

Yaxham Parish Council Annual Report & Meeting 31st May 2018

At the Annual Parish meeting Peter Lowings, Chairman, Yaxham Parish Council reported that “quite a lot has happened for the Parish Council and the village in the past year”.

Goodbyes and Hellos

- We’ve said our goodbye to one of our longest standing members, David Myhill, a major contributor to making Yaxham what it is today. David you will always have the village’s and the council’s thanks for all you have done and achieved. We have also said goodbye to our Clerk, Kristine Wilson, who was a tremendous support to the Council and myself. Thank you Kristine.
- Less pleasantly, we had to terminate the contract of our Finance Officer, Griselda Hubbard. The police investigation found she had committed fraud against this Council.
- We have welcomed our new councillor, Ian Martin, in August, and he has brought much to this role, not least his planning experience from the Neighbourhood Plan. And, we have welcomed Melanie Eversfield as our new Clerk. Melanie says “I love a challenge”. Good luck Melanie.

Planning in the past Year.

- The Neighbourhood Plan was completed and endorsed overwhelmingly by more than half the village in May last year. It was then “made” by Breckland Council in June 2017 and is part of Breckland’s Planning Policies. A first for Breckland and a huge achievement for a small village.
- We saw-off Lanpro/Glavenhill for a second time in on their application for 25 homes north of Norwich Road, on the 1st of their 24ha that they own between Yaxham and Pinns Corner. Inevitably they have appealed and we await the result of that Appeal.
- In January, we helped Toftwood see-off Lanpro/Glavenhill application for 291 new homes west of the railway line. Also in January, we supported Mattishall in resisting the Gladman Appeal.
- We are now representing Yaxham at Breckland’s Local Plan Public Examination, seeking to retain Yaxham as a rural village with settlement boundaries. This to enable the small-scale organic growth of the village and resist the intense pressure from developers and their friends, for having Yaxham to be declared a Local Service Centre. We do not have the services and do not want large-scale development that being a Local Service Centre would bring.
- We are always appreciative of the support of the community in these ventures, and certainly Breckland has been impressed by the numbers of Yaxham residents that do attend these meetings when Yaxham’s interests are at stake. Thank you to all of you who make the time to rally to Yaxham’s cause when required.

Services & Businesses in the Village

- First the good news, the Mill has re-opened as Rani’s Fine Dining. We wish them all the best in this. And the Forge B&B in Station Road is going from strength to strength.
- Our campaign to retain the Konnect 4 bus service to Dereham and Norwich, has been successful. This is a great relief to all who depend on this service.
- Yaxham Waters, appears to go from strength to strength as far as the Café and the Lodges are concerned and we hope they will finally deliver connection Anglian Water’s foul main sewer system. Sadly the Yaxham Waters shop closed at Christmas.
- The loss of the only Post Box in Clint Green has upset many local residents, especially the elderly. We are working with Breckland and George Freeman, MP to get a new Post Box soon.
- The YVAA and the Village Hall is flourishing and working with the Council. We helped facilitate the Portakabin for changing rooms for the recreation field being up and running in due course.

Other Parish Council Matters

- A first for Yaxham in recent years is applying to Norfolk County Council for Parish Share grants for 3 new bus shelters and village gateways.
- Another first for the Council is to have set up a projects and grants fund to help organisations in the village make Yaxham even better.
- Dog Poo is always with the Parish Council. This year, following the NP4Yaxham Village Consultation in November, a new dog waste bin will be going at the junction of Cutthroat Lane & Paper Street. And we're replacing the one rotting on the recreation field.
- The Council has held the usual 10 formal meetings a year, plus meetings at Breckland and elsewhere, and various councillors have attended training courses this year as well.
- Council meetings have been well-attended with often some 20 members of the public attending, and the record this year is 42 – over 6% of the voters in the village. Thank you.
- Lastly we have frozen the Parish Council precept – our part of the Council Tax bill – for 2018/19 and hope to do so again this autumn. There are enough demands on all our money, without the Parish Council asking for more, unless there is a very good reason.

Thank you's

I must extend a warm thank you to the support we have received from our elected representatives: Breckland Ward Councillor, Paul Claussen, who has been a great support to the Council this year; and Cliff Jordan at County; and George Freeman MP. A big thank you to all three.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you to George Crummett as a long-standing, and long-suffering, Vice-Chairman, and to my other colleagues who have served with me this past 12 months.