

Cotton Parish Council - Chairman's Report for 2018/9

During the year the Council has operated with a full house of seven councillors who have all worked hard to get things done. Some of the events shown below are good examples of that. The Council has always tried to offer good value for the Parish Share of the Council Tax, this has resulted in monies being made available for refurbishment of the Village Hall and some Community Events.

The long-lasting commitment this year has been the restoration of the War Memorial in the Churchyard and the commemorations of the ending of the Great War in November. A large group of parishioners organised a Village Tea Party, a film show of The Battle of the Somme (twice), a 6am bagpiping event at the War Memorial followed by refreshments and the Remembrance Service at the Church. All these events were well attended and funded by the Parish Council as a Community Project. Most importantly was the righting and restoration of the War Memorial itself which had been leaning badly and become overgrown for many years. The engineering done by Parish Councillor David Williams was first class and saved many thousands of pound compared with the extraordinary sums quoted by contractors. These savings enabled all the events to be funded by the Council, still leaving money for new endeavours including a final event in May to dedicate the Memorial with the Bishop of Dunwich in attendance. The Memorial is owned by the Parish Council.

Although residents of Cotton went through a comprehensive public review of housing need and potential land use in the Village in the autumn of 2017 the District Council has dragged its feet completing its own part of the Joint Plan therefore making comments on planning applications tricky, despite this all planning applications are given consideration and comment where appropriate. Having said that the application for 47 houses on the Bacton side of Broad Road has now been brought back to life with a new outline application for 65 houses and one-way working under Pound Hill Railway Bridge – the Parish Council will be opposing the application.

The Parish Council has provided four grit bins at locations renowned for danger in icy conditions but the County Highways Department is finding every reason not to fill them. Our County Councillor, Andrew Stringer is trying to resolve the issue before next winter!

The pothole situation is always with us and the Parish Council keeps pressure on the County Council to fix them.

Plans are in hand for 'Beating Around the Bounds' a 10 mile walk in May round the Parish using footpaths nearest to the official boundary. The Parish Council will be sponsoring the event by providing funds for the refreshments in the Church after the event.

The Parish Council meets at least six times each year. The meetings are informal and everybody attending is encouraged to join in, this has often resulted in more than the usual one attender, which is encouraging and adds greatly to the value of the meetings.

Chris Tester, Paul Howlett and Marian Cocksedge have decided to 'retire' from the council. Their input has been most valuable and much appreciated. In the coming weeks I look forward to seeing some new faces stepping up to the plate and 'having a go'.