

ANNUAL REPORTS – IMPINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

2007 – 2008

Environment Committee

Members: DW Payne, H S Abdullah and PJ Nudds (Chairman). Mr T Silk is a co-optee, Allison Conder is Tree Warden for Impington

Activities considered or completed this year

- Terms of Reference - Completed and accepted by Full Council;
- Byelaws - Preparatory work undertaken, although work is still on going with Histon regarding jointly owned areas;
- Milton Road Bus Shelter - This was removed as it was considered a Health & Safety risk due to vandalism;
- Tree Warden appointed - Local resident Allison Conder provides valuable input to the committee;
- Village Sign returns - Restoration is completed to the original style and colours specified;
- Rights of Ways - Residents are currently working with the committee to submit proposals for consideration for inclusion in County Council's "Cambridge Necklace" of public footpaths and bridleways;
- Dog & Litter Bins Consultation - Resulting in the acceptance of 2 new Dog Bins in Villa Rd and New Rd; but disappointingly in the refusal of new litter bins in Station Rd and Cambridge Rd/Lone Tree Ave;
- Probation Service - Under the guidance of the Committee several projects in The Copse and The Coppice have been completed;
- Enviro.Volunteers - Their efforts have meant several tasks (which had not been budgeted for) have been possible and have made considerable savings on others. The Committee continues to support and encourage them in their various activities to maintain and enhance our public open spaces;
- Environmental Action Plan - Work is on going with HICCA, although time constraints and the need for involvement with Histon are hindering progress;
- Homefield Park - The Enviro.Volunteers with the Recreation Ground Committee have agreed to work on a management plan and vision for the future of the park, including the formation of "Friends of Homefield Park";
- Guided Bus - Items continue to be monitored a)Progress with Compulsory Purchase Order involving part of The Copse b)Tree & Landscape works c)Relocation of the Crossing Keeper's Hut d)Fencing & access onto the maintenance track;
- Cambs County Council Highways - Promises have been made for:- a soakaway near the new New Rd footpath, patching to New Road (north), the repair to parking area in Milton Rd, clearing debris from foot/cyclepaths in the vicinity of The Dole, bollards to prevent flytipping and parking on Milton Rd & New Rd, clearing of vegetation from all lighting columns. Although communication is good little maintenance has been done in Impington and even urgent maintenance to ensure the safety of road users is proving extremely difficult;

- Commemorative Tree - Permission to plant on CCC land has been granted with some conditions. Planting is expected to take place in the Autumn.
- Police - The committee continue to liaise with the police with regard to implement ideas to reduce Anti Social Behaviour and incidences of Graffiti.

The Copse

Regular Enviro.Volunteer activities have been carried out here including litter picking, laying chippings on the paths, Tree planting, pruning & maintenance of the hedge, bramble clearance from footpath/cycle way, Sycamore & Ivy clearance and dead hedge laying. This year has also seen a number of fallen trees due to high winds and major works to make way for the Guided Busway, principally the felling and monolithing of 17 trees

Clay Close Lane

This area continues to be well used by a wide cross section of the community. Activities necessary this year have simply been regular grass cutting and litter picking, with no recommendations for any tree works. Appreciation has been received from residents and dog owners for the recent installation of a dog bin. Some preparatory work has been done on a management plan for future enhancements and for a biodiversity corridor along the ditch, further meetings are due to take place shortly.

The Coppice

Regular Enviro.Volunteer activities have been carried out here including litter picking, path & ivy clearance and pruning. This year has seen the completion of a number of recommended tree works namely bracing 1 Horse Chestnut, pollarding 1 Sweet Chestnut and pruning others.

South Road Play Area

Regular inspections are carried out by our assistant groundsman and reported to the Environment Committee meetings. This area has continued to be well used by local residents and RoSPA found no deficiencies during their annual inspection of the play equipment.

Doctors Close

Regular inspections are carried out by our assistant groundsman and reported to the Environment Committee meetings. This area remains underused at present, but is kept in a tidy but more natural meadow-like state. However outline plans are underway for wildflower areas and general biodiversity enhancement.

Cllr Pene Nudds, Environment Committee Chairman

Finance Committee

Members: D W Payne, H S Abdullah, P Gooden, B S Ing, Angela Young (RFO)

The Finance Committee started the year with a round of review. Several of the governing documents of the Committee and of the Council, such as the Code of Conduct, the Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations and the Financial Strategy were updated and approved.

