

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2024/25

It has been a great privilege to represent the Parish Council as Chair over this past year. Here is a summary of some of our achievements and ongoing activities:-

Westleton Parish Council (WPC) has continued to meet with Sizewell C (SZC) and the Suffolk Councils to finalise the traffic calming measures to mitigate the increased traffic because of the SZC construction. A village consultation showed support for a number of the proposed measures, including average speed cameras, and these are due to be installed in 2025. We hope that these measures will reduce speeding through the village and improve safety. If needed, the village can still ask the County Council to impose a 20mph speed limit which would be supported by the District Council and our MP, and hopefully also the County Council. In parallel, we continue to look to find more parking spaces in the centre of the village; parking at the bottom of the Green was considered, but ultimately deemed an inappropriate use of the Green for too few parking places - we continue to try to find a solution.

If the Government approves the proposed Sea Link and Lionlink National Grid cabling projects, traffic and construction in the area will increase further. WPC has been meeting with other East Suffolk Parishes to coordinate responses to the anticipated Planning Inspectorate Examinations. With others, Westleton will call for the cables to run off-shore and landfall at brownfield sites closer to the power's demand - this will negate the need for the on-shore underground cabling and the construction of large converter stations by Saxmundham. However, recognising that the Government may approve these projects, Westleton will also call for the projects' construction traffic to be banned from the village.

Following the rejection by the District Council last year of Orwell Housing's pre-application for an Affordable Housing project, together with Community Action Suffolk WPC undertook a residents' survey which showed both the need and support for affordable housing. Orwell Housing then presented its proposals for 12 properties at the top of the village on the Blythburgh Road at a village consultation in December - the plans were overwhelmingly well-received. Orwell Housing are now discussing terms with the landowner with a view to submitting its planning application in the summer.

Maintenance of the Common continues with a keen focus now on firebreaks. A new pathway has been made from Black Slough to a viewing point and bench with panoramic views toward Middleton. Late last year, John Bebbington stood down after many years of being the Common's Group Secretary - WPC expresses its sincere thanks to John for all his hard work. Ian Webber has taken his place.

Unfortunately, bad weather prevented a New Year's Day bonfire and fireworks event - we hope for better weather next year. Plans for a summer picnic/fete on Sunday 6 July for villagers are underway with support from the village's organisations.

The programme in place to upgrade facilities at the Community Playing Field is ongoing. Over the past year, more of the children's play equipment has been repaired and a new carousel has been installed. General upkeep and repairs to the sheds have also been necessary.

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2024/25

Unfortunately, the Box hedging at the War Memorial suffered from blight and so it has been replaced with Euonymus hedging. When replanting, the opportunity was also taken to upgrade the path to the Memorial and replace its surrounding lavender which was nearing the end of its life.

WPC has continued to seek an appropriate site for village allotments and discussions are underway with a landowner.

WPC undertook a residents' survey which showed that there is demand for a bus service to local towns. Our subsequent application to extend the 521 Aldeburgh to Darsham and Halesworth route was not successful, but the Suffolk County Council (SCC) officials are making a proposal to the SCC Cabinet Member to start a new service which would go to Leiston and connect with the 521.

WPC continues to publish a monthly update of our activities in the Yoxmere Fisherman. We have also been holding monthly surgeries in the Village Hall Foyer for residents to raise matters and will continue to do so as long as there is demand for the service.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the work of all the Councillors and our Clerk, Ian Haines, without whom this work would not be possible.

Andrew Turner
Chairman - Westleton Parish Council