

Annual Parish Meeting - 13 April 2021: Rattlesden Parish Council 2020-2021 Report

Speeding Vehicles

In response to concerns raised with the Council it has continued to press Suffolk Highways and Suffolk Constabulary for action although the road configuration around and through the village tends to preclude the sort of actions that residents would really want to see such as 20mph limits, speed bumps and the like. That said, the Council is pushing forward with the acquisition of solar-powered speeding devices which, potentially, can be sited at different locations to deter speeding. This might have happened sooner but for a protracted legal and site assessment process via Suffolk Highways and, of course, the pandemic.

Cemetery Green

Some funding was again made available to a resident who kindly volunteered to organise planting on the Green. The result, as evidenced by the amazing display this spring, has been the subject of many favourable comments.

Cemetery

Despite the pandemic and Government warnings of a rise in deaths causing a problem for council cemeteries across the country, it is somewhat reassuring to report that demands upon the Cemetery have been minimal in the last year. Hopefully, that reflects the fact that the impact of coronavirus on the village has been less than might have been anticipated.

447th Bomb Group

The Council has continued to arrange and pay for the cutting of the grass at the Memorial. This has worked well and ensures the Memorial is kept at its best.

Grants

The Council is limited (in law) in the financial support it can offer to local groups, but was able to offer small donations to bodies who work hard for residents - not least, to the Parochial Church Council towards the costs of "Revelations" and towards the maintenance of the Church clock. More significantly this year, a significant grant has been made to the Community Council to fund the grass-cutting at the Playing Field.

Work on Footpaths

The Parish Council has worked repeatedly with Suffolk County Council to deal with footpath issues during the year - blocked and overgrown rights of way, missing footpath signs and more. Not surprisingly, perhaps, they seem to have been used even more in the last year. Thanks are due to Gaye Reid for carrying out the role of Footpaths Officer so conscientiously and efficiently.

Council/Village Assets

Councillors regularly carry out inspections of village assets such as seats, the bottle bank and bus shelters. Last year various repair jobs were identified and duly carried out.

Anti-Social Behaviour

As ever, the Council has had to continue to deal with a small minority of people who engage in anti-social behaviour - from those who drop litter to those who do not clear up after their dogs. Many thanks to Jean Coleman, for her tireless work in tackling the litter

dumped throughout the village. The Council continues to monitor the need for extra bins although it has to be said that the cost of not only acquiring bins but also paying the District Council for their emptying is rising all the time. In an ideal world they would not, perhaps, be needed but overall the price is arguably worth paying to keep the village clean and tidy.

Planning

Even within a small village, planning has seemingly remained a big issue during the pandemic lockdowns as the Council has been consulted on no less than 32 applications during the year. It has to be remembered that the Parish Council is just one of a number of statutory consultees when it comes to planning applications and so its views are, while quite properly taken into account, more often than not overruled by the District Council. At least the Parish Council does get what is called a Community Infrastructure Levy - funding provided directly to the Council as a product of such applications - to invest in local infrastructure. Currently, the Council has received around £14,000 which it plans to use to further enhance local community land and facilities.

Trees

Thanks are due to Carol Williamson for her work as the Council Tree Officer - using her knowledge and experience to advise on appropriate planning applications. She is also proactive in letting the Council know when something needs to be addressed. Her expertise often seems to go unnoticed so it is good to have the opportunity to highlight what a good job she does.

Website

As ever, Parish Council information is readily made available on the village website - please have a look if you have not already done so or are unfamiliar with the facility..

Community Land

Through the generosity of a local landowner, the Council will soon (if all goes well) be taking on the gift of a significant piece of green space. It is early days, as yet. Councillors have considered potential options for its use but if any resident has a particular idea for how it might be used then please get in touch with any councillor or the Clerk.

Wildlife Friendly Village

Following a resident's suggestion the Council is looking into becoming a Wildlife Friendly Village. Cllr Rayner has taken on the task of talking to relevant people to see what might be possible...

Thanks...

Finally, I should offer my thanks, as Chairman, to all other councillors for their hard work on the Council. It is entirely voluntary, and can occupy an amount of their time. This last year has been especially challenging for the Council but it has continued to meet and carry out business very efficiently and effectively albeit on-line. Their personal commitment is really appreciated.

Cllr Kerry Burn
Chairman