

BRETtenham and KILVERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

2022 – 2023

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is with great sadness that we report that our long-standing Chairman Tony Poulter OBE passed away on Friday 3 March.

Councillor Poulter was, in many ways, the “Father of the Parish Council”. Before 2000, Brettenham was a very small Parish and, therefore, only merited a Parish ‘Meeting’. Tony was involved as a Councillor with the Parish Meeting soon after moving to the area following his retirement from the Royal Navy.

Following the construction of new houses at Arlington Way, on the western edge of the Parish, the size of the Parish (ie number of parishioners) increased to warrant it becoming a full Parish Council. However, Arlington Way was adjacent to the eastern boundary of Thetford and Thetford Town Council argued for a boundary change to make Arlington Way a part of Thetford. A full boundary review was conducted by Breckland District Council, a process in which Tony was actively involved, and it was argued that the boundary should remain unchanged. This campaign was successful and Arlington Way was retained within the Parish of Brettenham.

It was then determined to combine Brettenham with Kilverstone to become, as it is today, the Parish of Brettenham & Kilverstone. Tony then became Chairman of this new Parish Council, and remained so until his passing on 3 March, a period of over 20 years. Tony’s contribution to the Parish and the whole local community during his more than 20 years of service is immeasurable.

Introduction

The Parish Council has continued to hold its meetings in the Kilverstone Estate Office by kind permission of Lord Fisher. Full meetings have been held at roughly 2 month intervals with additional ‘Provisional’ meetings interspersed as required for any urgent business.

The Council continued to work with 7 councillors until the 3 March and, with the imminence of the local elections, it was decided that there was no need to co-opt a new councillor to replace Councillor Poulter. At the recent local elections, the Council had the required 7 nominations for Councillor, so the election for Brettenham & Kilverstone was uncontested and we continue our work with 7 councillors. We welcome John Skirving, our new councillor.

Precept

The Council continues to be conscious of the need to increase its income to cover running costs and contingencies. However, cognisant of the recent increased demands on household budgets, the Parish Council decided **not** to increase its Precept for this financial year (2023/24). Parishioners will have seen this reflected in their recent Council Tax bills.

Greater Thetford Partnership

The Partnership Board continues to support the programme to build 5,000 new homes and supporting infrastructure to the Greater Thetford area and regenerate the Thetford, Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone areas. The overall programme would include a Local Enterprise Zone which would bring prosperity to the area, create jobs locally, and prevent Thetford becoming a dormitory town. Unfortunately, development of the Enterprise Zone has stalled due to issues surrounding acquisition of the land from its current owners.

The GTP manager is responsible for the delivery plan and lobbying and liaising with partners, authorities and stakeholders and is partially funded by the Parish. Ongoing projects are the development of Thetford Station, including a new footbridge and possible expansion of the car park, options for improvements to the A11 junctions and roundabouts (which are undergoing in-depth modelling) increased health facilities, which include additional facilities at the Healthy Living Centre (HLC) and an extension to its car park. Capital works at the HLC are due to commence this spring. Land to build a school for Kings Fleet has been acquired.

As well as the A11 junctions, there are issues with the Fiveways roundabout, which has 2 short listed design options (if awarded funding), as well as the A11/A14 junction (J38) which does not allow traffic to route from the East to North and vice versa. Unfortunately, these are not seen as a priority by National Highways even though both are important for traffic flow to and from the Thetford area. Capacity Enhancement at the Ely Rail Junction looks like it may be dropped as a priority due to predicted costs.

The board meetings still have a large emphasis on Thetford business. In the past year for various reasons only 3 meetings took place. The GTP Manager leaves his post on 4 May and the last Manager's monthly board update was December & January 2022/23. Although he will be replaced, as yet there has been no update on a replacement or if the format of the Board will change.

Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP)

In the short term, the JNP will be amended to reflect the boundary change between Croxton and Thetford and this will be implemented by Croxton PC. In the longer term, there will need to be a more comprehensive amendment to the JNP to reflect the requirements of the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF) and the revised Breckland Local plan. The Parish Council is already in discussion with planning specialists to advise on this work.

Kilverstone Alms House

Progress has been made this year on improving our management of the two Almshouses. The tenancy agreements have all been updated and Emergency contact details collected. Outgoings this year have been minimal and mainly for maintenance and repair. This includes the repair of 3 faulty copper pipes in Bungalow 2. The heating in bungalow 2 still proves to be an issue and we are actively seeking to rectify this. We are working to obtain a retrospective building certificate for the renovations of Bungalow 2 as this was overlooked at the time of completion. Going forward a thorough inspection of the two bungalows will be

carried out to identify any issues that have arisen with the decor or fabric of the buildings as both tenants have been in place for a number of years now.

The Trust finances are in a healthy state and, as Trustees, the Parish Council looks forward to working with tenants, both present and future, to ensure we provide the best possible accommodation to suit their needs.

Community Safety

Crime in the Parish still remains at a very low level with no serious crimes reported. The main issues remain speeding and illegal off road motorbike scrambling, and the number of accidents at the junction of the A1066 and C149. NCC highways have indicated that no action will be taken over the accidents as they do not meet their criteria of seriousness. A traffic survey had been carried out on the Rushford Road which indicated a 35% of motorists were breaking the speed limit by more than 5mph. The Parish were offered the loan of a Speed Indicator Device (SAM2) from Thetford Town Council but practicalities over its management and insurance have so far meant it has not been installed. Although we had the possibility of using covert cameras to identify off road illegal scrambling, permission was not forthcoming to use it on the Suffolk Wildlife Trust land.

