

DALHAM AND DUNSTALL GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2019-2020

My report for 2019 - 2020 is dominated by the events of the last few weeks, in which our parish has been dramatically affected, along with the rest of the country, by the lockdown ordered by Government to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

Whilst the financial impact, inconvenience and stress of the experience has been severe for many, and several villagers have self-isolated as a precautionary measure, the way in which the whole parish has pulled together to deal with the difficulties and to help out those who have needed it has been inspiring. We can be proud of the way that the parish has risen to the challenge, and that we were ahead of the game in our response to the crisis.

I would especially like to thank those villagers, including several parish councillors, who helped establish the Dalham Volunteers Group (which includes volunteers from Dunstall Green) to assist those in isolation with tasks such as shopping and picking up prescriptions. But I should also note and thank those many individuals who have helped their neighbours out spontaneously during the lockdown. You have all made a difficult time much easier to cope with.

As this is a report for the whole of 2019-2020, I should not neglect the more prosaic news from earlier in the year. Villagers should by now be familiar with the new village sign, which was finally installed in late 2019 and which replaced the rotten wooden one. We now also have a new footpath map, which shows details of our various colour coded circular walks, for which we produced leaflets for last year. Most of these have now been waymarked, with the remainder awaiting the necessary signage. The costs were met from reserves, including the remaining money in the Parish Plan fund.

The parish council has continued to lobby energetically for other improvements. One success last year was getting Suffolk Highways to repaint the faded white lines at the dangerous junction on the Gazeley Road. We continue to seek ways to improve the traffic safety situation for villagers, especially on Stores Hill.

A number of planning applications were considered and commented on during the course of the year but the revised retrospective application for affordable housing at the Woodyard has been called in for review by West Suffolk councillor's Development Control Committee. Members of the public will be able to attend and make representations. A date for the meeting is still to be confirmed. The highly contentious application for a holiday village on the eastern edge of Ashley, which many villagers in Dalham had commented on, was eventually rejected by East Cambridgeshire District Council.

The extraordinary circumstances created by the epidemic and the consequent restrictions imposed on non-essential meetings have obliged the Parish Council to exercise its newly granted powers not to hold an Annual Meeting this year, and to hold its routine meetings online for the duration of the emergency. Members of the public will be able to join online meetings and make representations before the meeting starts, but the Parish Council recognises that this is not ideal, therefore will aim to defer items such as village issues which it feels need to be discussed when members of the public are able to attend in person. Should you have issues that you want to raise, please contact our Parish Clerk, Joanne Kirk, by email at dalhamparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk and we will discuss your correspondence at our next meeting.