

CRINGLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT to the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING for the year 2022-23

The Annual Parish Meeting is part of the process of local accountability. It offers an opportunity for Parishioners to raise matters of concern with the Parish Council. This meeting is not to be confused with the Annual Parish Council Meeting which will be in May this year following the elections. This meeting receives annual reports from the Chair of the Parish Council, St Peter's Church, Cringleford CE VA Primary School and both Norfolk County and South Norfolk District Councillors. Since my report last year, we have had one resignation and welcomed a new co-opted councillor to maintain our full complement of eleven councillors.

Your Parish Council has several committees and a series of advisory working groups. Council meetings, the Planning and Environment Committee and the Personnel Committee have decision-making powers and are held in public. Everyone is most welcome to attend any of these meetings. A summary our committees and groups over the year is presented below with a few highlights from the year.

Committees

Full Council

Council meets monthly normally, except in August, and receives reports and recommendations from its other committees and working groups, plus those from District and County Councillors and the Police. We have recently purchased a wireless microphone system to help with the clarity of our proceedings.

Planning and Environment Committee (PEC)

This committee meets monthly and is the statutory consultative body for considering matters of planning and development in the Parish. We submit official Council comments on planning applications via our Clerk.

Personnel Committee (PC)

This committee deals with confidential staff matters, including appointments. At a minimum it meets annually, but this year it met several times to discuss, among other items, maternity cover for one of our staff. We currently employ ten staff.

Advisory Groups

Community infrastructure Levy (CIL) Group

This group oversees the monies that come to the Parish from this levy. The District Council sets the amount that developers pay towards infrastructure, facilities and services for each new development in the area. The Parish receives 25% of the levy that passes to the District.

Finance Advisory Group (FAG)

The Council receives income from the precept, CIL, commuted sums (allocated to specific developments for maintenance) and grants. This group works diligently to oversee our expenditure and financial compliance, ensuring robust processes are in place, including audits, and makes recommendations to council on investments. It presented a draft annual budget to Council in December. This year it recommended an increase in the precept that was less than inflation by using a subsidy from our reserves.

Recreation and Amenities Advisory Group (RAAG)

This group discusses and provides advice to Council on all matters concerning our facilities including the Parish's recreational spaces and buildings. This year it played a major part in developing our new community centre before transferring responsibility to PEC for planning approval.

Road Safety Group (RSG)

This group was established as a 'task and finish' group to look at ways to improve road safety by developing a strategy for the Parish and so does not meet regularly. Its strategy was published in December 2021 on our website. This year the group were very pleased to be sent plans showing that one of its goals – a crossing adjacent to the bus interchange – would be put in place in the near future. The deployment of our SAM2 safety cameras across the parish has shown that there is very little speeding in the parish.

Highlights

Perhaps the most important development for Cringleford this year is that we now have planning permission for The Jubilee Centre. We worked with Big Sky to put together the final specifications for tendering the works and currently are awaiting bids to build the Centre. We are also in the process of applying for a grant from South Norfolk Council to help with the build. Council will decide in May whether to proceed with the development and, if it goes ahead, it should be completed by summer 2024. It will house a multi-use area the size of two badminton courts, changing facilities for the adjacent playing fields, an additional nursery space for Crackerjacks, plus several electric vehicle charging points.

For the Queen's Green canopy year, Council planted 70 heritage fruit trees at Newfound on Cringleford Heights, around 20 native trees on Roundhouse Park, including a copper beech in memory of the Queen. You will also see that we have started planting The Jubilee Garden on Lobelia Lane which we hope to open in Spring 2024 once the plants have established.

You may also have noticed that The Eastern Daily Press announced funding for 'Cringleford Country Park' as part of its report on a meeting of the Greater Norwich Growth Board. This is an award to help the Parish Council put in place an accessible path and bridge across the Yare. The purchase of the land, however, has not proceeded according to our initial plans since the owner is awaiting the outcome of the local nutrient neutrality scheme required under new regulations from Natural England. We hope to be able to proceed with this project in the next financial year.

Professor Trevor L Wang, CPC Chair, April 2023