

Reports APM 2012

[items 6&7]

Good evening Madam Chairman, Parish Councillors, Nick & Residents,

This is my 3rd County Council annual report, which has seen a challenging year however there have been some excellent success stories considering the budget restraints. I am going to highlight some general achievements and then what we have achieved locally here in Scarning & the surrounding area.

- savings of £60 million through different ways of delivering services
- there was no increase on the council tax like the previous year and we are hoping for no rise next year
- the county council decided to invest £15m in our Broadband Bid which the Government has agreed to match fund which should result in Norfolk have 99% broadband coverage the majority being super fast
- unlike other counties Norfolk has decided to keep all our libraries open and there are no plans to close any in the future
- a leg of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race was held in Norfolk, the nearest point to us was Litcham
- a £10m grant was invested in new fire appliances/fire engines and it has been agreed that no fire station will close
- with the help of 16,000 signatures collected the final part of the A11 will be duelled
- £8 million has been allocated to a new Dementia Care Home
- Norfolk has remained the safest county in the country and we look ahead to the new Police and Crime Commissioner Election on November 15th

Locally

- our new recycling centre opened in December whilst it had a few teething problems it has been welcomed by the majority of residents
- the Riverside area has now been tidied up after long negotiations and new tenants are being sought for the shop units and the apartments

- highways tours have taken place throughout the year and whenever a sign, pothole or resurfacing has needed to be looked at, these have been attended to although some will always slip through the net
- our Highway Rangers continue to visit the parish
- your Chairman and myself have been in talks with the relevant bus companies regarding additional bus services and we will keep going until we get a result
- at long last the perils on Draytonhall Lane have been addressed and with the road activated safety sign, the resurfacing and new signage has made a significant difference although I do acknowledge it is not perfect but at least it is an improvement and we are getting there

Thank you for listening and thank you for your continued support it is an absolute pleasure working with you and we can look ahead to another fruitful year including celebrating HM Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics.

Cllr Diana Irving

On behalf of Elizabeth and I, I would like to present our annual report from Breckland. Last May, Elizabeth & I were very proud to be elected as your Breckland Councillors; we cannot believe that it has been eleven months; we had a large number of new members who have all settled into their new roles. A special mention needs to go to Stuart Green, who was Chairman of Breckland Youth Council and at 18 & 2 months old became the youngest District Councillor in the country representing my former seat of Dereham Humbletoft.

Again it has been a challenging year which has seen many changes. Last April has seen Breckland join forces with South Holland District Council, we still work as two separate councils however we share the management and the Chief Executive and has resulted in each council saving £500,000 in its first year. We are also hoping to join forces with Great Yarmouth Borough Council later next month, this has been recognised as a ground breaking initiative.

- the council tax has remained frozen and remains the lowest District/Borough/City precept in the country
- on March 21st the council launched its Older People's Forum which offers an opportunity for anyone over the age of 50 to make their views known on the services which matter to them
- in June, Breckland launched 'Breckland Key Select' which is a computer system designed for anyone on the Housing Register to bid for up to two properties a week in their chosen area which they are eligible for. So far we have had over 10,000 bids; it has made applicants realise that unfortunately there aren't that many properties available which has prompted them looking at alternative housing options such as the private rented sector. Elected Members are also mindful that social housing is a precious resource and that housing should go to those who are in the most housing need
- over £30,000 has been given out to support various projects throughout parishes in Breckland and it is important that parishes are not overlooked in favour of the towns. We were delighted that Scarning School were successful in their bid which will benefit the whole community
- locally Aaron Protheroe from Scarning was selected to be on the new Youth Council which has 14 new members who are all so enthusiastic and really want to make a difference and listen to what the young people would like to see. They are very keen to do some intergenerational work, going into care homes to play games on a Wii, bingo, do some singing and also teach their elders some computer skills. They feel it is really important to break the public perception that young people want to make a difference and they don't just sit back and let it happen.
- at long last it appears that there has been progress with the Scarning Watermeadow so we can move forward with what we want to achieve.
- as a council we have been providing computer courses for older people and also providing holiday activities for the young people

Again we would both like to thank the Parish Council and all residents for their help and support and we look forward to working with you in 2012/13.

Cllr Diana Irving & Elizabeth Gould

Report APM 2012 item 9

Scarning Water Meadow Committee Report -2011/12

Introduction.

