

# **Robert C. T. Wardley.**

## **Chairman's Report**

### **2019/2020**



**An aerial view of our Village.**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Welcome to my Annual Parish Meeting Report.

2020 has been a very difficult year so far for all of us, and although things are improving day by day, I feel we have not yet seen the back of this dreadful Coronavirus. At the beginning of March, we were faced with a complete lockdown each and every one of us had a role to play in ensuring that we all stayed at home to keep safe.

We still need to be vigilant and if we all adhere to the Government guidelines, I'm sure we will be able to get our Village though this without incident and hopefully get back to some kind of normality.

In times of crisis, our village has always pulled together, so it's no surprise there has been so many people getting involved in the village by helping our friends and neighbours during the current Coronavirus outbreak.

At the beginning March an emergency plan was put in place which involved Councillors and volunteers who made themselves available to assist people in the village with offers of help. I must extend my personal thanks and appreciation to all of you for what you have done to make sure everyone in the village has been well looked after.

Over the past three months I would also especially like to thank those businesses who have been providing villagers with essentials supplies during the lockdown, in particular Jon at the Dennington Queen for providing take away food, Vashti at the Neathouse for general provisions, Dave Dunnett for meat, Spencer Whitman for fish, along with Eve and Richard Berrill and Tim Moss for wine. I was delighted that they all offered free delivery of their products to those in the village who were self-isolating.

As the weeks and months go by, it will still be testing times for all of us and as we move forward, we will have to accept there will be changes to our lifestyles in how we live and work. At times like this, it is crucial we all still continue to look after each other.

Over the past 10 weeks, I was delighted to see and hear so many of you clapping in the Village to show your appreciation to those who are working so hard to keep all services running and especially those front-line workers who providing care to those who have this dreadful virus.

It's important that you still take care of yourself, and stay safe.

I and my fellow Councillor colleagues, along with our Volunteers in the village, will continue to make themselves available to give help and advice, please just ask if you need it.

At times like this, it is crucial we all still continue to look after each other.



Photo With kind permission of Jon Reeve.



Our 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary my acknowledgement to our NHS.

Continuing with my report, I would like to thank our representatives from organisations within the village who have submitted reports to the Council which I know you will find interesting.

Councillors are elected to serve you, and to look after village affairs. I must thank those Councillors who have given their time to represent the village over the past year.

In May 2019, we had an uncontested parish election. The Parish Council should consist of nine Councillors, however, eight Councillors were returned to office, resulting in a casual vacancy. I was delighted to welcome Ken Hoyle who stepped in and joined the Council. During last year, Robert Rous stood down after many years on the Parish Council. At this point, I wish to place on record my thanks to Robert for his valued contribution he has given to this village as an elected Councillor. I am pleased to welcome

Sam Steward as a new Councillor and I hope that he finds the Parish Council work interesting. It is with regret that Ken recently resigned for personal reasons from the Council.

I must thank all councillors for their trust & support which they have placed in me over the past year. I would also like to thank those Councillors who have taken on various appointments on behalf on the Council.

#### **PLANNING:**

Planning Applications are considered in the Parish Council Planning Meetings. Applicants and objectors are able to speak about planning applications during these meetings, subject to informing the clerk.

Each speaker is given a maximum of 3 minutes. The time must be allocated to a spokesperson or shared between all speakers for each group.

Speakers will not be allowed under any circumstances to exceed this time limit. Further information is contained on the Parish Council web site.

From April 2019 to June 2020, 24 planning applications were received and discussed by Councillors.

All these applications can be viewed on the East Suffolk Web Portal.

Members of the Council are governed by strict guidelines, which ensure that those decisions that are made by the Parish Council are made in compliance with the law.

#### **WEB SITE:**

Have a look at our website address, <http://www.dennington.suffolk.cloud> this is a Local government site and averages around 300 visitors to the site every month.

It contains all of the relevant Parish Council information including minutes, agendas, reports, as well as useful village organisation contacts. There are various links within the site, where you can connect to the School, Village Hall and church web sites, along with an events diary.

On behalf of Councillors we say thank you, Shirley you're doing a fantastic job in making sure our web site is kept up to date; If you have any newsworthy items or have any forthcoming events, or matters of local interest which can be placed on our web site please. *No Advertising please).*

Shirley is our designated administrator manager of the site, you can send notification to Shirley, via e-mail [Shirley.cunningham1@btinternet.com](mailto:Shirley.cunningham1@btinternet.com)

This year in particular has very been busy for Shirley, especially during this Coronavirus outbreak, as she has been responsible for making sure the Government information has been added to our site and in some cases, this has been on a daily basis.

This Local Government site, is worth looking at; it will keep you in touch with what's going on in and around the village.

## **CLERK TO THE COUNCIL:**

Lydia is our Parish Clerk and was appointed following the retirement of Ruth Hart. Lydia like all Clerks has to ensure the Parish Council's business is run strictly in accordance with the law of the land and in particular compliance with the Local Government Act.

In addition to this ensuring that a tight rein is kept on Councillors so they don't detract from the Code of Conduct and break the law.

Every aspect of our business is thoroughly audited by our independent auditor and furthermore by the local government appointed external auditor.

