

Chairman's Report

The PC continues to undertake its regular and diverse work on behalf of parishioners including – managing the defibrillators in the two villages, reporting potholes and other problems with the roads, providing a Christmas tree on Cole Green BSP, cutting grass verges and overseeing the local Speedwatch group. Following the resignation of Diane Smith as clerk last year, I'm pleased to report that John Douglass has taken up the post with dedication, attention to detail and with, I think, some relish! Diane's shoes were hard to fill, but John has done a great job so far, and I'm looking forward to working with him in the future.

After the resignation of Harvey Bamford, Alexander Bills expressed a desire to join the PC so he was duly co-opted at the May meeting, thereby reducing the average age of the PC even further!

The following officers were approved at the same meeting
Footpath warden and Emergency officer – Peter Hesketh
Tree warden – John Pheby
RFO – Holly Chaplin
and I was re-elected as Chairman of the PC.

The early summer was blighted by the very sad death of a guest at the Community House. Apparently she collapsed and, despite the presence of three doctors and the attendance of the Air Ambulance, she could not be saved.

On a different note, our defibrillator was out of order for some months as the East of England Ambulance Service were not able to source a battery for the device. However, this situation has now been resolved and a system of monthly checks on the machines has now been instituted. There have also been two training days to explain the use of the devices. These days were very well attended and elicited very positive reactions. Thanks are due to Cllr Robin Lock and the clerk John Douglass for their help in organizing all of this.

At a planning meeting in September the proposed Solar Farm off Bakers Rd was granted planning permission despite a vigorous and long-running campaign by the PC and others on behalf of the majority of residents who had objected to the development. Our thanks go to all who contributed to this campaign.

As well as the regular work of the PC, there has been progress on the Local Development Code with a survey of the local residents being undertaken by Cllr Hannah Rumsey with the help of Diane Smith, and two exhibitions of the results being very well attended and producing very interesting reactions. Cllr Rumsey has also been very active in canvassing opinions about a replacement village sign and also in reporting local potholes and flooding in and around Belchamp Otten.

In addition to taking on responsibility for the finances of the PC, Cllr Holly Chaplin has also taken over as the chair of the Playing Field Management Committee and is actively engaged in streamlining the relationship between the PFMC and the PC with a view to making the decision-making process more efficient.

The PC is pleased to say that BDC has come up with Section 106 funding which was used to resurface the tennis courts. They are looking splendid and now that longer and milder days are here I would like to remind everyone that the courts are available to all the residents of the Parishes.

I must mention Cllr Ruth Carter who kindly donated a much more up to date computer to replace our old out-moded machine, thereby easing the job of our hard-working clerk!

Thanks are due to our litter-pickers Mr Fred Eady and Mrs Angela Acton for their contribution to keeping our villages looking beautiful, not forgetting Fred's outstanding efforts with Betsy keeping the green ship-shape, and also to Cllr Dominic Curran who has taken on the task of co-ordinating our Speedwatch team. I should also thank Cllr Robin Lock and his elves for organizing and decorating the annual Christmas Tree on the green at BSP.

Thanks also to our representatives, Iona Parker from BDC and Peter Schwier from ECC for continuing to take an active interest in our affairs and keeping us informed of developments in the outside world.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the PC for all their hard work on our behalf and apologise if I have inadvertently left anyone out. A lot of what we do is behind the scenes and not particularly obvious, but on behalf of all our parishioners I would like to thank my colleagues for everything they do for us.

David McKee (chairman)