The Scarning Water Meadow Committee was formed in May 2011 by the Scarning Parish Council. The Committee comprised five Parish Councillors, the Manager of Wensum Valley Trust and a public advisory member.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) is to monitor and maintain all aspects of Water Meadow working with other organisations.

The year 2011/12 was frustrating as well as challenging.

The first meeting of the SWMC was held in May 2011 on the Water Meadow walking the area and making note of damage, responsibilities and possible development.

In June our next meeting we looked at three options to manage the Water Meadow.

- 1. Maintain existing arrangements - Parish Council only leases the two play areas. Breckland District Council continues to maintain the rest.*
- 2. Scarning Parish Council takes all responsibility.*
- 3. Develop a Partnership Approach with BDC and other Agencies. The existing lease would remain but a Joint Management Committee would oversee the SWM. The JMC would be BDC, SPC and WVT.*

It was agreed to go with Option 3 at the time.

On 25th August 2012 a meeting was held at Breckland District Council Offices between members of SWMC, WVT and BDC.

The meeting was to discuss the possibility of the Parish Council leasing the SWM but BDC remain responsible for the maintenance of paths, bridges, fences, trees and grass cutting.

The benefit of this arrangement would be that the Parish Council would not have to obtain permission on a piecemeal arrangement to carry out work to the land

Breckland District Council agreed to carry this forward by instructing a surveyor to measure the land and prepare a plan.

The plan would be emailed to SPC for approval and then BDC would instruct their solicitors to draw up a lease.

In anticipation of the lease the SWMC identified the priority work required and by whom.

The priorities being:

- a. Area known as Lucy's Meadow - 2 scrapes to be formed and a Notice board identifying species and work carried out.*
- b. Blackthorn Drive Pond - Fell small trees, strim and general cleaning by Probation Service.*
- c. Middle section fields - Identify contractor to cut area.*

In November the Parish Council received the proposed plan of the SWM from BDC. The Plan was amended slightly and returned to BDC in December 2011.

In January the amended plan was returned by BDC to the Parish Council.

On 11th January 2012 a formal letter was sent to BDC stating SPC accepted the Area amended on the map plan and requested that a formal lease be drawn up.

BDC has instructed their solicitors to draw up a lease and on 30th March 2012 have sent a letter authorising a licence for SPC to undertake maintenance on the SWM. This letter with certain work restriction has yet to be approved by SPC and returned to BDC.

Work completed on the Scarning Water Meadow.

General maintenance including:

- 1. Litter removed and disposed of*
- 2. Himalayan Balsam removed from along the stream.*
- 3. Lucy's Meadow - Strimming brambles and main area. Removing willow trees and willow off shoots. Burning dead wood Repairing a broken fence line. Cutting about 50% of the self contained wet meadow.*
- 4. Dividing the SWM into 6 areas and naming these areas.: A. Playing Field .B. Barn Owl Flight .C. Warblers Way.D Ellis Comer.E Lucy's Meadow. F .Lucy 's Meadow North.*
- 5. Notice boards. - Local artists produced drawings/paintings for the notice board allocated for Lucy's Meadow. Dimensions and printer were identified for production of the picture which would be fixed to the notice board*

Work not completed on the Scarning Water Meadow.

- 1. Blackthorn Pond - On requesting permission from BDC to work round the pond it came to light that the pond was not registered as their property. The Builders also dispute the ownership but are still investigating.*
- 2. Cutting of the areas now known as Warblers Way and Barn Owl Flight. A contractor and monies were obtained but BDC refused permission.*
- 3. In November 2012 BDC decided not to authorise any work to be carried out on the SWM until the new plans/maps were approved*

Conclusion.

In January 2012 it is announced that the Wensum Valley Trust was going into hibernation from the 1st April 2012. This meant that Steve Dalliston (Manager of Wensum Valley Trust) would have his employment terminated

Steve Dalliston through his leadership, knowledge and enthusiasm has been the main stay in delivering a volunteer work party on the SWM. We thank him for all his contribution and wish him well for the future. Steve has asked to stay in the link to the meadow to assist in any way he can.

A meeting was held on 9th Feb 2012 by the SWMC to discuss the implications of the WVT going into hibernation.

It is agreed to set up a new conservation group known as the Scarning Conservation Group (SCG). The group would work closely with the Parish Council and other conservation groups.