**Great Ellingham Parish Council - Chairman’s Report**

16th April 2014

I would like to start with a few words of thanks.

First, to the members of this Parish Council who have given up their time and energy not only in attending PC meetings but in performing their various particular offices, which often involve attending other meetings and resolving villagers’ issues.

Second, to Bill Smith, District Councillor, who has attended a majority of the meetings to keep us informed of the various goings on at Breckland Council and offering his support and wisdom which have proved very helpful.

Third, to the various officials of the village groups represented here this evening, first for giving up their time and second for the very interesting reports they are about to deliver.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our Clerk, Liz Ground, who has worked tirelessly and most effectively.

In May, Nicky Perkins was co-opted onto the PC and has proved to be an excellent addition to the team

Regrettably, Bob Cook & Bernard Ashe have found it necessary to resign their positions on the council. I would like to thank them both, on behalf of the Parish Council and myself as chairman, for their contributions to the council and to village life generally.

During the last 12 months the PC has been consulted on a number of planning applications. In the majority of cases the PC has raised no objections; however, where a proposed development was outside the agreed development area; seemed likely to create a safety issue or impinged too greatly upon a neighbour’s property or amenity, the PC has raised an objection.

In no particular order the PC has achieved the following:

**Highways**

The PC has kept a diligent eye on the village’s roads, pavements & verges. Unfortunately they have all taken quite a beating over the year due mainly to the weather but also due to the reckless driving of agricultural & commercial vehicle drivers. The PC has made representations to the usual suspects and will continue so to do.

The flooding problem at the Church Street / Attleborough Road junction was finally sorted after many attempts.

**New Build Project**

The New Build Project is being lead by a sub-committee of the Recreation Centre committee. However, due to its need to raise over one million pounds to stand any chance of affording a new centre, capable of meeting the needs of the village and able to abide by the numerous rules and regulations to which such a building would be subject, the sub-committee approached the PC to seek its agreement to be the lead vehicle for a Community Right to Build (CRTB) development.

In essence such a development would allow the village to buy land, at a reduced price, from a local farmer and sell it to a developer for the purpose of building an agreed number & style of houses. The PC would gain from the difference in the purchase price of the land and its sales price to the developer. Such a process would only go ahead if the village voted positively in a referendum. Just to complicate matters, three generous local landowners have offered land, so a pre-referendum, referendum will be necessary for the village to decide which of the three pieces of land, if any, it would prefer to be developed.

There is presently a hiatus in the project as the Chairperson & Treasurer of the New Build committee resigned recently but replacements are being sought – any volunteers should approach the Chairman of the Recreation Committee.

I would like to thank three people with regard to this project. First, Ann Milner, a stalwart of the village who has worked tirelessly, and in the face of some criticism, on this project. Second & third, Matt Wood & Sheila Moss-King, who have contributed their time & professionalism, mostly without charge, to the project.

Let’s hope that a new chairperson & treasurer can be found soon so that this project can continue.

**Church Clock**

The church clock, which was installed as a memorial to the 1st World War, has been repaired. The PC and the War Memorials Trust shared the cost of the repairs. The memorial will be re-dedicated by the Bishop of Thetford on Sunday 11th May.

**The Crown**

The PC succeeded in having The Crown public house listed as an Asset of Community Value, which meant it could not be sold as anything but a public house without the owners having to offer it to the village first. Fortunately, The Crown was bought by a local business man and is presently being refurbished in readiness of its re-opening as a ‘local with good food’ sometime in late May / early June.

**School Crossing**

Regrettably Jo, our Lollipop Lady, left her post (lollipop) recently. Norfolk County Council is, at the time of writing, still seeking a replacement. We all know how dangerous the junction of the Hingham & Attleborough/Watton roads is so we hope a new Lollipop person or people can be found soon. A job share would be considered.

Independent of the vacancy, the Parish Council will investigate a proposal to apply to the NCC for a controlled crossing (Zebra) to be installed.

**Main-line Sewerage**

Anglia Water has launched a project to install a main-line sewerage system to that part of the village, which doesn’t enjoy this amenity. The project is due to break ground in May and will take approximately 36 weeks to be completed. The PC has supported the project team in communicating to villagers and will continue to act as a conduit for information & guidance. All available, useful information is being posted on the village website, including the details of local builders who would be interested in quoting for the work to link households to the main-line sewerage system.

**Improvements to Village Amenities**

* **New Notice Board** – the PC arranged and paid for a new notice board to be installed on the Pyghtle. This was provided by Mr Bob Smith, Church Lane and the PC is grateful for his services.
* **New Picnic Table** – the PC arranged and paid for a new picnic table to be installed on the Pyghtle. It is capable of seating four people plus four persons in wheelchairs. It is constructed of recycled material. The PC thanks Liz Ground, Clerk for storing the bench until her installation team was available, whom the PC also thanks.
* **Removal of old amenities** – the old notice board; tree seat and picnic table will be removed shortly.

**West Carr & environs – merger with Gt Ellingham**

In March, the Chairman wrote to all households in the Burgh and Haverscroft Ward, within the civil parish of Attleborough – this is better known as West Carr Road; Wroo Road, Swangey Lane & the southern end of Long Street. 35 residences in total. The letter sought views upon the idea of these households being supported by GEPC rather than Attleborough Town Council. Should 18 or more households agree to the change, Cllr. Bill Smith will approach Breckland District Council to arrange the handover.

**Grants to Village Groups**

The PC maintained its policy of supporting Village Groups with the emphasis upon one-off purchases rather than on-going running costs. With the assistance of the Rix Petroleum Consortium fund, the PC assisted: The Recreation Centre New Build Project £1,500; The PCC £500; Deopham War Memorial £50; Church Clock Repairs £340 and Picnic Table & seating £496

**Gt Ellingham website**

The PC would like to thank Steve Moore-Vale for his work as webmaster of the GE website. We are progressively using it as our main means of communicating with villagers. On it you will find all the material provided by Anglia Water regarding the main-line sewerage project; information about the New Build project; minutes of PC meetings; etc.

**Village Christmas Tree**

It has become a tradition for a large Christmas Tree to be installed on the green at the top of Chequers Lane. This is largely due to the efforts of Charles Mason and we are grateful to him.

**On-going Issues**

GE is still plagued by inconsiderate parishioners & visitors who litter & fail to pick up their dog’s mess. The PC has pursued resolutions to these problems continually throughout the year and will continue so to do, with the help of all responsible parishioners, who we ask to report such incidents. The PC has sought the help of the Dog Warden who has and will make frequent visits to the village.

The problem of pollution in the ditch at the Long Street end of Penhill Road continues to defeat the PC’s attempts at finding a resolution. The complexities of ownership; responsibility & politics have all conspired to frustrate us. It is to be hoped that the introduction of main-line sewerage will resolve the pollution, if not the ineffectiveness of the ditch as a flowing water channel. This will, of course, only be the case if the properties on the north side of Penhill Road connect to the main-line system. The PC encourages them so to do as, following the installation of the system, the quality of run-off from any remaining septic tanks will be re-checked and any property falling short of the required standards will be required to resolve the problem.

**Precept**

…and all of this for £6,424 or approx. £17 per Band D residence!

Thank you for your attention.