I wish to thank and place on record my thanks to Lydia on behalf of the Council for completing and presenting the 2019/2020 accounts. Lydia has obtained approval from our internal auditor, as well as the Local government auditor.

I am also pleased to report that this past year both these audit professionals have approved our books with complimentary comments.

Lydia is an extremely efficient clerk in every aspect of what she does in connection with Councils Business. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated person one who has taken such a keen interest in our Village affairs.

## **HIGHWAYS:**

Frostley Bridge B1116 - Bridge brick parapet repaired following damage by an RTC.

Frostley Bridge Verge and grass cutting thanks to Robert Rous.

Speed awareness sign which has been provided by Councillor Burroughs from his Locality Budget is still awaiting site meeting with Stephen and Highways for permission to locate the sign on the highway.

Outstanding - road directional signs near the Church still not replaced following an RTC in July 2019.

## **DUCK SIGNS:**

Three Duck awareness signs have been provided by Robert Rous; these have been placed on his land within the village.



## **NEWSLETTER:**

The newsletter is produced by the Village Hall Trustees. Four times a year the newsletter helps organisations in the village to broadcast their news and events to the residents.

## **NEW MOWER.**

Following discussions, the Council decided to invest in a new mower. The Ransomes Parkway cylinder mower that the Council had been using for several years was proving to be very expensive to maintain and repair, with costs rising each year.

The Council took delivery of a Kubota rotary lawn mower in February. This rotary mower will be more efficient and the maintenance costs will be considerably lower compared to previous Ransomes mower.

## **PRECEPT.**

Councillors approved and set a precept of £9.998 for 2020/21.

The Council made donations: -

V/ Hall.	£300.00
Leiston CAB donation.	£ 55.00
Sports Club donation.	£ 700.00
EAAA donation.	£ 55.00
Parish Church donation.	£ 450.00

  

Replacement of Parish Mower.	£15.400.00
Speed activated sign.	£ 4.044.60

## **VE DAY - VJ DAY CELEBRATIONS.**

The Parish had hoped to hold an event to celebrate both these events but sadly due to the Coronavirus restrictions they have had to be postponed. The Village Hall Trustees have kindly offered to help and will try to organise an event in the village sometime at a later date.



Village Decorations VE Day 8<sup>th</sup> May

## VOLUNTEERS:

I must thank our volunteers. They do a sterling job in all weathers, keeping the village neat and tidy. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team.

Firstly, I need to thank Peter Nobbs, Peter cuts the area of grass in the Village Centre around the traffic directional signs, village seat and pond site. Peter has also cut the long grass and hedge at the edge of the village green and footpaths around Swainston Way. Thanks again Peter, the Centre of the village always looks very tidy.



Secondly, Adrian Neill, has continued to cut the Village Recreation Field on a regular basis over the year and more often at the height of the growing season and has done an exceptional job. I am sure you'll agree with me by having this area of open space kept tidy, it gives us an important recreational area within the Centre of the village.

I would like to thank Roy Steward who provides the fuel for the mower. Fuel these days is expensive and having this provided free of charge makes a considerable saving for the council.

I would also like to thank Nick Watts for providing the labour and equipment at no cost to the council. Incidentally it was a good half day's work to cut the hedges around the village green and allotments.

I would also like to thank Robert Rous for cutting the grass verge at the Frostley Bridge junction. This is a great improvement and hopefully, by having the grass shorter, it will help to reduce accidents at this junction.

Finally, Ray Dearing does an enormous amount of work in keeping our village tidy, cutting the village hall hedge, grass strimming, the sports club hedge and not forgetting some of the parish footpaths. Thanks Ray.

## PARISH COUNCILLORS:

Finally, I must thank all Parish Councillors for supporting me over the past year.

I would also like to thank those persons, for taking on the various appointments on behalf of the Council, thank you again for agreeing to do this. This certainly reduces the

workload for the Chairman. You will be pleased to know that there has been no claim for expenses in connection with the business conducted by the Chairman or members of this Council.

I am sure you will agree with me, when you look around other Villages around the same size of Dennington, you will find many of them are not as fortunate as we are to have so many great facilities that the residents of the Village can enjoy.

We have a good active Sports Club, children's play space and a great playing field.

We also have a large Village Green, a fantastic Village Hall now completely refurbished, and have of course a tidy Churchyard.

I have to thank all those people who are working on these Committees and those people who carry out the hard-manual work, on a voluntary basis. They help to keep the Village ticking over, and thus make Dennington one of the nicest places to live.

Finally, I have been your Parish Chairman for many years now, too many to count. It is with regret I have decided not to put myself forward in the forthcoming election for Chairman and feel I should resort to a back-bench position on the Council.

Since being Chairman, I have worked over the years with nine Parish Clerks and I will soon be celebrating 50 years as a Parish Councillor.

It has been a great pleasure and a privilege to have been the leader of the Parish Council over these years. I couldn't have asked for a more supportive team of Councillors and I will treasure the friendships I have cultivated with each and every one of you, I will also hold onto the many accomplishments that are part of my history.

Thank you for trusting me to serve as your Chairman over these years.

**Robert C.T. Wardley: July 2020.**