when the construction of the housing is completed estimated to be in 2025 the ownership of the areas will be transferred to the Parish Council.

**Major Tasks Completed.**

Phase 1, Paved bike park, seating, litter bin and planters created in the corner of Market Square at no cost to the Parish Council, funded by S106 grant and a small grant from the Co-Op. Thank you Holly and Steven for the design work on this and for your continuing work on further enhancement along the front of the Square. Phase 2 complete design and refurbishment on the front of the square which has included new kerbing and pavers, bus shelter, new Parish notice board, new litter bins, 2 large planters with integrated seats and signs for community garden/Poplars play area and the Village Hall. The community garden volunteers will fill the planters funded by a grant they have received for this and will look after the upkeep of them. I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Councillors Steven, Holly and Graeme for the design and management of the scheme and a sincere thanks to Crendon Timber Engineering for the construction and donation of the bus shelter, Abel Homes for donation of Pavers, Cement and Kerbing, David Holden (Holden Plant Hire) for loan of security fencing and Holbrooks for donation of Soil, Hardcore and Ballast.

**Defibrillator**

The Parish Council decided to provide a defibrillator on the southeastern side of the village taking into account the new estates creating a large number of houses in this area. The cost of the defibrillator was £1500, 50% was funded by London Hearts and 50% by the Parish Council. The preferred site was under the porch area at the surgery and in December the partners agreed for it to be installed there, as there was a change in practice management Kate checked in January and the partners again agreed on the basis that there would be no costs and no liability for its maintenance for the surgery. Harling Electrical kindly offered to install and connect it free of charge meaning the only cost to the surgery would be a maximum of £3 per year for the internal light. Once given the all clear from the surgery Kate completed all the necessary paperwork and ordered the defibrillator, however the week of delivery of it I received an email from the surgery informing me that the partners had decided that they would not allow installation as they deemed it unnecessary as there were already 2 in the village. So my thanks to Chris Barker for allowing it to be installed on his building opposite to the surgery entrance and Harling Electrical for the installation.

**Local Council Award Scheme.**

You may remember last year I announced the Parish Council had been awarded the 1st tier of the LCAS Quality Award which confirms that the Parish Council is operating in all matters to a very high standard. Our Clerk Kate has spent almost a year working on achieving the next level and I’m delighted to inform you that the Parish Council has now been awarded the 2nd tier of the LCAS Quality Award which is Silver, only the Gold left to go for now.

**Events.**

During 2023 there were 3 events organised by Kate on behalf of the Parish Council, May the Coronation of King Charles 111, Fireworks display and the Xmas lights switch on. This year’s special event will be the commemoration of D-Day on the recreation ground and there will be the Fireworks display and Xmas lights switch on as usual. Kate has now set up an events group which invites all clubs/organisations to meet informally to share ideas on future events/fund raising etc and continues to meet on a regular basis.

**Action Plan.**

As funds allow, residents meet and greet (early summer), further Council training, information/history board, Chapel refurbishment, traffic gates church road. More allotments on Garboldisham Road.

My thanks to my Council colleagues for their commitment and work on behalf of the Parish during this past year and I would also like to thank our Vice Chairman Holly for the support she has given me this year.

On behalf of the Parish Council a thank you to our District Councillor William Nunn and our County Councillor Steven Askew for the help and advice they have given us. Again on behalf of the Parish Council sincere thanks to our Groundsmen Brett Allan and Rod Plumb for grounds maintenance and keeping the middle of the village tidy. Of course, not forgetting our Clerk, RFO and Proper Officer for the advice and guidance Kate given us all. Every year I say Kate’s work load seems to increase and this year is no exception, Kate continues to fulfil her role in a truly exemplary manner, it is a privilege to work with you Kate so a very sincere thank you from myself and your Parish Councillors and the residents of the Parish.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for allowing me to serve as their Chairman for the past year.

Philip Edge

Chairman

25/04/2023