

BLAKENEY PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT - 2012

The Past Year – Much of what your Parish Council has achieved during the past year has been written up in the monthly reports in the Glaven Valley Newsletter, but I would like to draw attention to a few items of interest.

- In May of last year there were elections for parish councils. Blakeney were fortunate in that we had many applicants (11) but as this number matched exactly the number of places on the council, the current members were duly deemed to have been elected unopposed.
- Victoria Dewson, Alban Donohoe, Margaret Benson and Louise Leonard, recently undertook the training module to allow us to use the Power of Well-being the remaining members having undertaken this sometime ago. This strangely named power has allowed us to go ahead with the re-furbishment of the vacant War Memorial Cottage on New Road. Work on this is progressing well and will be finished soon.
- Your Council applied to register the footpath from Saxlingham Road to Wiveton Road as a public right of way, as parishioners had used it for as long as can be remembered. Although initially refused, due to some objections, we appealed and won the appeal, and the registration should go through later this year. This will allow the footpath to be opened again.
- A public meeting was held to discuss the future of the flood siren. There was a unanimous feeling not to retain it at the Parish Council’s expense but, at a subsequent meeting, the Council decided to ask the County Council to leave the siren in position until a clearer picture emerged as to what is happening along the rest of the coast.
- The Council agreed last summer to allow Circus Ferrel to hold an event on the village playing field. This was a great success with many primary schools attending workshops to learn about circus life and work, followed by some public performances.
- The Council purchased a salt/grit spreader for use by volunteers when icy conditions occur. This is one that can be towed behind a vehicle which will make salt spreading much quicker than with the previous hand towed one. We are all very grateful to Willie Weston for his time and effort clearing the ice in the recent cold spell. The Council has also bought a salt/grit bin to be installed in Oddfellows Field where there is a particularly steep length of road, dangerous in icy weather.
- As in previous years, the Council arranged for Christmas lights to be erected, but this year they were extended to include the Quay, as well as the tree on The Pastures.
- Again, as previously, the Council, with an enormous amount of help by many people in the village, held the Bonfire and Fireworks event in October, raising the magnificent sum of £1,930 for the Blakeney Pre-school.
- As you have seen this evening, £400 has been given to thirteen local groups to help with their funding. This is one way in which the Council feels it can help local people, who are themselves doing so much for the people of the village.

The Year Ahead

- Affordable housing for local people is still high on our agenda, and we are doing everything that we can to achieve this. Our hope is that some of the affordable houses in the Langham Road development will be for local people, and it is our aim to build two more bungalows on the Memorial Cottages land, subject, of course, to obtaining planning permission. In the longer term, we will look into the possibility of an ‘exceptions policy’ development elsewhere on the edge of the village.
- We continue to fight Natural England’s proposals to have potential exclusion zones (Reference Areas) in Blakeney Harbour.
- The Bus Shelter – drawings and specifications have been prepared for the conversion of the old brick bus shelter near the village hall into a unisex/disabled public toilet and parish council store, leaving a small part of it still as a shelter on the side facing the road. The plans are shown on our display board in the hall this evening. Tenders for this work will be invited shortly.
- The Carnser car park – We are concerned about the erosion of the bank supporting the Carnser car park near to the Quay and are looking, with the National Trust, into ways in which this can be prevented.
- The Dinghy Park – The dinghy park committee, on which the Parish Council is represented, is continually improving the park with additional tie-down chains for the boats, and is now exploring the possibility of obtaining grants for dredging the channel where it is becoming dangerously narrow.
- Much is being done by the Diamond Jubilee Committee, on which the Council is also represented, under Margaret Benson’s chairmanship, to ensure a really memorable weekend for the village to enjoy, and I am deeply grateful to them for all of their hard work.
- The County Council has told us that they will no longer maintain the footpath through Little Butts and so the Parish Council has agreed to take this on. It is important that all these paths are kept in use.

Thanks

I would like to express my great thanks to Tracey, our Clerk, for all the hard work she puts in on behalf of the Parish Council. It is no easy task, and we value the skill and experience that she devotes to it.

I would also like to thank all the members of the Council who put in a great deal of time to dealing with Parish matters. Not only are there the twelve monthly meetings, but there are twelve committees meeting at other times, and some become involved, in the interest of the village, in attending meetings of outside bodies such as the Police, the Blakeney Area Advisory Group, Wells Area Partnership, Marine Management Organisation, the National Trust and the like. A lot of time and effort is put in by them on our behalf.