A review of our annual insurance costs and interest rates on all the Council's bank and building society accounts was carried out according to the terms of the Financial Strategy.

A new internal auditor was appointed; a review of the effectiveness of the internal audit is now required to be conducted each year.

The annual responsibilities of the committee (preparing the budget for acceptance, reviewing the asset register, carrying out a risk assessment, preparing the accounts for internal and external audits and setting the precept for the following year) have all been accomplished.

This year has seen continuing financial demands on the Parish Council due to repayments against loans taken out with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) last year in order to purchase the freehold of the Recreation Ground; to contribute to the Recreation Ground development project; and to pay Parish Office development costs.

The loans have been taken out over 25 years, so will be an on-going commitment for some time to come. The annual repayment costs for this council in the last financial year were £19,921.

The responsibility for Arbury Park has added an additional complexity to our financial affairs both in the last financial year and in financial planning for the coming year. The council have received some funding in order to cope with the increased administrative load that the new development within the Impington Parish brings, and will receive some money (commuted sums) in order to maintain the community facilities and public open spaces. Money raised through the precept from Impington residents north of the A14 will not be put towards expenditure at Arbury Park.

Of last year's budget, 85% was spent as budgeted with the unspent money carried forward to reserves. The largest part of the council's precept (33%) went to support the running of the Recreation Ground; the next highest areas of expenditure are our loan repayments (20%), looking after our environment (12%), paying our five staff (12%), the Burial Ground (8%) and youth work (5%). It is worth noting that the council have committed 50% of the precept to the acquisition, development and maintenance of the recreation ground.

For the coming financial year, 2008-09, the council have set a precept at £133,000 which is a 14% rise on last year. This rise is due in part to the council's strategy of establishing a number of ring-fenced amounts which will build year on year to finance large projects such as a new community centre.

In December and June Impington Parish Council consider requests for donations from local village groups or projects that will benefit our residents. As a result, this year we were pleased to make donations to Cambridgeshire County Council Reading Project at Histon Library, Histon and Impington Day Centre and Victim Support.

Cllr Hooda Abdullah, Committee member

Burial Ground Committee

Members: D W Payne, P D Gooden, J P Teague

The overall appearance of the burial ground continues to be a credit to the work of our groundsman Mr Terry Farr. He is once again to be congratulated for his exceptional efforts.

Thanks to the efforts of Cllr G Payne, all the necessary risk assessments have been completed, and the essential provision of further safety equipment made.

The allotments are now well used.

In terms of planning for the future:

- plot owners are being more firmly encouraged to return plots to grass as soon as possible, so as to simplify maintenance. The Committee is conscious that this is a very sensitive area, and is taking a "light touch" approach at this time;
- management policies have been drafted;
- a more structured approach to the review of fees is being considered;

- paths will require to be extended into the new area, and replacement of the water supply/tap is to be investigated.

It should be noted that the burial ground is also the site of 3 war graves, maintained by the War Graves Commission. Unlike normal plots these are allocated in perpetuity.

Cllr Denis W Payne

Planning Committee, Arbury Park Planning Sub-Committee

All members of the Parish Council are on the Planning Committee, with delegated members on the Arbury Park Sub-Committee only

Planning Committee, and the Arbury Park Planning Sub-Committee, have met 19 times during the year.

We've only had 58 applications (according to the SCDC website - it seems like more) to deal with in the Parish - ranging from a single satellite aerial, through advertising signs, extensions up to a hotel, 113 homes on Impington Lane and 182 "dwellings" on Arbury Park.

Again, according to the SCDC website, 3 were withdrawn, 5 were refused, and a number are awaiting decision/processing in some way.

In addition, of course, there have been the ongoing LDF issues, a considerable amount of effort by a small number of Councillors put into the Northstowe application, the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB) and a wide range of other consultations to deal with.

To put some of these in context:

- 113 homes (the application for the former Unwins site) is more than the number homes in some Parishes;
- actually writing the formal response to some of these local applications was the best part of a day's effort, involving many Councillors;
- the Northstowe application came in several boxes, or 3 CDs (1,293Mb of words, plans etc) - one of the largest applications seen to date;
- the effort put into Northstowe related issues swamps everything!

The Council is also involved in the Joint Action Group (JAG), a loose collaborative group of Parish Councils to the north of Cambridge that is concerned with the Northstowe development and is working together.

