**The Chairs Report**

I would like to begin by thanking my fellow councillors for their help and continued support. It’s been two years since I was elected chair, you could have picked an easier period for me to begin my tenure!

Since our last Annual Parish Meeting Councillor Janice Rose and long-standing Councillor Pat Floyd sadly gave up their positions on the council. I’m sure you all join me in thanking them for their hard work and dedication over the years. We also welcomed our Parish clerk Dan. So, this is the first Annual Meeting for both the Clerk and myself.

Having joined the Parish Council a few years ago I can say that at times it feels like a thankless task and you wonder why you ever said yes! However, it has been a privilege to serve the village which I am lucky enough to call home. I know we don’t always get it right and I know we can’t always achieve what everyone wants of us. We may not always agree. But I can promise that we try.

The last year in particular has brought its challenges with the pandemic. I’d like to thank all those in the village that in a time of need were able to help their neighbours with shopping, prescriptions and other tasks that helped to keep our village safe and record some of the lowest numbers in the country.

Whilst some decided to ignore government guidelines and use second homes and holiday homes on the whole it was a credit to the many second home owners that complied and stayed away from the village they also love. It’s been great to see many of you return over the last few weeks.

The level of vaccines in North Norfolk remains higher than the national average, great news for us all.

Financially the Parish Council remains healthy, the year ending April 2021 will run at a deficit, this has largely been due to unexpected large expenditure such as new lamp posts. For future years the Parish Council has changed how we budget to ensure all our assets can be maintained over their expected lifespan. Bank balances remain high due to the government grant and the monies donated by the HDPF committee. Our current balance excluding this is above the recommended 12 months income and allows us scope for improvements around the village.

The Deep History coast was installed with the starting point in Weybourne and the new picnic area. After years of trying, NNDC with help from Sarah Butikofer and Karen Ward, will be installing compostable toilets at the beach car park.

We continue to highlight the state of the beach car park and the unadopted road to the west. Budgets for all local authorities are extremely stretched but we will continue work with NNDC for improvements. As far as I am aware the revetment is still proposed to be moved and replaced in the near future.

Work on the March Pond ceased over a year ago when the environment agency found water voles. Since then, and despite continued effort, we have been unable to get any response to what will be done and when. This work is also important to prevent flooding to properties in the village.

The planning application for the earthworks at the beach was withdrawn and it is my understanding this will now be removed by the landowner.

Windfarms, love them or loath them wind farms are part of the governments bid to cut emissions. With more installations due to make landfall at Weybourne the Parish Council will continue to push for an Offshore Ring Main. For any cables that make land in the village we will do our upmost to protect the environment and to ensure any disruption is kept to a minimum. Many thanks to Val for all she does in regards to this.

I may be cynical but the companies installing and running these wind farms have shareholders to keep happy. Their profits are in the billions, I worry this greed for profits is often put before the environmental and social impact of the damage they cause. Sadly, these wealthy entities seem to be able to ride roughshod with little chance of us making an impact.

We are currently looking at the future of the Harry Dawson Playing Field and will be looking for grants and fundraising to give this village amenity a new lease of life. Our thanks once again go to the members of the HDPF committee that spent years supporting it and fundraising for it. Particular thanks go to Heather Deakin who assisted in a smooth transition.

The allotments continue to thrive, through rain and sun it’s always good to see so many residents working hard at them.

Thank you to the Village Hall Management Committee. It’s been a hard year for them but they've managed to not only upkeep but improve this valuable community asset. We need to ensure they get all the support we can manage.

Clive Hay-Smith and Paul Middleton have been extremely kind and generous in helping to keep some of our hedgerows cut back. We pass on our thanks to both.

From the land to the sea our environment is precious to us, we are looking at areas of the village where we can plant more trees and allow wildflowers to flourish. We could all do our bit in our gardens to encourage birds and insects playing our part to protect and enhance the environment in which we live. We have introduced lighting stipulations on all planning applications and are always looking for new ways to cut detrimental effects of global warming.

Planning applications come through the Parish Council where we can comment and pass on our views, the Parish Council do not have the final say. Whilst we try to make these views known its always disappointing when our views are ignored. Residents are encouraged use the NNDC website to make their own comment on applications for or against!

Traffic and parking in the village continue to cause issues. Speeding through the village and down Beach Lane cause a real danger to pedestrians. As part of the Parish Partnership Scheme, we have had white lines installed along Sheringham Road and The Street to assist pedestrians. The West side of Church Street is to have a white line painted from the junction to past the dropped kerb to stop parking one the corner. As a small village and with the number of cars on the road growing parking will always be an issue. There seems very little we can do to address it.

Housing, as with many coastal areas the number of second homes and holiday lets has and will continue to divide the village. Many second home owners are active members of the community and have really made this a home away from home. Holiday rental properties bring in much needed tourism income to the area on which many many jobs depend. Of course, when the numbers of second homes and holiday homes is too high the impact on the social fabric of the village is enormous. For many months of the year the properties can remain empty, this affects all the things that bring people to our village. Village amenities suffer in the out of season periods such as the shop and pub. The village hall has less residents to attend or organise its events, the community fund has less volunteers and the church a dwindling congregation. Transport out of season becomes less frequent which has a serious effect on residents of all ages. Children attending after school groups find themselves unable to get home.

When a property registers as a business the Parish Council no longer receives anything from that property meaning the burden of the precept falls on less residents costing them more each year.

We are in desperate need of housing to help redress this balance, open market housing will simply be available for anyone, there would be nothing to stop it becoming a second home. Nor would it be affordable to the vast majority of local families.

At present if you're on £10 per hour you’d need more than a 15 times mortgage to afford an average house in Weybourne. So next time you go to the Doctors think about who cleans it. When you need domestic help, look at how much they get and ask yourself where they are going to live. When there is no one to work the lower paid jobs because they can’t afford to live here, we will all suffer the consequence.

If families can’t afford to live here and there are no prospects for young people to stay the village will in time suffer. As will the local schools and colleges.

Generations of families whose predecessors’ names are inscribed in the church yard and the war memorial, gone because they cannot afford to live here anymore.

A community led housing project is the only way we can help our local families. With the advent of Airbnb and others more landlords are turning to holiday lets than private long-term renting. Short term lets give none of the security a young family desperately seeks.

This isn’t an us and them thing, it’s aimed at no individuals. Many who own properties here are now friends of mine, many contribute to village. It’s a fact of life and it’s something that we need to address before we all suffer. When government ministers own second homes in beauty spots it’s not likely to come from the top.

I would like to thank Sarah Butikofer for her help at both County and District Council levels. Thanks to Karen Ward who sadly has stepped down as our District Councillor. We hope her successor will be equally as passionate about our village and the surrounding areas.

It’s been a long time since we had representation by the police at our meetings, however I would like to pass on our thanks for the hard work they and all our emergency services do in keeping us safe, especially during the pandemic.

Please remember we are here to help. None of us get paid to be a parish councillor. None of us are professional politicians or experts in every field of village life. We all put ourselves forward to try to keep Weybourne the special place it is to live.

In closing and on a more personal note to you all, in a world where you can be anything, be kind.

No one knows what someone else is going through. You’ll be surprised what a smile can do.