

TERLING AND FAIRSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 22nd May 2012

(To published on the Website, on the Notice boards and in the Parish Magazine)

This report is a summary of the work of the Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2012. The Parish Council met twelve times. Following the election in May, which was not contested, Mr Reg Hunt joined the council. There is currently one vacancy.

Parish Council members have an area of responsibility and serve on one or more of the Council's committees. During the year councillors have attended various meetings and courses on subjects such as Planning, Law and Procedures, Funding, Rural Broadband and the Localism Bill.

At the end of the year our Clerk, Mrs Jayne Halfhide passed her Certificate in Local Council Administration to become a fully qualified Local Council Clerk. This involved nine months of courses and study and, as a result, I am confident that all our policies and procedures are up to date and in place. Congratulations, Jayne, and thank you for the enormous amount of work you do on behalf of the Council.

Ward Councillors are invited to attend all meetings. Our District Councillors Margaret Galione and Tom Cunningham have attended meetings and we thank them for the work they undertake on our behalf. Our County Councillor, Michael Lager, is in regular contact with our Clerk and receives copies of minutes of our meetings.

We are always pleased to welcome members of the public at our meetings and thank you for your interest. The suggestion box, situated in the shop, continues to be an effective means of communication.

PC Jason Corrigan and PSCO Nikki Doubleday have attended meetings during the year to report on the policing of the Parish. They follow up any issues which give us cause for concern. Terry Blunden is our Greenfields Representative. My thanks to you all.

Planning and Highways

Twenty planning applications were considered during the year, including four tree preservation orders which were considered by our Tree Warden, Angus MacWillson. Angus is always on hand to give advice regarding the trees in the parish and I thank him for his work on our behalf.

The Pub Working Group continue to liaise with the owner of the former Rayleigh Arms and I would like to thank them for all that they are doing to, hopefully, bring back a pub to Terling.

Potholes continue to be a major problem on roads throughout the parish. There have been many other Highways concerns, most notably in Ranks Green, which we have attempted to resolve with Essex Highways. We are in regular contact with the department but many of our roads are still in need of repair.

On a more positive note, an on going problem regarding HGV access to Birds Farm and Noakes Lanes was finally resolved, after many months of discussions.

We are concerned at the damage to the area around Terling Ford caused by the owners of large vehicles using the area as a playground and hope that the area will be restored soon.

I would like to thank the Planning and Highways Committee, Robin Dixon, Pauline Bird and Reg Hunt for their work on these issues.

Environment

Environmental issues are a major part of the work of the Parish Council. We continue to be a member of the Parish Paths Partnership to ensure that the footpaths are well maintained and accessible to all. Thank you to the many volunteers, led by Sheila Alder and Sue Poole in Fuller Street and Trevor and Joyce Lewis in Ranks Green, who attend our litter picking sessions, part of our Street Cleaning Agreement with Braintree District Council. Thanks too to Ray Pond and Sarah Elliot who assist with the organisation in Terling. I know that there are also many of you who pick up litter as part of your regular walks around the villages. Your help is much appreciated. Similarly, reports of dog fouling are followed up with the Dog Warden and dog bins have been provided. All issues of fly tipping are reported and dealt with promptly.

In response to a request from local residents a notice board has been placed on Tudor House Barn.

We maintain the various benches and seats in the parishes which are owned by the Council. The seat which was placed near Oakfield Lane to commemorate King George VI's Coronation has been replaced and now has an additional plaque to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Thanks to the Environment Committee, Darren White, Trevor Lewis and Louisa Sime, and to our Village Handymen, Daniel and Alan Jiggins who do so much to keep our villages looking so good.

Health and Welfare

I am delighted to report that the Parish Council has received an Essex County Council Big Society Grant of £7,500 towards improving the pitch and providing new changing facilities at the football field. Thanks to Louisa Sime who prepared the application and is leading the project on our behalf. A local team with players from the villages are planning use the ground next season but we also hope that parishioners will use the area for recreation. I understand that a Rounders Team has been suggested!

During the summer a large branch fell from the oak tree resulting in the Children's Playground being closed for several weeks whilst the tree was inspected and fenced off. The playground is checked weekly and ROSPA carry out an annual inspection. I would like to thank David Anderson who repaired the bouncy rabbit.

In August the Parish Council funded a Children's Activity Day in the Village Hall.

We are grateful to Mrs Sue Gore who generously donated a defibrillator in memory of her late mother. The machine is sited in the phone box on Owls Hill and in October about thirty parishioners took advantage of a training session organised by the Community Heartbeat Trust. The equipment is very easy to use and, in the case of an emergency, on dialling 999 the ambulance service will give full instructions. Thanks too to Debbie Burns who checks the defibrillator each week.

Terling School held a competition regarding what we could do with the phone boxes. Victoria Stoughton was the winner, but there were some wonderful suggestions from everyone. We hope to display work from the school in one of the boxes in the near future.

In addition to our weekly buses to Braintree, Witham and Chelmsford we now have the Monday Shopper Bus which picks up passengers at their door. I would like to thank Daphne Parris for attending the Passenger Transport Meetings and for her hard work in keeping these services running.

Thank you Ann Anderson and Sheila Alder who make up the Health and Welfare Committee, Trevor Lewis, who spends an enormous amount of time advising us on Health and Safety issues and ensuring that our Risk Assessments are up to date, and Pauline Bird, our Village Hall Council Representative.

IT and Communications

Thanks to Colin Cutler, our IT and Communications Adviser, our web site is regularly up-dated and is an excellent source of information. The Internet Café in the shop continues to be popular as is the Events Board. Thanks to Colin and to Ray Pond and Sarah Elliot for their help and support.

Thanks also to Colin and Heather Cutler for their continued work on the Village Design Statement, now nearing completion.

Finance

I am pleased that the precept for the financial year ending March 2013 will remain unchanged. The unaudited accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2012 are available to be viewed by arrangement with the Clerk. I would like to thank the Finance Committee, Ian Smith, Sheila Alder and Robin Dixon.

Estate Liaison

Pauline Bird and Trevor Lewis liaise with local landowners on behalf of the Council. I would like to thank the landowners for the support they give to our parishes in so many ways.

The Parish Council have considered a number of consultation documents circulated by Braintree District Council, Essex County Council and other organisations and have ensured that the views of the parish were submitted for consultation, including comments on the Village Envelope.

This is a brief summary of another busy year. Should you wish to know more the minutes of all our meetings are available on the website www.terlingandfairstead.co.uk or by application to the Clerk.

It only remains for me to thank my Council colleagues for their support and for their hard work throughout the year

Thank you for your interest and I hope to see you at a Parish Council Meeting in the near future.

Sarah McNamara
Chairman