

Linton Parish Council - Chairman's Annual Report

In May 2010 there was a scheduled Parish Council election. As there were not enough candidates the election was uncontested, with the addition of Jacque Wilson. However just after this, David Champion, Sally Dew, Brian Manley and Merrie Mannassi were co-opted to the Council.

The Parish Council is now lucky enough to regularly have members of the public at its meetings and after adopting new standing orders there is much more interaction with the public during the meetings. Over the year we have had both young and old attend our meetings and a particular highlight was when we had ten young people present to talk about the skate ramp and let us know their thoughts and ideas about what they felt should be done. Councillors were then able to make a much more informed decision, and the skate ramp is to be repaired and reinstated, with plans for enhancement for the future already being discussed, and the young people willing to help by fundraising.

The last year has, as always, seen many fantastic events from the Book Festival to the Linton Village College Heritage Project. The High Street was again adorned with chariots galore for the Wacky Races and camels visited the Infant School as part of Epiphany. Just reading the Linton News every month shows how active the village is, and the Parish Council has to be the same.

County Council spending cuts have hit the village quite severely. Although we were lucky enough to have part of the High Street resurfaced this year, the rest of the village still looks like a patchwork quilt and there are still plenty of potholes. It will be some time before any of these areas see any resurfacing as the Highways budget is always the first to take cuts. The Parish Council has agreed to part fund its village Youth Club, like other Parish Councils, saving them from closure. In return Linton Parish Council will be in partnership with Locality, who run the youth clubs, and will therefore have a greater say in the way it is run and any extra work we wish to be undertaken. The future provision of youth services is likely to be the responsibility of the Parish Councils, and we will look at ways of combining resources with other clubs in the area. Linton Library is also under threat and it seems that the provision of library facilities is now going to rest with volunteers – Linton library is a valuable asset to the village and would be a considerable loss if it were to close. The Parish Council will do all it can to make sure the facility remains.

During 2010 the Police Station moved from its unsocial position on the A1307 to the centre of the village, renting space at the Fire Station. This is hopefully a permanent solution however the Fire Service is also faced with cutting front line services, and we will watch this situation very closely.

The Parish Council heard during 2010 that its application for the Camping Close to be a village green was successful and it was officially opened by our MP, the Right Honourable James Paice, in October. During October we also heard that the application for a wind farm at Catley Park had been refused by the planning inspectorate for reasons of air safety and also the effect that it would have on the heritage of the area and the local landscape. For over 70% of the village electorate who undertook the Parish Council survey this was the result that they wished for.

The Nichols Court development has been an ongoing issue throughout the year, however some twelve months later a planning application has been received for the lighting scheme, which is something that should have been done some three or four years ago. The Parish Council were concerned when they were informed by South Cambridgeshire District Council that Sanctuary Housing would not meet with them, but thankfully this matter has been resolved and the Parish Council is meeting with them shortly.

The car park in Coles Lane is now the responsibility of the Parish Council – this was the subject of SCDC cuts and would have been lost as a village amenity – the lease has now been signed and it is protected for the future. Local sporting groups are applying for funding to extend the Pavilion. The Cathodeon Centre is currently being extended to house the new Children's Centre. The Heritage Trail is now in place thanks to the work of Cllrs Bald and Gee – I know many residents have already tried it out. As you can see, there are still many improvements being made to the village, and small improvements, such as these, are very important to the sustainability of the pubs, shops and businesses in the village.

The quest for village allotments is still at an exciting stage. The Working Party is no longer just a Parish Council subcommittee, but a village organisation. We are determined and committed that we will have allotments within the next two years.

Sadly not everything was good news. The skate ramp is temporarily fenced off for health and safety reasons, and the surrounding security fencing has been damaged many times.

The Parish Council continues to work in partnership with various organisations. The CCTV on the Recreation Ground has been a vital resource for the Police at a particularly difficult time for the young people of the village.

I am sure the next year will bring its own challenges to the Parish Council. This year I faced my own but thankfully as Chairman I was backed by great councillors – we live in a democracy where we do not expect everyone to agree – but the parish councillors of this village are determined to do the best for our village – Parish Council meetings are not the war-zone that others have led you to believe, but have become the place where the interests of the village come first with the injection of a certain amount of common sense and humour. To my fellow councillors, I would like to say thank you. I would also like to thank Sue and Anne, Colin and Ivy for all the work that they do. As I come to the end of my term as Chairman, I would like to say that I have been very proud to be Chair of Linton Parish Council. The village of Linton is simply one of the best – but more importantly so are the residents of the village, young or old.

Esther Cornell