**Parish Council Villager articles 2021**

**Jan to March 2021 (3 month edition due to Covid delivery restrictions)**

**Your Village Needs YOU**!

Have you always wanted to help out in our village, but fear you don’t have the time to commit to being a Councillor?

If so, Trowse Parish Council are currently reviewing their emergency planning and preparedness and are seeking volunteers for a number of different roles and scenarios. If you own/operate of any of the following and would like to volunteer to be placed on our emergency planning assessment, please get in touch:

4 x 4 Vehicle; Tractor; Van; Chainsaw; Portable Generator; Inflatable Boat; Portable Heater; Camp Equipment such as Stoves, Camp-beds, Sleeping bags, Cooking equipment

We would also like to hear from anyone who would be able to offer their time and skills in the following:

First Aid/First Responder; Visiting & assisting vulnerable residents; Manual/Heavy lifting; Minor gardening and Lawn-cutting

If you would like to volunteer please contact Trowse Parish Council via email trowsepc@outlook.com

**What’s been happening on the Parish Council?**

Following the resignation of Christopher (Chris) Bowers the Councillor vacancy has been filled, by Rebecca (Becky) Long

In welcoming Becky to the Parish Council the Chairman, James Smerdon, would also like to take this opportunity to thank Chris for the amazing amount of work he achieved whilst a Councillor. “Chris is extremely passionate about the village and I know he will continue to work tirelessly for this community”. On a personal note “I will miss his common sense, honesty and can do attitude

**Parish Council meetings**

We can’t promise the excitement of Handforth Parish Council, but this is a flavour of what been happening, here in Trowse. If you’d like to join a meeting please contact the Clerk.

**Full Council meetings feedback**

Agenda items discussed included:

- Feedback from sub committees - see updates below.

- Updates from County and District Councillors - Parking, White Horse Lane Busgate, Flood review, Street lights conversion to LED, Tree planting, Census, Covid & testing, Council tax increase. May elections (postal votes can be registered until 20th April). From May Council meetings will cease being ‘virtual’

- Planning - Responses as a consultee on planning applications. There will be a woodland path between the new school and the Dell allotments. Development of the Deal ground is being discussed, we have registered an interest.

- Neighbourhood Plan – Around 150 survey responses were received. The steering group has met and 2 sub groups formed to consider the responses. Policies on vegetation and encouraging new species will be considered, also creating a village trail. Heritage assets are to be identified.

- Finances – bank balance updates provided and payment schedules agreed. Subscription to the ‘Allotment Association’ renewed.

- Common – The delivery of incorrect picnic benches has caused a delay with replacement benches expected in March. Quotes are being sought to provide electricity.

- Highways - parking matters were discussed and agreed. Final plan to be provided to SNDC.

- Trowse Heritage – Historic information has been provided and will be considered with a view to deciding how best it can be exhibited.

- Emergency planning – Clerk is working on a Village resilience plan. Volunteers will be sought to assist.

**Finance Sub Committee feedback**

Recent meetings have considered the funding of all the projects of necessity and those to enhance the village, the most obvious being the refurbishment of the allotments and continuing care of many trees around the village. It is considered that we are financially able to fulfil projected commitments, and also to reduce the annual precept by a very significant amount. This follows last year’s decision not to seek an increase, and shows our intent to help parishioners in these very difficult times.

**Personnel & Communications sub committee feedback**

January saw Sarah Hunts’ return to assist our Clerk with specific project work. She is particularly interested in finding out as much information as possible about the history of the common to see how control has been exercised in the past (between South Norfolk District and the Parish Council), with a view to see how it could be exercised in the future. Kate continues to work on our Neighbourhood plan activities. Ted liaises with both and maintains regular contact, with Councillor Paul Greenizan in support (acting as Councillor ‘point of contact’).

Website ‘traffic’ information is now available, consideration will be given as to how best it can be used. Villager articles will be added to our website.

**Open Spaces and Property sub Committee feedback**

Agenda items for discussion included; Allotments; Cemetery; Flooding; The Common; General maintenance (including voluntary works scheme); Street signage & Highways.

Works have been approved, and are ongoing in the cemetery, including perimeter fencing and repairs to the compound gates. Quotes for further works are awaited. Upgraded access to the common is nearing completion, with a new safety gate (opposite the old school) and disabled access ramp by the bus shelter. Tree work was agreed. School safety scheme is being installed. All Dell allotments are now allocated; work continues at Block Hill allotments including consequential redesign, vacant plots will then be available for allocation. Talking of allotments, the article below provides some additional information and history.

**Allotments in Trowse Newton**

The distribution of land to the people for personal cultivation has existed since Saxon times. However, the ‘allotment’ that we are familiar with came after the Common Closure acts in the 18 and 19th centuries when the rapid expansion of the industrial economy resulted in acute food shortages.

