

## **DALHAM AND DUNSTALL GREEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

We were pleased to welcome two new co-opted councillors during the course of the year – Mark Corby from Dalham, and Francine Wilkins-Smith, who took on the role of representing Dunstall Green on the council following Jackie Bolton's resignation.

Unfortunately, we were also obliged to say goodbye to David Fitch, who with his impending move from Dalham back to his native Australia, resigned in March of this year. His work over the last year in improving the council's website and assisting with its transfer, as well as that of the council's email system, to a gov.uk domain was greatly appreciated and he will be much missed.

Following extensive discussions which took into account previous feedback from villagers, the parish council was pleased to be able to agree a scheme to address issues with speeding, road safety and problematic parking in Dalham. A new sign on Stores Hill warning motorists of the risk of pedestrians in the road has already been installed and new 30mph roundels on the Lidgate Road and white lines on both sides of Stores Hill down to the junction with The Street are due to be added in the next few weeks. The cost of the scheme was met from reserves and with the aid of locality funding from our County Councillor Andy Drummond. The council continues to explore further measures to reduce speeding, including the possibility of a Community Speed Watch group and the potential for any 20mph zones in the village.

Footpath improvements were to the fore, with Councillors Aylott and Ward replacing decayed and fallen footpath posts across the parish and our new Councillor Wilkins-Smith tackling the same task and clearing undergrowth from paths in the Dunstall Green area – all of whom were assisted by their respective partners. Two applications were received relating to minor diversions of paths in Dunstall Green, and Councillor Ward continued to gather evidence to support an application for the addition to the definitive map of Public Rights of Way of an additional path from Dunstall Green to the Denham Road via the New Road track. A new verge cutting scheme for the roads in Dalham village was agreed in March 2024, balancing safety, appearance and wildlife diversity, and will be implemented over the forthcoming months.

In accordance with wider policing initiatives, the parish was assigned a named community support officer, Emma Harper, a step that was welcome in view of a series of break ins to outbuildings prior to Christmas 2023 and earlier reports of hare coursing in fields near Dalham. We also lobbied for additional bus services to Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds as part of the consultation exercise undertaken during the course of the year.

The council was pleased to be able to freeze its precept request for the forthcoming 2024-25 tax year at the same level as that of the previous year, despite the expenditure on traffic schemes and the reduction in the tax base resulting from the adjustment of the boundary with Ousden during the previous year. Reserves remain healthy, as a result of the careful control of expenditure last year. As ever, we are grateful to our parish clerk, Antonia King, and our District and County Councillors, Mike Chester and Andy Drummond, for their hard work on our behalf.