

Fornham St Martin - cum - St Genevieve Parish Council Chairman's Report for year ending 2016

The Parish Council

The West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) has dominated Parish Council business and our thoughts and efforts throughout the year. I personally have been to numerous meetings with the Chairmen of Great Barton and Fornham All Saints Parish Councils together with our professional advisor Adrian Graves. There have been two full consultation periods where the public have been able to respond and also drop in sessions where questions could be asked.

Currently my understanding is that we should have sight of the final report around week commencing 6th June 2016, before it goes to Cabinet. You will be hearing from Adrian Graves later on this evening with some details of the results of the consultation. Tonight I wish to direct my remarks and recognition to all the residents who responded. The three chairmen have been able to review the contents of all the submissions (suitably redacted) and have been very impressed with the sound arguments and ideas and opinions that have been evident. Thank you to all of you who have participated. I also wish to say that a major opportunity has been grasped, by the three Parish Councils involved and others on the periphery of the West Suffolk Operational Hub by working so close together and sharing resources. These clearly are lessons and experiences that will be very useful for future major planning / development issues.

Other Business

The much anticipated widening and improvements to the path from the bottom of Barton Hill to The Rectory was finally completed after four years of gestation. Considerable positive feedback has been received and I am happy to say that the improvements were completed at no cost to the Parish Council.

Speeding

The Parish Councils emphasis on speeding in the village will be strengthened by the introduction of VAS (vehicle activated signage). There have been a number of experiments in the last couple of years with these signs which flash the actual speed at which the vehicle is travelling. They also have sophisticated software that records actual speeds and times for the purpose of analysis. They do not remember number plates. The Parish Council has purchased one of these and it will be used in four locations in the village on a rota basis. We hope this will be up and running in the near future.

Change of Personnel.

We sadly have to say farewell to Nick Owen who has taken an opportunity four days a week in Luxembourg where he will be using his considerable banking and insurance experience to help develop a business. I would like to thank him personally for all his wise input to Parish Council matters. We are also saying farewell to our Clerk. Paul is leaving us for a larger Parish Council that is nearer his home in Lavenham, this will save him considerable time travelling. During his short time with us Paul has instigated a number of reforms within the Parish Council bringing us more up to date with modern accounting procedures. We wish them both well in their new ventures.

I am delighted to announce that our new Clerk is Victoria Bright who is also a very experienced clerk with 3 other Parish Councils in her portfolio. Victoria is due to start in early June and her contact details will be published in The Bugle. We look forward to welcoming her to our team.

In Conclusion

It has been a very busy year for myself and Parish Council colleagues. I would like to thank them for their efforts and contributions to business which has this year taken up even more of our free time. I also must thank Rebecca Hopsfenpurger for her professional advice and guidance and her ongoing generous financial assistance for village projects. Our bi monthly village newsletter is produced by editors Sue and Pat Brooklyn and my thanks go to them and also the team who give up their free time to deliver a copy to all households. David Hoggett continues to keep our village in pristine condition and our collective thanks must go to him.

Our village is blessed with many residents who willingly contribute much to village life, welfare and its activities. They are too numerous to mention but their contribution goes a long way to making the village such a great place to live. The way the village has pulled together this year particularly with the challenge of the West Suffolk Operational Hub has been very positive and helps to ensure that Fornham remains a great place to live.

Michael Collier

Chairman.