

## CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022

**Parish Council Meetings.** As a result of lockdown measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Parish Council meetings were held via Zoom, until Face to Face meetings were able to resume in June 2022.

Meetings continue to be held, in a Covid-secure way. on the second Tuesday of each month, except for the summer break each August. The Village Halls have been utilised for these meetings and we have been able to enjoy two newly refurbished halls.

**Precept & Finances.** The Parish Council's reserves are currently in a good position with approximately £8,500 in reserves This includes approximately £6,000 from the Communities Infrastructure Levy (CIF). The Parish Council agreed that the Precept should be raised to £10,500 for 2022/23 in order to meet increasing costs.

The Parish Council has continued to employ the same Auditors as in 2021.

Minor Adjustments were made during the last accounting period to include the payment of an employment pension for the Parish Clerk.

**Training.** As there have been a number of changes to the Parish Council representatives this year, in October 2021, Norfolk Parish Training and Support were engaged to provide a comprehensive training course, for all of the PC, covering key aspects of Parish Council Governance

**Information and Dissemination.** The Parish Council disseminates information, minutes of meetings, and representatives' contact details, to the local community by three methods:

- The Website: <https://marlingfordcolton.wixsite.com/mcpc>
- Grapevine
- Notice boards placed in both villages.

As in previous years the Parish Council has been involved in a range of activities, or has provided small grants to the following initiatives:

- 1. The Grapevine:** The Parish Council continue to provide a grant to the publishers of the Grapevine magazine. This useful journal is now distributed in hard copy format three times a year, and as an electronic version on other occasions. The PC are currently investigating how best information can be disseminated monthly, in particular to residents without internet access. It is understood that Clare Howard is looking to relinquish her role as publisher, and the PC has been approached to identify a suitably keen successor.
- 2. Community Car Scheme:** The Parish Council continues to provide a contributory grant to this scheme. A separate report is provided by the organiser, David Ditton, to this meeting.
- 3. Flooding.** The Parish Council is aware of potential flooding to the roads in the centre of Marlingford, caused by run-off from the forthcoming development in Easton, by Persimmon Homes. The PC will liaise with Easton Parish Council to mitigate this issue.
- 4. Highways.** In addition to the potential issues referred to in 3. above, there are continuing issues with respect to overgrown hedges obscuring road signs. This has been brought to the attention of highways for them to carry out appropriate rectification.

The Parish Council continues to send a delegate to continuing discussions in regard to the planned dualling of the A47, and the construction of the Norwich Western Link. It is understood the Secretary of State is currently reviewing the consultation, with a hope to issue the Development Consent Order (DCO), for the A47 project, around mid-August 2022, with construction beginning in 2023.

The Norwich Half Marathon was held last summer however the 2022 event has been cancelled. The Norfolk Gazelles 10k returned this year and was sold out in advance.

The Parish Council continues to be concerned about potential speeding through both villages. The Council is now monitoring traffic flow, using both SAM2 speed cameras, such that a report can be prepared in advance of discussions with the police.

- 5. Footpaths.** Councillors continue to monitor public footpaths in both villages. There are in generally good condition with any issues having been reported to Norfolk County Council who oversee these paths. The PC has noted that there is rot in some of the footpath signs, and a report with photographs is currently under preparation, and will be submitted to Norfolk county Council.
- 6. Communications:** There have been several incidences of theft of copper phone cable. This has left many villagers without phone lines and no way to communicate. The PC has worked with Open Reach to raise the profile of these thefts amongst residents. A representative of Open Reach presenting to the Council in the autumn.

Since the last meeting, The Parish Council is pleased to report that Internet Connections in Marlingford have been significantly improved by the installation of Fibre Optic Cables in the

village. There is no indication as to whether a similar capability will be provided in Colton, although current internet download and upload speeds are considered satisfactory.

7. **Policing.** The Parish continues to have relatively low levels of crime. However, it is important that any incidents are logged with the police, so they are able to track patterns of crime. It is hoped that the PC will establish a relationship with the new beat officer, Ms Natasha Indans and hope they will be able to attend a PC meeting soon.
8. **Sports and Recreation Facilities.** In Marlingford a group of parents is working on developing the existing play area to add additional items for older children. The PC will continue to support them and help them access funding.

The PC is currently in the process of extending the lease at Colton play area, and the Car Parking area adjacent to the Village Hall. Once the lease has been secured it will be possible to make appropriate improvements to this valuable facility, dependent upon need and proposals submitted by the villagers.

9. **Planning Applications.** In the past year the PC has:
  - Dealt with five applications in total, none of which were opposed.
  - South Norfolk approved all five of these.
10. **Wind Farms:** The Parish Council continues to monitor the development of the Offshore Wind projects being planned offshore East Anglia. In 2022, much of the dialogue has been with Equinor, who are developing extensions to their Sheringham Shoal, and Dudgeon sites, in the Wash. Both of these projects are scheduled, when granted their DCO, to deliver power to the National Grid, via a substation west of Norwich. This will include power cables which will go through our parish. As Equinor has demonstrated only minimal interference during this construction phase, the Parish Council has not raised any objection to this proposed initiative.
11. **Food Enterprise Zone:** The Parish Council attends the regular meetings of the FEZ (Food Hub), both to monitor its development, but also to continue to lobby for a more logical access to the site, directly from a (hopefully improved) connection to the A47, rather than via the current Church Lance access.

Specific to this development, The Parish Council has received planning applications for a photovoltaic (PV) solar farm, to the west of Colton, which will be connected to a substation, currently under construction, west of Easton Parish Church. Although the original plan was for this solar farm to have sufficient spare capacity to provide renewable power to the local community, it is understood that its total output will be necessary for the Food Hub.

**12. Proposed Honingham Thorpe Development:** The Parish Council is in a continuing dialogue with the developers, the local authority, and other special interest groups to include the CPRE, in respect of this major initiative. The Parish Council, which is opposed to the plan in its current form, will continue to seek some clarity from the Greater Norwich Local Partnership (GNLP), who originally stated that this development was only scheduled for consideration in 2038. This date is somewhat at variance with the developers of the project.

The Parish Council would wish to record our considerable thanks for all the work carried out by our Parish Clerk / Book-keeper / general factotum, Maria Hutson, and to Margaret Dewsbury, our District and County Councillor, for her continuing support, and continued access to grant funding.

On behalf of Paul Hammerton, our Chairman, I would also like to extend my thanks to my fellow members of the Parish Council, for their considerable commitment, in particular during the earlier part of this year when we were unable to meet in person and had to rely on the mysteries of Zoom teleconferencing.

Finally, I would like to record with great sadness, the passing of our previous council member, Martin Hemming. We extend our condolences to Judith and the rest of his family, and we know his presence in the village will be sadly missed by all.

John Morse

Vice Chairman,

April 2022

On behalf of Paul Hammerton

Chairman.