

Walberswick Parish Council (WPC)

Report to Walberswick APM - May 2023

I am pleased to be able to report another productive year for WPC and I'm very happy that we have still been able to move quite a few items along, despite distractions like Eurolink and Sizewell(!) which are being reported on separately.

So what has happened since we last met? Well, the Council has set its budget for the 23/24 tax year and we were very proud to be able to hold the precept (again) completely flat year on year, despite the inflation all around us. We have also had a smooth year end accounts-wise so far and continue to get clean reports from internal and external auditors. In this regard, I would like to thank our extremely professional and capable Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer who have now worked for the WPC for 4 years. All the details of the Council budget, meetings and decisions can be found on our website at: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-parish-council/>

One of the big areas of future focus for the Council continues to be the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), of which you will hear more later on in the meeting from Rebecca.

We are fortunate to have a number of advisory groups working with the Parish Council, including the Scroll Advisory Group, and the Speed Watch team (who have produced their first ever report for this meeting) all of whom I would like to thank for their input and advice. Our most active advisory group continues to be the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and we remain very indebted as a Council and a village to them for the excellent work they do in assessing the many planning applications we receive. Our hope is that the NDP, once approved, will make it much less likely that East Suffolk District Council planners will be able to ignore the arguments put forward by PAG and WPC that seek to limit overdevelopment in our village.

Many of you will remember that last year I reported on the removal of both the large and small Pirate ships which comprehensively failed their last ROSPA safety assessment. This time last year we were uncertain how and when we would be able to replace the ships given that it would take several years to save the funds. It was therefore genuinely heart-warming when James & Maggie Cochrane quietly stepped forward and offered to fully fund the (bigger and better) replacement Pirate Ship that is now installed.

WPC also purchased (partly with grant support courtesy of our District & County Councillors) two much needed new noticeboards to replace the existing one on Stocks Green. One will be dedicated to use by the Parish Council (and will be lockable for the first time) and the other will be for general use and is dedicated to the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, as this was the rationale for obtaining the grant funding.

Many of you will be aware that May 2023 is the month of the four-yearly election cycle for all seven of the Walberswick Parish Councillors. Two of our existing Councillors – Jane Sutherland-Rogers & Vanessa Tucker took the opportunity to stand down and one new Councillor, Peter Watson stood up. All other Councillors chose to continue to serve our community and I/we are indebted to all of them for doing so. The Parish Council therefore had six candidates for seven

posts, so all candidates were automatically elected in an “uncontested ballot” but make no mistake, they are all now the democratically elected representatives for Walberswick Parish for the next four years.

That leaves us with one Councillor post to fill and during this year we hope to be able to “co-opt” someone to that position – if anyone has any interest in finding out more about the work of the Council and may be interested in joining us, please talk to either myself or the Clerk.

In the meantime please join me in thanking both Jane and Vanessa for all their help and service to the Council in recent years along with welcoming Peter to our team and thanking my other fellow councillors: Josie Bassinette, Esme Richardson, Lee Sutton, Rebecca Whiting and Peter Watson for all they do on a purely voluntary basis for the village

Andrew Lewis

Chair, Walberswick Parish Council