

## **BLAKENEY PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT 2015**

### **THE PAST YEAR**

You might be interested to know that the Parish Council is 120 years old, having had its first meeting on 4th December 1894. Three new Councillors have joined during the year, Leanne Welch, Rosemary Thew and Edward Hackford. We have had another busy year and hope we have taken some worthwhile actions, some of which are listed below.

### **Recreation Area**

One of our main achievements, and certainly the most visible, is the installation of the recreation area for older children and teenagers on the playing field. Largely funded as an offshoot of the development on Langham Road, together with other grants, this is almost complete although it does still await the construction of the BMX track. This recreation area has been something that the Council has wished to do for many years in order to provide a play area for older children, and we are very pleased that it is at last coming about.

### **Coronation Lane Car Park**

The conversion of the public part of this car park into a pay and display, although not initially universally popular, is proving of great benefit to the village, raising a considerable sum. Indeed for part of the winter it has raised more money than the Carnser car park.

### **Broadband and Mobile Phones**

High speed broadband is now available in the village and to receive it you need to contact your Internet Service Provider. We have been less successful in improving the mobile phone signal but if you are with Vodafone, you will find the signal improved later this year when further booster aerials have been fitted around the village. I would like to thank all those who have been willing to have these installed as they will benefit their neighbours as well as themselves.

### **Parking**

We are in discussions with Norfolk County Council over the occasional use of the school playing field on Langham Road as a temporary car park. This would be for special events such as the rural sports in the summer, when parking becomes a real problem.

### **Trees**

We have had all the trees on parish council property surveyed for condition and are having work carried out where recommended to make them safer. The tree by the public toilets near the Carnser that was killed by the recent flood event has been taken down and will be replaced in due course.

## **Road Safety**

We have had installed a vehicular activated sign on Langham Road where traffic speeding down the hill has been a problem. This was done in conjunction with NCC Highways on a partnership funding scheme where the cost is shared between us. We are discussing with Highways the provision of a footpath at the top of the hill on Morston Road where the public footpath has a very dangerous staggered crossing over the Coast Road, but this is proving complicated because of uncertainty about the ownership of the land affected.

## **Other Matters**

There are many, many, other matters that have been dealt with during the year ranging from commemorative seats (over 40 in the village!), to dog bins (7), the bottle and paper banks and the annual Bonfire and Fireworks event held last October. As always, the last was a great success only slightly spoiled by the downpour at the end, and I would like to thank all those who helped with it, without whom it just would not happen.

## **THE YEAR AHEAD**

### **Affordable Housing**

This is a subject always at the top of our minds. The Langham Road development has provided 12 affordable homes, 9 of them rented, and we are told by NNDC that of the 9 available for rent 6 have been let to people with a local connection, the remainder, presumably, going to people in urgent need from elsewhere in the NNDC area. However, the Council says that there are still 83 households with a local connection on their waiting list for properties in Blakeney and the surrounding parishes, and so the need for affordable housing in the area is still very great. We will be having discussions with our surrounding parishes to see what can be done to help satisfy this need, in the hope of finding a site for an 'exceptions policy' development where the houses have to be let to local people.

### **Election**

The present Council stands down in May when there is an election for a new Council. I am hoping that many of your present Council will stand again, but it would be good for the village if sufficient people came forward for there to be an election. There are 11 places to fill and if any of you would like to join please have a word with Tracey Bayfield, our Clerk, who will explain what has to be done.

### **Thanks**

I should like to thank all of your present councillors for the great amount of time and effort that they have put in during the last year. Also, especially, to thank Tracey for the amount of work that she does on our behalf, often involving evening meetings when I am sure that she would be happy to be at home! Lastly, to thank all of you who are involved in one way or another with organising and taking part in events which help to make our village such a vibrant community, said by the Press to be the best place to live!