

Chairman's Report

As this meeting is a long drawn out double affair, I am going to keep this as brief as possible.

All events that have concerned the Parish Council have been discussed and minuted at the bi monthly meetings and I refer you to these for information of the council's activities in the past 12 months.

We have said good bye to Councillor Claire Adams and hope to welcome John Patrick. John is known to most of you and I think will be a great asset to this team. We have also welcomed Charlotte Stanley to our team and her knowledge of health service and it's workings etc is a valuable asset to us.

The airfield Solar Energy project seems to have hit an hiatus and whilst it has not been cancelled a start date for construction has yet to be announced. Consequently discussions of the division of community payments seem superfluous at this stage.

Lydia and I attended a SALC Conference where the main event was the introduction of the new contractors that Highways Suffolk are using. Time will tell whether they are better than the previous company. My personal reservations are Highways Suffolk are still managing them.

Cloudy IT were at the conference and were going to demonstrate how we can be more efficient with their state of the art IT systems. Sadly Cloudy were late to the conference and then their equipment would not work.

CCLA gave a very good account of themselves and explained how they achieve high rate of interest an how to operate an investment account with them. Following on from this we resolved various issues and are now about to become one of the many councils investing with them.

Lydia and I also attended a meeting in Grundisburgh held by the East Suffolk Planning Alliance. This was an interesting event. I would encourage other councillors to attend. It is enormously helpful to learn how other Parishes manage to achieve better quality developments and better designed homes, industrial units etc. The alliance is hopeful of winning place at planning meetings generally to give the amalgamated view of many smaller parishes. This may well get our voices heard and have planners paying more attention.

In the village we have new residents at White House Farm. Tricia and James Peters are keen to involve themselves although only weekenders. Some of you may remember James as a friend of the previous owner. Daphne Macnicol's house has new owners and once they have finished building work and moved in I think they may well become active members of the village. The housing trust homes have all been taken up. It is such a pity that the new

residents have had so many problems from the siting of these homes and the poor quality of construction. It is good to see some of those residents engaging in bar nights and one lady in particular, Karina (Rose?) Has become a real dynamo getting bookings for the village hall.

The main event to record was the flood on 27th October 2023 as a result of storm Babet. Many properties in the village were rendered uninhabitable by the ingress of 18-24 inches of water. The flooding was not confined to the lower parts of the village. Flooding occurred to properties on high ground too. The worst flooding was in the are of the main road, the lower end of North Green Road and The Street. At the time of writing this several householders are still awaiting repairs to be completed and in some cases for the insurers to come up with figures of compensation. Whilst the storm was a most uncommon event the whole situation was made much worse by the poorly maintained infrastructure of the area - indeed the whole of Was Suffolk Drains had not been maintained, culverts were blocked, ditches were blocked.

Not only did the river rise but huge volumes of water came down North Green Road and Hall Hill. Where they converged they met the overflowing river and huge powerful flows of water were created. It must be recorded that Highways should attend to their business of maintaining drains and culverts and monitoring and resolving blocked ditches with the appropriate land owners.

Local landowners are looking at ways to mitigate any future events of this nature with leaky dams to hold water back locally along with creating water holding areas on higher ground. It is imperative that we keep up our reporting of blocked drains and culverts to highways via their website reporting tool. We should also report unswept galleys alongside roads as this build up all serves to block the drains during heavy rainfall.