



BURSTON AND SHIMPLING PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2017-18

THIS year has been a year during which there has been major disruption of the village of Burston due to the installation of a new sewer, and a growing likelihood that there will be further development in our Parish as a result of the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan. There has also been a 'Governance Review' during which South Norfolk were considering totally changing the nature of many Parish Councils.

Throughout the year the Council has provided the necessary services to maintain our villages. The Council has had regular meetings, and has done all the things that a Parish Council usually does, but which are only really noticed when they are not done. This has been achieved 'within budget', and in spite of the amount of funding provided by South Norfolk being substantially reduced for the coming year we have managed to prepare a budget that only increases the tax on a Band D house by £1 per year.

We started the year having set a new budget, and at our meetings we have considered many planning applications for developments within the parish. We have liaised with representatives of the Norfolk Highways department, and our meetings have led to various improvements and repairs which otherwise might not have been done. A lot of this good work has been undone by Anglian Water, but we have been applying pressure to them to restore the village of Burston to its original condition before they leave. We have made efforts to ensure that our footpath network is accessible at all times, and that the paths are signposted appropriately. We have liaised with local landowners, and in many cases they have been able to help us.

During the year we have maintained the playing field, having the grass cut by contractors, having the equipment inspected on a weekly basis to spot any safety issues before they become serious, and having a RoSPA inspector carry out an annual inspection. We have maintained the churchyard in Shimpling, and contributed to the maintenance of the churchyard in Burston. We have trimmed hedges, organised a litter-pick, and liaised closely with the Unite union regarding The Rally. We have organised the Don Swanton Award which will be presented this evening.

Councillors have been involved in preliminary meetings regarding a Neighbourhood Plan for Diss and the surrounding parishes, and also regarding the Governance Review being carried out by South Norfolk Council.

All of this does not happen on its own, and I am very grateful to all who have helped in any way.

I must thank Ann Baker, our Clerk, for all the work that she does of an administrative nature. My thanks also to Alison Wakeham who is an excellent and very supportive Vice-Chair, and does a lot of work on planning, and on the IT side of the Parish. Christine Stevens does work that is very much appreciated in connection with footpaths, and is the Editor and Production Manager of our excellent Parish magazine – The Planet. Tom Grieve also deserves special thanks for all his work on ‘events’ and on the Don Swanton Award. Jim Rudd has assumed the responsibility of liaising with Highways, and has been instrumental in the establishment of a new ‘Speedwatch’ group, which we hope will reduce the number of vehicles speeding through our villages. Lindsey Bilston has been very supportive members of Council, and has made valuable contributions in many areas.

During the year Piers Bilston had to stand down, and we thank him for his service. We were able to co-opt Keith Cowley onto the Council, and he is proving to be a very useful councillor, having assumed responsibility for the Playing Field.

In addition to my thanks to all of the councillors, I must express gratitude to all of those who help the villages and the community in any way. ForFarmers contribute behind the scenes to many village events, and also pay for Church Green to be mowed, and also arrange for The Planet to be printed. Sir Rupert Mann helps in many ways, and is always willing to co-operate. Jamie Churchard works hard as our village caretaker in spite of the challenges that he has faced this year.

Many other villagers ‘do their bit’ to help keep our Parish a pleasant place to live, and my thanks goes to them all.

And as we move into the next year, we will keep up all of the ‘regular tasks’ as well as continuing to play a leading role in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Nigel Frankland
Chairman