The Parish is represented when possible at the Safer Thetford Action Group (STAG) meeting. The police will no longer be providing local crime data directly to the Parish Newsletter although the information can be obtained from the police national website www.police.uk/pu/your-area/norfolk-constabulary. The Parish now has a dedicated Beat Manager. The idea being that the Parish will be able to contact them with any local concerns (such as ASB/drugs/speeding etc), events where they'd like a Police presence, and Council meetings which they would be able to occasionally attend better to understand local concerns.

Peddars Way

In 2021 it was reported that the Peddars Way path, north of the Blackwater Bridge over the Little Ouse River, had a low level electric (otter) fence on the public right of way. The electric fence was considered a danger to walkers, particularly children and dogs, and the PC asked Norfolk County Council (NCC) to have it removed from the public footpath.

NCC conducted a risk assessment and determined that the electric fencing was not illegal. The PC disagreed, arguing that it was dangerous and that several reports of shocks to dogs have been received. The electric fencing was then inspected again any by the NCC who, once again, concluded that the fence was compliant. The matter remains unresolved.

Village Signs

In early 2022 it was noted that the village signs for Rushford and Kilverstone were in urgent need of refurbishment. An artist based in Norfolk, Fiona Davies, was contacted in order to undertake the work and thanks the generous contribution from Shadwell, who paid half of the cost, the village signs were restored to their former glory.

Riverside Path

The Riverside Path from Arlington Way to Nun's Bridges continues to be maintained, part-funded in conjunction with the BTO, and is a very well utilised facility allowing easy pedestrian access to the Nun's Bridges area and into Thetford Town.

Arlington Way Public Open Space (POS)

The Arlington Way POS is maintained by a private contractor funded by the Parish Council from its Precept. The POS was used for a local community celebration for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and, more recently, for a celebration of King Charles III's Coronation.

MONEY MATTERS

FY 2022/23 Accounts

	£		£
Opening balance	£ 20,351.07		
Receipts		Payments	
Precept	6,000.00	PC Expenses (travel)	21.60
Support Grant	-	Jubilee Beacon	588.00
VAT Reclaim (see note 1)	-	Subscriptions	232.40
Interest (to Mar 23)*	21.87	Insurance	558.10
BTO Refund	150.00	Grounds Maintenance	261.00
POS Rental	100.00	Stationery/Ink	52.48
	200.00	Clerk Pay, Expenses and Allowances	1,674.47
Breckland flagpole Grant		Jubilee Expenses	365.64
		Printing	65.00
		Postage	7.92
		Internal Auditor Fee	40.00
Total Receipts	<u>6,471.87</u>	Total Payments	<u>3,866.61</u> ***
In Year Net Surplus	2,605.26 *		
B/F	20,351.07		
Total	<u>22,956.33</u>		
Carried Forward	22,956.33		

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	<u>2022</u>		<u>2023</u>
	£		£
	8,769.24	Bank	
	11,581.83	Treasurers Account	11,352.63 *
	20,351.07	Business Instant Access Account	11,603.70 **
			22,956.33
Assets	£ 10,688.64		

* as of 31.03.23

** as of 31.03.23

*** £500 contribution towards GTP manager not claimed

Note 1: VAT that was received in 2022 was mistakenly applied to receipts in 2021/22. VAT reclaimed for 2022/23 will be received in YE 2023/24 and will be accounted for appropriately next year.

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the PC at 31 March 2023 and reflects its receipts and payments during the year. It is clear that it will be necessary to increase reserves to be ready to support the building of community facilities in the SUE development in Kilverstone.

Notes to the Accounts

- Assets** Notice boards (and with drop boxes), Village signs, bench, grit bin, office equipment for the Clerk, Riverside Path furniture and donated Public Open Space at Arlington

Way - £10,688 (Based on the purchase value) – to be reviewed in July 2023 after the purchase of the flag poles and the Jubilee beacon.

2. **Borrowings** The PC has no borrowings
3. **Earmarked Reserves** Following completion of the Riverside Walk project and legal work associated with the transfer of the Trust from CoopHomes, The PC had earmarked reserves of £15,500 for at the end of FY 22/23:
 - £8,000 for Community Facilities Development
 - £6,500 for POS Maintenance
 - £1,000 Contingency
4. **Tenancies** The PC has no tenancies
5. **Section 137 Payments** The PC made no S137 payments in FY 22/23.
6. **Agency Work** The PC undertook no agency work
7. **Contingent Liabilities** The PC's accounts for the year end 31 March 2023 do not include a provision for any such contingency.

A contingent loss will be accrued in the financial statements where it is probable that a future event will confirm a material loss which can be estimated with reasonable accuracy at a date when the financial statements are approved.

Where a material contingent loss is not accrued, perhaps because it cannot be accurately estimated or because the event is not considered sufficiently certain, it is disclosed in a note to the accounts.
8. **Advertising and Publicity** No costs were incurred for advertising and publicity during the year
9. **Trust Funds** The PC is the trustee for the Kilverstone Alms house Trust.
10. **Commitments** The PC has and maintains the POS at Arlington Way under a Unilateral Agreement (similar to a Section 106 agreement).

PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Chairman
M Engwell OBE

Responsible Finance Officer
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