

Annual Parish Meeting. May 12th 2026

Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council.

I would like to start by marking the death earlier this year of Harry Wiseman who as most of you will know as a local Farmer who had always shown an interest in the village and village life. Harry was a member of the Parish Council and for a number of years was its Chairman, Harry and his wife Deirdre have also played key roles in village life over that time.

We are lucky in this village to have the valuable and varied expertise found in our Parish Councillors, ranging from Toby with his work for the Woodland Trust, Sharon and her financial background, David with his expertise in Insurance and Sally as an independent business owner and partner in a local Farming business. Antonia has built up significant expertise in Parish council matters across a number of Parish councils and Simon comes with a background in business expertise and a varied experience in various local charities. Nicky, our clerk, has proved to be a valuable asset to the Parish Council and brings her own experience of running a successful local business. All members of the Parish Council have played their part and I would like to express my thanks for all their support.

The Parish Council has various responsibilities, and I would think its most important is looking after the interests of the village. To achieve that task it requires the Parish Council to work with others, including those who have provided reports to this meeting. Also we will be wanting to continue to work closely with our Local Parish Church and the Village Hall Committee, these are both valuable assets in the life of the village

The other main link is with our representatives in both the District and County Councils. So I would like to give the thanks of the Parish Council and the Parish to our councillors Bobby Bennet as our County Council rep and to Mike Chester as District Council rep. Their attendance and support at our meetings, particularly those held on a cold and dark winters night in a cold village Hall is very much appreciated.

Of course we are now facing significant change in the Local Government structures that will occur over the next 2 years and this includes changes to our Councillor reps. So the first stage in those changes occurred in last week's election with our County Councillor rep now being Becky Hoppensburger, so we wish the best to Bobby Bennet and again our thanks for her support over the years.

Issues facing the village are sometimes very familiar with traffic being the most consistent. The report from David shows that speeding and lorry traffic problems remain. This is where working with others, either neighbouring Parish councils and sharing our concerns with our Councillor Representatives continues to be essential. As an issue traffic safety in the village is important and we do have some limited monies(originally obtained through grants in Colin's time as chair) and so we would welcome ideas from the Parish on how best to use that money.

The Play area has had some upgrades in the swings and we again we would welcome ideas, particularly from children, on other areas of improvement in the play area that should be considered.

Another issue the Parish council will be monitoring is the potential development of a large Forest city below Lidgate and Wickhambrook encompassing Suffolk and Cambridge farmland.

We have also this past year started to trial out a bi monthly newsletter delivered with the Benifice magazine. The costs of the newsletter includes only the cost of paper and ink and is a savings to the expenditure of the Parish Council where we will continue to try to minimise any significant increase to the village precept.

This will be my final time as Chairman of the Council the election of a new Chairperson will be decided at the meeting following this Annual Parish Meeting.