Councils were eventually given the mandate to supply local land for the purpose of personal cultivation of food crops. The amount of land rented was based on the assumed area that enabled a family of four to grow sufficient food for a year.

The demand for land increased significantly during the two world wars and has fluctuated since although recently the interest in ‘growing one’s own food‘ has increased again.

The two allotment sites in Trowse Newton are The Dell to the East of White Horse Lane and at Block Hill just East of Devon Way. The Council has taken on the task of rejuvenation of both sites, following historical neglect. The Dell has been largely renovated and some of the existing allotments have been subdivided to allow more people to enjoy gardening. Most people are no longer using a plot to grow all that is necessary for a family of four but to enjoy gardening as a hobby.

The next and greater task is to renovate Block Hill which will require removal of asbestos and large quantities of accumulated rubbish.

The expansion of the village community by more than 100 homes means that there will be increased demand for sites and there is not much more land available. This means we will have to consider ongoing reduction of allotment sizes in some areas.

The Trowse Council rents this land and rental for an allotment is taken to help to cover the costs, the supply of water to the sites and the use of skips each season to remove rubbish.

The Open Spaces Committee of the Parish Council is given the responsibility of managing the two sites and to ensure that all allotments are being used throughout the seasons for cultivation.

No resident of the community that is on a waiting list for an allotment should find a site that is overgrown and obviously not cultivated.

It is our responsibility to support the ongoing enthusiasm of the residents of Trowse for ‘Growing things ‘. As a Parish Council we are members of an Allotment association.

Duncan Price

Chair of Open Spaces Committee

**May 2021 edition**

**Your Village Needs YOU**!

As mentioned last month the Parish Council’s is reviewing its emergency planning and preparedness. If you own/operate of any of the following:

4 x 4 Vehicle – Tractor – Van – Chainsaw – Portable Generator– Inflatable Boat  – Portable Heater –Camp Equipment such as Stoves, Camp-beds, Sleeping bags, Cooking equipment

and would like to volunteer to be placed on our emergency planning assessment please get in touch. We’d also like to hear from anyone who would be able to offer their time and skills in:

First Aid/First Responder; Visiting & assisting vulnerable residents; Manual/Heavy lifting; Minor gardening and Lawn-cutting

If you’re interested in volunteering please contact Trowse Parish Council via email trowsepc@outlook.com

**Feedback from April 2021 meetings**

* Public Forum

As usual our main meeting was attended by County and District Councillors who provided local updates including Covid, the ongoing flood review; our bus gate (which is delayed due to overhead power issues); Trowse parking schemes; a new recycling centre at Harford Bridge (which will include a ‘re-use’ shop and ‘swap & save’ initiative) is under construction; Norwich ‘Park & Ride’ will become ‘tap & go’; ‘Beryl Bikes’ bike share scheme finds electric scooters are more popular than bikes. A missing 30 mph sign (missing from the village for some time) was raised and will be looked in to.

A member of the public asked if there was any news about the future use of the YMCA building. Nothing has been advised yet to the Parish Council.

* Planning

There was thought to be some confusion regarding the application for removal of the conifers around the sub-station on the common (which are intended to be replace by a hedge). This will be looked in to.

Street lighting requirement, as the housing development continues, up from the school, to be established.

* Neighbourhood plan (NP)

A constructive meeting took place at the end of March, attended by members of the NP local group and the Whitlingham Trust. It is hoped that the easing of lockdown restrictions will enable increased activity going forward.

* Finance

Scheduled payments were agreed, as was the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment from SNDC. Internal Auditors agreed; the end of year accounts preparation in progress. Update on bank balances, and status of accounts provided.

* Open Spaces

‘Phase 1’ work on Block Hill allotments is complete, boundary and internal fencing was discussed and agreed. Consideration regarding the registration of Trowse common is delayed due to Covid access restrictions to the Unilever archive (where the required records are retained). The provision of electricity to the common remains ongoing. Councillor Long volunteered to undertake weekly inspections of the play equipment on the Common. A report from the drainage board regarding safety fencing and equipment between the dyke and Common is awaited. Tree works will be starting over coming days on the Common and Block Hill. Consideration for a ‘book swap’ facility will be referred to the next Open Spaces Sub Committee for further consideration. A suggestion that recycle bins are used, in the vicinity of the new café will be discussed with the proprietors. Following recent burglaries, the matter of CCTV was discussed. The police have been approached and we are awaiting information from them.

* Sub Committees

A review of the composition of Sub Committees is underway. Changes of members will be advised and implemented from next month.

If you are interested in knowing more, please contact our Clerk. By e-mail trowsepc@outlook.com or phone 07899798853

If you have any feedback to the Parish Council articles please let us know.