

# Brandon Parva, Coston, Runhall and Welborne Parish Council

## Chairman's Report April 2016

### Elections

At the elections in May, five members of the previous Parish Council were re-elected. The new Council invited residents to stand for co-option and we were fortunate that Stephanie Austin, who had played a major role in producing the Parish Plan, offered her services and was co-opted on to the council. Later in the year, Carolyn Bailey from Coston was also co-opted.

Although the parish is very small, with only around 300 residents, we are very fortunate that there have always been residents willing to join the Parish Council. We now have, for the first time for many years, at least one councillor from each village in the parish.

### Thanks

I want to thank my six fellow Parish Councillors for volunteering their services. I hope that the other residents in the Parish appreciate the commitment of the time, effort and thought that the councillors put into the work of the Parish Council. Their work is not just about attending meetings and making, not necessarily popular, decisions. In between meetings, there is frequent communication between us and our clerk, councillors attend events on behalf of the council and attend training courses.

We are very fortunate in our small parish that many other people get involved in helping us in some way:

- Thank you to Jill Craig for her continuing work as coordinator of our parish fuel oil bulk buying scheme.
- Thank you to Brian and Margot Hancock for volunteering to take over the role of litter wardens in Welborne after Paul and Pauline Munt moved away. Thanks also to our other litter wardens Coralie Meadows (Brandon Parva) and Mark Gill and family (Coston and Runhall). It is very disappointing that so much litter is deposited in our villages but our litter wardens keep on top of it and keep our villages looking nice.
- During the year we were able to extend direct deliveries of our newsletter to all households in Brandon Parva, Coston and Runhall as well as Welborne. So, thank you to all the volunteers who distribute our newsletter to all households in the parish, especially Carolyn Bailey (Coston), Stephanie Austin (Brandon Parva), Clare Kay and Liz Holmes (Runhall). If anyone else would be willing to help with deliveries, please let me know.

Finally, as always, I want to thank Bev Long who has been parish clerk for over 20 years. The Council was very pleased that Bev was awarded the Norfolk Small Council Clerk of the Year Award 2015 in recognition of her services to the Council. Congratulations Bev!

### What the Parish Council did in 2015

- The Council addressed all the short term recommendations in the Parish Plan. A major focus was on parish footpaths. We invited Ken Hawkins from the Rambler's Association to a meeting of the Council, at which several members of the public highlighted various problems with footpaths. Following the meetings and the action the Parish Council took, we have had no further reports of problems.

- We convened our fifth Annual Parish Meeting at which Inspector Lou Provart from Norfolk Police talked about policing in our rural area of Norfolk. I am pleased that the Annual Parish Meeting is now established as a well-attended annual event at which we also hear from organisations in and around the parish.
- The Council awarded grants to Runhall PCC £100, Runhall Play Area £282, Brandon Parva PCC £120, Welborne Village Hall £100, Group News £10, Miscellanea £10.
- We continued to produce a newsletter after each meeting of the council. The newsletters are the Council's main way of keeping residents informed, not only about what the council is doing, but also passing on public service information from other councils.
- We dealt with the theft, for the second time, of the salt bin on long slope down Church Road in Brandon Parva.
- Councillors met our County Council Highways Engineer to make sure he was aware of a number of highways issues. Later in the year, he helped us by sorting out the flooding on Church Road, Welborne.
- On our behalf, Bev Log updated the Parish 'Welcome Pack' for new residents.
- We responded to a number of planning applications.

### **What the Parish Council did not manage to do in 2015**

It is only right to balance our successes with what we did not manage to achieve:

- We did not manage to set up a Community Transport scheme for the parish so we have abandoned the idea for now. In the meantime, we will follow up alternative ways of providing public transport to and from our villages.
- The volunteer posts of Footpath Warden and Tree Warden remain vacant.

I would encourage residents to consider offering to help us with these roles.

### **Planning**

Planning decisions are made by South Norfolk Council. However, the Parish Council is consulted on every planning application in the parish and we have the opportunity to give our views.

We try very hard to focus our responses to planning applications on 'planning' issues. But it is not always easy to separate strictly planning issues from people's emotional responses to some planning applications, especially where they are retrospective.

### **Money**

We still have very little money in reserve because, until 2012, the council had not increased the precept for many years. Since then, we have increased the precept by a small amount each year, including 2015.

We will, of course, only spend money when we have to and try to be creative in getting value for money.

### **The future**

Our Parish Plan, published in spring 2015, will continue to provide a basis for the council's work over the next few years.

The parish council will continue to act on behalf of all residents of our four villages. The councillors will, I am sure, do their best for the parish although, inevitably, not everyone will agree with everything that the council does.

Mike Webb  
 Chairman  
 Brandon Parva, Coston, Runhall and Welborne Parish Council  
 10 April 2016