As time has passed and more of the Arbury Park works have come on stream, particularly the Community Centre (which could take a full report of itself), the Sub-Committee has accepted an oversight role for the work of the contract project co-ordinator, who reports to the AP Residents Group.

A number of Councillors are "regulars" at these meetings, and their skills and experience is being felt, eg:

- St Andrew's Way, where a strong case, supported by a presentation at Planning Committee, contributed to a rejection of an unsatisfactory scheme in poor location;
- "Unwins" site, where there was good engagement with the planning consultants, pre-meetings (something common place with the major Arbury Park applications), and a public meeting. Almost all the Parish's concerns transferred into the reasons for refusal given by SCDC;

- Northstowe, where all but the most challenging (to SCDC policies) objection was carried forward.

In addition skills built up over time, Councillors have attended SCDC/CPALC and CPRE training courses.

The Committee has a number of concerns regarding both staffing levels and turnover at SCDC leading to issues over enforcement, satisfactory discharge of conditions and different advice from different officers. None of these have had major impact, though one application, refused by committee against officer recommendation, is generating real cause for concern about process.

Councillors will continue to work on the Northstowe application, CGB, LDF, Arbury Park and, of course, porches, extensions and conservatories in the coming year. They'll continue to bring their judgement and local knowledge and understanding to each recommendation, in the best interest of the community.

Cllr Denis W Payne

Histon Poores Land Charity

The Pooresland charity is continuing to maintain its allotments. The Charity has broadened its remit and is now able to offer small amounts of money to a wider section of the residents of Histon and Impington. This is to include both male and female residents and who do not have to be retired e.g. single parents.

Each Christmas a small monetary gift is made to the widows / widowers of the two parishes.

The Charity would welcome being informed of any residents who may be in need of a small sum of money or the purchase of a moderate item to assist them. This is throughout the year.

The names / details should be passed to one of the Pooresland committee.

Josephine P Teague, Impington PC Trustee

Histon & Impington Mobile Warden Scheme

The Mobile Warden scheme continues as before with very much the same numbers (averaging 15 over the year). The services of the Warden Phyllis Peacocke continues to be very much appreciated by all. It has been suggested that the Scheme takes a table at the Feast Market in July to raise profile some more. Although now retired from Council I will continue on the body this year, but a Councillor representative is required for Histon and we look forward to welcoming that person to our meetings. Hooda Abdullah is now the Impington representative.

This year the Scheme asked for £750 from the Council for which they were grateful. It would seem likely that this year the request will be higher, perhaps back to the original level of £1,500

Malcolm Ruel, representative to the Group

Histon & Impington Youth Committee (advisory body)

During the last year, the membership of the committee has changed. We said goodbye and thanks to Mark Lawton, but welcomed Pene Nudds to our number. We also welcomed Sophie Lucas as our new youth worker, taking the place of Andrea who went on maternity leave in the summer term. The Youth Committee and Sophie have been well supported by Paula Mayes who is in charge of youth work in our patch.

During the year work on the skate park project progressed, with the small team of skaters and the skate park design group GBH Ramps Ltd. The resulting skate park design was incorporated into a project proposal which was presented to the two parish councils. The young people also made a successful bid to the Youth Bank for £8000 to fund the youth shelter which was part of the overall design. Unfortunately the project has been shelved and the grant money returned as the proposed site for the park, on the Recreation Ground, could not be made available. It is hoped that the new skate bowl planned for development on Arbury Park will help satisfy local need.

Of the four youth clubs started last year it is only the two sports youth clubs that are continuing to attract significant numbers of young people. Declining membership and other difficulties at the church halls have seen the transfer of the Monday night junior club to IVC and the Tuesday night senior club closed and replaced with outreach work. Additional projects have also taken place within IVC during the school day. A discussion was held with the Principal of IVC, Rob Campbell, to consider the possibility of having some dedicated space within the college for youth work.

As in previous years the youth committee had a presence at the Feast market and will be sponsoring events on the Recreation Ground during May.

A new responsibility this year has been the start of youth work at Arbury Park. A youth group is gradually taking shape as residents move into homes on the site. The current meeting place is known as the 'Banana' but there is hope of having space in the new community building when it is opened.

More recently a small number of young people have been causing problems at the Recreation Ground and in the Villages generally. Our youth workers are involved with all other agencies to help find a solution for this. It has to be recognised that provision for young people in the Villages is poor and a dedicated space for our young people and youth work is much needed.

Councillor Hooda Abdullah, representative to the Advisory Body

May 2008

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