

## Henley Parish Council

Chairman's Report May 15

Firstly may I thank the current councillors for their support during these past 12 mths, it is always difficult to volunteer your own time especially when all of us sit on other committees within the village and also our ever increasing work demands. My I also thank Mike Briggs for his support and efforts over the past years. Mike has decided not to stand for re-election

May I also personally thank our parish clerk Rod Caird who once again has maintained the Parish administration to his normal very high standard throughout the past 12 months. Rod has given the village good clear communication through our email system, web-site and local magazine.

Looking back as a parish we have had some success and areas were we need to improve..

We are really pleased that after several failed attempts we have found a suitable spot for our community bottle bank. It has certainly been well used since its arrival. Thankyou to Ivan & Jim for working on the site. Also the trustees of the community centre for the approval & location.

The issues with parking around the Church seem to be resolved with the new single white line in Church lane. Thankyou to the PCC for their support and hopefully the problem is now in the past.

We continue as a parish council to focus on key issues within the village:-

Broadband in Henley Square has been very frustrating for the PC to try and help improve. We have continued to voice our concerns to Suffolk Broadband and are pleased they are now on a priority list depending on future site surveys, but our hands are very much tied with the bigger plans of BT and their future commercial role out. As 2017/18 has been mentioned we as a PC have approved to work alongside an independent provider using fibre optic from the Community Centre and then sent to various receivers close to the Square. We hope to have some survey news soon to share with the residents of the square and surrounding areas.

School parking is still a major concern & danger to the public. We have received some communication from MSDC regarding the interest from the school at looking at another access route to the community centre. This is good news but could be years in the making as a number of land owners need to be involved and the usual funding issues. The communication from the school is still fragile but we are always trying to look at a short & long term solution. As mentioned before unfortunately it sadly will take a serious incident to bring all parties together and resolve. With the recent excellent Ofsted report and the relaxed catchment rule changes we may be dealing with more traffic entering into the village, so we need as a PC to push all the options available to us to the school & Mid Suffolk District on a regular basis.

Public transport will always be a conversional & frustrating topic as we are not in full control. We were pleased that Suffolk County Council added a few extra services on a trial basis but really frustrated that the timings of the new service were always going fail and it was not a surprise when they were removed due to the lack of public use. We will try to review and put pressure back onto the transport council to improve the service in the village.

Another ongoing area that we talk about a lot but really never move forward to a satisfactory conclusion is vehicle speeds on the two main roads in the village and the square. These will still be debated regularly and hopefully resolved eventually, but until you get the backing and support from other effected parties or a serious accident occurs then we as a council can only be du-diligent with our actions. It is interesting that we have seen more of a Police presence recently checking and issuing speed enforcement notices. Also the proposed changes to actual speed limits requests might be of some benefit soon. We await some feedback.

The village is suffering from being an 'aging' community which is common in many towns & villages around the country. The village will clearly need an injection of energy in the future as it has enjoyed over the past 80 years. New housing will certainly help, and the council has agreed in principle that if the current village planning restrictions are relaxed then we would support any future development but only if it includes a high mixture of starter & affordable housing of up to a maximum of 30 dwellings – we need to have control with any form of new development within our boundaries. This injection would clearly benefit the community in many ways, but we also need to be mindful of the effect it could have on transport & services.

The council also shows its disappointment with the no forward movement of a village shop at 'Fiveways and the closure again of the 'Crosskeys' public house.

May I thank in advance the new parish council for their future commitment - We will continue to work on our 5 year strategy plan within the areas of - Transport, Communication, Leisure, Environment & Housing and also provide our residents with clear communication and issued raised.

Kevin Griggs

Chairman Henley Parish Council