

Gt & Lt Plumstead Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2010

Annual Parish Meeting - 2010

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at Little Plumstead Village Hall on Monday 10th May 2010 at 07.30 pm. This meeting is open to all Parishioners and matters of local importance and any other issues to do with the Parishes may be raised at this time. The regular Parish Council monthly meeting follows on immediately thereafter, including the annual election of officers.

Chairman's Comment

After the last Annual Parish meeting held on 11th May 2009, the Council appointed Cllr EJC Wiley as Chairman and Cllr SA Vincent as Vice-Chairman for a further 12 months.

Your Parish Councillors have represented your views both at local, district and county level. On some matters we have had success and on others we continue to persevere! Please make use of your Parish Council as much as you can. It is important, as we put our comments to the Higher Authorities, that we have your backing. We are far from idle on your behalf and I list some of the areas of activity in the last year:

Little Plumstead Hospital - the development of this site has yet to continue and we await confirmation of new owners and in due course the continuation of building works. We have received an application to convert the 'Watch Tower' and associated buildings adjacent to the main drive, into a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartments.

Little Plumstead VA School. Site audits are now being conducted and the Parish Council raised some comments in this respect. We understand that site clearance in preparation of the build commencing, is due in the next few months.

The Development Triangle (Laurel & Green Farm developments / Postwick interchange & associated expansion of Broadland Business Park / the expansion of housing at Sproston / Rackheath Eco-Town and the Northern Distributor Road). A great deal of time and effort has been given to understanding the proposals and their combined effect on these Parishes - principally related to traffic flows and the over-development of the eastern fringe of Norwich. Many concerns have been raised by residents and the Parish Council has worked hard to put itself at the forefront of consultees and continues to lobby the Higher Authorities, to persuade them of better alternate strategies, that will have a less detrimental effect.

Thorpe End traffic remains an issue and the Ward Councillors have worked hard to establish the fully functioning pedestrian crossing and shortly a new bus shelter, making the use of public transport more attractive. The threat of increased traffic in the future; the proposed construction of a flyover feeding from the NDR; the closure of minor roads leading from Gt Plumstead and the closure of feeder lanes from the A47, all remain current and fundamental issues.

Village amenities remain a priority - the provision of play equipment in Thorpe End and the renewal of play equipment in Gt & Lt Plumstead. Monitoring the public areas and amenities in Lt Plumstead Hospital development. Gt Plumstead playing field and its future uses. The proposal to expand the Scout facilities at Gt Plumstead. Car parking at Lt Plumstead Village Hall.

Public transport - we continue to push for better services and currently the reduction in bus services in the 3 Parishes.

Local Plan / Parish Plan Review (Broadland District Council). We are fully involved with matters in respect of expressing your views on future development of these Parishes.

Liaison and reports in the local Press on matters of concern.

Bringing matters to the attention of the Secretary of State and the local Member of Parliament.

Meeting with higher Council's to progress the opinion and influence of the Parish Council.

We continue to implement and prioritise the agenda of the Parish Plan.

Following the General Election we await the final results of any changes that may be implemented by the Boundary Committee in respect of the proposed Unitary Authorities and the effect this may have on these Parishes.

I say this every year, but make no apology and once again take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank my fellow Councillors for their hard work, support and the particular areas where they have volunteered to act on matters of concern: Amenities (Cllrs Palmer, Bensley, Bartram & Edwards); Thorpe End bus shelter (Cllr Townly); Road safety (Cllrs Skipper & Palmer); Allotments (Cllrs Hamilton & Bensley); Press and information and Parish web site (Cllr Cossey (ret'd) Cllr's Dixon and Townly).

In particular, I would like to thank our retiring Parish Clerk, Mr Ian Bishop, for all the hard work and time he has spent

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on Parish matters during the last and many previous years and to wholeheartedly welcome Mrs Jane Jones, who replaces him in that role. The Clerk's commitment to their work enables the Parish Council to perform its duties effectively and without that dedication the Parish Council could not function.

I would also like to draw your attention to changes we have occurred in the membership of the Parish Council in the last year. Cllr Alan Houseago, who died in July 2009. Cllr Greenwood who resigned in July 2009, on leaving the village of Lt Plumstead and Cllr Cossey who resigned in March 2010 after many years as a Parish Councillor. I would like to thank all these 3 Councillors for their time and dedication to this Council. It also gives me great pleasure to welcome Cllr's John Dixon (Lt Plumstead Ward) and Richard Claxton (Thorpe End Ward), who both took office during the last year. Following Cllr Cossey's resignation, we still have a vacancy on the Lt Plumstead Ward.

In respect of your Parish Councillors, this is all voluntary and unpaid work, which the Council is happy to carry out on your behalf. Please bring matters to the attention of the Council. We are there to try and improve the standard of living in the Parishes and solve the problems. With your help, this can be achieved.

Cllr Ian Mackie as our County Councillor, continues to be thoroughly committed to his role and once again I thank him for not only his attendance at our meetings, but the fact that he takes our concerns forward to the County & District Councils. Without this assistance, much of what we wish to and have delivered to the Parishes, would simply not have happened. District Councillor and Parish Council Vice Chairman Shaun Vincent, continues to combine both of these roles to great effect and I thank him for his time and commitment.

Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the second Monday of each month, at one of the 3 village halls in rotation. All meetings start at 07.30 pm and are advertised in advance in the Church and Parish Magazine; on the Parish notice boards and on the Parish website. **Public Participation.** At the beginning of every meeting, the public are asked to speak and raise any issues which they feel are of importance. **The Council both welcomes and asks for residents of the 3 Parishes to attend.** If you wish to raise any issues directly, you will be given the opportunity to speak. **So please accept this invitation and make use of your Parish Council.**

Council Property

The Council continues to maintain the playing fields at Sandhole Lane, Crowes Loke and Gt Plumstead and the play equipment on these areas, which are currently under review, with plans to improve the existing equipment where possible and create other play areas where they are wanted by residents. These are important village amenities and some also earn revenue for the Parishes, when they are let out to third parties. Plans to build a football pavilion and return the Gt Plumstead Playing Field as a fully used amenity are on hold, due to the economic conditions and lack of grant funding. We will resume with this as soon as the opportunity arises. The Bowls Club at Gt Plumstead continues to be very popular and the tennis court is available for use by the Parishioners, who may book the court by telephoning Mrs Berendsen. The allotments are well used and following considerable work by the Allotment Sub-Committee a further 10 allotments or half-allotments have been made available.

The Council continues to improve property as funds allow and welcomes comments or ideas from the residents of the three villages.

Planning & Development

Your Council continues to remain very active on issues of planning. Many private applications for house extensions etc. are made over the course of the year and the ward Councillors view these sympathetically, objectively and make time to visit each application. One of the most important criteria is whether there is any detrimental effect of any proposals to the adjacent properties. Please ensure that any applications made, do, where possible, take into account the feelings of your immediate neighbours.

We are in office to put your views forward on planning matters. Please make sure that you use your Parish Council for this service.

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Transport & Highways

As always this remains an important issue. We are achieving considerable results in order to secure some improvements, within the wider issue of transport and highway considerations for the whole of the Norwich area. In particular the proposed NDR and the Broadland Business Park relief roads. **Please support your Parish Council on these matters.**

Finance

A detailed summary of the Council finances will be available at the Parish Meeting. Full audited accounts will be made available in June / July when they are returned to the Parish Clerk.

Major items of expenditure in the past year to 31st March 2010 -

1. Administration - £7,385.97
2. Grass cutting - £4,327.51
3. Maintenance of Council Property - £5,742.41

Income / capital deposits -

1. Investment income - £2.44 [this has dramatically reduced in the last 12 months]

The Precept raised by the Council for the past year in order to pay its costs, was £21,668.00. The Finance Committee met on 7th January 2010 and recommended that the forthcoming precept should be increased to £22,465.00 for 2010 / 2011 a rise of 3.5%, off-set by small increase in the number of band D properties and allowing for the collapse in investment income - a loss of revenue c. (£1,300.00) per annum. This was passed by the Council at the subsequent Parish Council Meeting held on 11th January 2010.

We, as your Council, are fully aware that it is necessary to keep any rise in the Precept to a minimum, but at the same time must manage the accounts to enable us to carry out our duties effectively. We entered the financial year with a balance of £38,367.44 and closed the financial year with a balance of £42,191.32. Of this balance sheet, unallocated funds amount to £30,511.32 and funds allocated to the Thorpe End Bus Shelter Grant (£3,530.00) and the Astley Road capital account (£8150.00) amount to £11,680.00.

Council Membership

We have had 11 monthly Parish Council meetings in the past year, at which attendance by Councillors has been consistently high. A full list of your Ward Councillors and their attendance record follows this annual report.

EJC Wiley, Chairman of Gt & Lt Plumstead Parish Council.

03 May 2010

List of Councillors

Parish Clerk:

Mr Ian Bishop Rose Acre, Broad Lane, Lt Plumstead, Norwich, NR13 5EJ. (Retires June 2010)
Mrs Jane Jones Hall Farm, Middle Road, Great Plumstead, Norwich, NR13 5EF.

The members of the Council during the past year and their attendance record at Council and Committee meetings are shown below:-

Gt Plumstead Ward Attendance

Mr B Hamilton -The Post office, Church Road

7/11

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Mrs D Bensley - 1, Hare Road 8/11

Mrs M Palmer - Applewood, Hare Road 11/11

Lt Plumstead Ward

Mr R Cossey - Oaklands, Blofield Corner Road 8/10 (Resigned 31st
March 2010)

Mr J Dixon - 59, Salhouse Road 6/7

Mr G Edwards - 1, Fairfield Close 11/11

Mr EJC Wiley - White House, Salhouse Road 10/11

Mr GE Greenwood 2/3 (Resigned 31st July 2009)

Thorpe End Ward

Mr A Skipper - 57, Broadland Drive 11/11

Mr SA Vincent - 78, Broadland Drive 9/11

Mrs K Bartram - 25, Broad View 11/11

Mr R Claxton - 22, Plumstead Road 6/7

Mr A Townly - 20, Plumstead Road 9/11

Mr AE Houseago 0/3 (Deceased July 2009)

In addition, Councillors have attended numerous meetings relating to Planning issues; Policing and other matters relating to the Parishes. The information gathered from these extra meetings is vital to assisting the Parish Council in coming to informed decisions.