

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 18TH MAY 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It has been a difficult time since our last meeting in 2019 and Covid has changed the lives of many of us. Some families have lost loved ones and some are still feeling the effects of catching the virus. We must hope that we have turned the corner and can now move on with life.

Your Parish Council has kept working through the pandemic not least learning to deal with on-line meetings. These were very much trial and error to start with but the bonus was the meetings were quicker. Maybe not so much to discuss or maybe not so many side chats,

These last couple of years has made it difficult to progress things as quickly as maybe we would have liked as liaising with MSDC and SCC has been complex.

The village has grown hugely over the last few years with new developments as well as infill build. Regular readers of Telstar will know the problems we have had with MSDC Planning that culminated in a visit to the village from the CEO of MSDC. I must thank our District Councillors for their help in all this. It seemed that the Planning Dept was looking to be more open with us and to look at the overall impact on the village of all development instead of just looking at each individual application piecemeal, however having written to the Planning Dept a couple of weeks ago to ask where we are with any proposal for the A1120/B1115 junction we are still awaiting an answer. Currently there are applications to extend the size of the proposed site opposite Holy Trinity church, Ashes Farm and Diapers Farm awaiting decision and we have no idea when, or if, an application will be submitted for the land behind the allotments. The new developments in the village and surrounding area have put extra traffic on our roads and incidences of speeding appear to on the rise. Our Speedwatch team are out and about and we are currently looking to see what Speed Indicator Devices we can purchase that can be safely moved by our Speedwatch volunteers. SCC has advised that they no longer authorise permanent SID devices so what we get has to be safe for our volunteers to move.

Despite the lack of information coming forward regarding the crossing at the Co-Op it is installed and well used. This crossing was something your Parish Council asked for when the plans to enlarge the shop were submitted and continued to push for. It is there so please use it to cross safely...don't take chances.

The installation of the posts around The Green has had a mixed reaction but they serve the purpose of preventing parking on The Green but still allowing open access for use of The Green by residents. It is the responsibility of your Parish Council to protect The Green not to prevent the parking and that is what the posts achieve.

Your Parish Council, like all of us, will have to be very careful with funds this year. We managed to keep our precept increase to 3% for this financial year and if costs keep increasing, we will have to be extremely careful with spending so may not be able to achieve all we want. With all the development in the village there are funds coming into the parish

via the Community Infrastructure Levy. This fund is levied against developers to make sure that the services and facilities in the village have capacity to keep up with development and to enable sustainable growth but cannot be used for day to day running costs. Clubs and organisations in the village can apply for a grant from the Parish CIL Fund for new equipment, help with build costs or help with a launch of a new project. There is money in the pot so if your club or organisation is looking to expand or needs new equipment do come and talk to us.

Currently there is still a vacancy for a Parish Councillor so if you would like to be involved in shaping your village for the future and have a few hours free a month please consider joining us. You know me always happy to chat.

This year is our Queen's Platinum Jubilee and there are events in the village, so please come along and join in. There is a big picnic on The Green, the Flower Festival, 70 Glorious Years, and a display by Stowupland History Group in the URC Chapel of "70 years in Stowupland". A new bench is to be placed on The Green as well as a tree to celebrate her jubilee. See the display board.

Finally, I want to give a huge thankyou not only to my fellow Parish Councillors, who give their time freely and occasionally take the brickbats from residents, our District and County Councillors for their help and support, and our Parish Clerk Claire who keeps us all on the strait and narrow, but also to the legion of volunteers that keep our village going. From the litter pickers and Speedwatch team to the Telstar team and those that deliver it whatever the weather. Lots of people doing what they can for their village, in their village, is what makes us a community.

Sally Reeves