

OUTWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT – FINANCIAL YEAR 1.4.2019 TO 31.3.2020

This Annual Report to Councillors and Parishioners is intended to summarise the Council's activities and to provide an insight into future planning. The Report is sub-divided under various headings – as follows: -

(a) Council Meetings

Council meetings have been reasonably well attended by Parish Councillors. Since the Election in 2019 our District/Borough Councillor is Mr H Humphrey and Borough Councillor Mr. Chris Crofts. Both combine Borough Council duties with other elected posts. Both Councillors' have attended as many of our Parish Council meetings as possible. An older member did not re stand for election, **Mr. Peter Cutting** who had a long service with the Council- he was thanked by the Council for his service to the village. Three new members were Elected, Mrs. Jane Sutton had been co-opted previously but was elected by the public, as was Ms Sarah Arden and Mr. Matthew Titmarsh. Sadly, one nominee was not elected but she is kindly carrying on work she had previously started. Attendance by parishioners has remained spasmodic, only on occasions, when issues affecting specific areas of the village are due for discussion, does the number attending rise above 1 or 2. Councillors continue to take this as a compliment, believing that most parishioners are content with the way in which the Council conducts its affairs.

(b) Committees/Representatives on village committees

The eleven members of the Parish Council have specific responsibilities and report in detail at each Council Meeting.

Councillor Tara Rust represented the Council as the Liaison officer **with Beaupre Community Primary School**, she takes an active interest in school affairs providing a detailed report on the school's activities to Council Meetings. **Councillor's John Holland and John Wake** report to the Council on **Cemetery** matters, the Parish Council providing the finance to keep the Cemetery clean and tidy. The Council started a new contract with CGM to cover the work required in April 2019 and they are doing a great job. **Councillor's Paul Brenchley, and Tara Rust** represents the Council on the **Playing Field and Village Hall Committee** and their monthly reports enable Councillors, who are all Trustees of the field, to keep abreast of the ongoing fund-raising activities. **Councillors John Hollands, Dale Boyce, John Watts, Mrs Jill Gooch**, form our **Planning Sub Working Party**, tasked with examining every planning application received from the Borough Council, and making decisions and representations on all planning matters. They are empowered to make decisions in respect of many applications (small extensions, outline planning applications etc) to allow the Clerk to meet Borough Planning deadlines for reply but bring any that may be controversial to the attention of the Full Council before recommendations or representations are made to the Borough Planning Authorities. **Councillors Dale Boyce, John Wake, Sarah Arden and Matt Titmarsh**, form our **Allotment Sub-Working Party** overseeing allocation of tenancies and conducting an annual inspection. The parish is fortunate that all allotments are occupied until October 2020. Mr. Clifton has given up his tenancy on Land in the Common that the Council rent from Mrs. Nicholas. **Councillors Paul Brenchley, John Hollands, Jane Sutton and Sarah Arden** form what is known as our **Village Committee**, they keep an eye out for any road defects, damaged road signs etc, and the general well being of the village. **Finance Committee consists of Councillor's John Wake, Jill Gooch, John Hollands and Fred Keer** whom ensure that Council keeps within the budget. The Council employs a Village Handyperson to keep the village centre clean and our thanks go to Mr M D Ellington who does small tasks when required and keeps the Council informed of any matters they need to know. **Councillor Mrs Jane Sutton** is the Council Police and Speed Watch liaison Officer. A new Working party formed for the Neighbourhood plan, consisting of **Councillors Mr. Fred Keer, Mr. John Watts and Mrs Jill Gooch**.

d) The financial picture

As of 31st March 2020 Council financial holdings were as follows :-

Business Premium Account	£12147.69
Community (Current) Account	£1934.76
Petty Cash	£3.19
Total :-	£14085.64

The end of year figures are slightly higher than this time last year, but still not out of the woods yet so the Precept for 2020/21 has been raised the 10% allowed from the previous year to accommodate the projects proposed for this financial year. Therefore, budgeting and looking at the forecast each month has been necessary. Council is grateful to **Councillor Fred Keer** for ensuring that spending is within the budget.

The Annual Precept for 2019-2020 was £16,129.00. There was a government grant allocated to the Parish of £241.00. This assuring the parishioners that the finance committee with the guidance of the clerk continue to manage the finances efficiently. Parish Council annually pay £250.00 to Borough Council for the maintenance and upkeep of the Community Car Park at Townley Close Surgery, and energy costs that keep rising. The Council is grateful to Mrs Emma Bateman who audited the books with great attention.

e) LDF Site allocations development- Neighbourhood Plan

This year, not much progress was gained.

f) Outwell Parish Council WebSite

This has become popular with visits. In turn the Council has been contacted in this manner and been informed of mistakes and old notices. It's a necessary part of the Transparency plan that every Town and Parish Council must have in place to publish their finances and assets. The link is www.outwellparishcouncil.co.uk .

g) Highway Issues.

Parish Council have constantly been in contact with NCC highways due to the potholes that have appeared in the village and re- occur. The other issue is speeding in the village. In 2017 a new group was formed in the village called Upwell and Outwell Neighbourhood Watch. These volunteers have now become a Speed Watch Team whom regular are out on the roads in Outwell, Upwell, Three Holes. PC Lee Anderton is our Police Liaison Officer who monthly updates Council with Crime news and figures locally in the area. Parish Council are currently negotiating with NCC highways to make safer crossings on the A1122 and A1101. There is hope from proposed developments in the Parish there will be money available to pay for these. Local MP Ms Elizabeth Truss is being involved along with NCC Highways.

h) Amenities in the Village

The Village of Outwell is a busy village with various shops, Public house, post office, hairdressers, Methodist Chapel and St. Clement's Church, Garages, and several businesses. The Village Hall and Playing field is popular with it being run by a management team and they have plans to extend the building. Parish Council endeavours to ensure that the Parishioners enjoy living in the community and their needs are looked after. There is a spirit in the village that when events are put on they are usually well attended. Council wants to ensure that all these amenities thrive, and the growth of the village is not to great that the infrastructure cannot be sustained. The Council in July 2019 moved their meetings from St. Andrew's Church to the Crown Lodge meeting room. It was an economic move.

i) Social media

The Council are finding other ways to communicate with the local Parish. There are three Outwell Sites that are full of local information, these are used by the Council to give information to the Parishioners on Social media.

j) New Cemetery Proposal

This proposal is very new currently and therefore lots of information is required before going ahead. If Council can, they will endeavour to provide burial places in the village when the current cemetery is full, which although there are only 4plots available, there are few reserved. Again, this project has not moved much in the last year.

5th May 2020..... Parish Clerk

NB. If the Parish Council approves this Report at the A.G.M. on 5.5.20 it is proposed that it is published on the WebSite.