

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2023/24

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

WPC has had more meetings with EDF and the County Councils to discuss measures to maintain road safety in the village once traffic increases with the construction of Sizewell C. Speeding is already a problem in the village and so the aim has been to identify means to help drivers to travel at or under the speed limit. Proposals were presented to residents in February and a questionnaire then sought views on those proposals. However, since the residents' meeting, we have been told that there is a possibility of average speed cameras being installed. At the time of writing, residents have not had an opportunity to consider this proposal. Our hope is that cameras offer a means to maintain road safety in the village without excessive and intrusive infrastructure. In association, we surveyed residents' views on a 20mph speed limit - an overwhelming majority supported the proposal which requires support from the County Council before it can be implemented. In parallel, we are still looking to find more parking space in the centre of the village. An approach to Adnams to buy their White Horse car park was unsuccessful. We continue to try to find a solution.

In the past year, we have worked with Orwell Housing and a local landowner to build some affordable homes in the village. A pre-application was rejected by the District Council saying that there was no evidence of need. Accordingly, with Community Action Suffolk we have distributed a *Housing Needs* survey whose results will be used in a follow-up application. Originally, it was planned that allotments could be included in the housing plan. That proved impossible and so the WPC is continuing its search for an appropriate site.

Maintenance of the Common continues and firebreaks and an emergency vehicle access have been installed to mitigate the threat of fire in dry summers.

We were able to organise a successful New Years Day bonfire and fireworks event which was well supported by the community. Special thanks go out to the organisers. With the ending of the Barrel Fair, it is hoped that we may be able to hold an annual summer fete for villagers and we hope that residents will be willing to participate in its organisation.

The programme in place to upgrade facilities at the Community Playing Field is ongoing. Major work on the swings area is almost complete and attention will now move to an upgrade and tidying of the younger children's equipment and the boules area.

The WPC has had to respond to a series of consultations by the National Grid who plan to build a large substation at Friston, a large converter station east of Saxmundham and to connect the two to offshore wind farms and domestic and international interconnectors with cabling which will landfall at points north and south of Westleton. WPC is very concerned about the scale and impact of these projects and are urging the National Grid to implement an offshore cabling solution which would avoid the onshore infrastructure.

WPC is now providing a monthly update of our activities in the Yoxmere fisherman. We have also started monthly surgeries in the Village Hall Foyer for residents to raise matters.

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. I would also like to thank John Bebbington who is standing down as the Westleton webmaster after many years' service.

Andrew Turner
Chairman – Westleton Parish Council