

WEST DEREHAM

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING REPORT 2013-14

West Dereham Parish Councillors

NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACT
Mrs Pam Bullas	The Hollies, Station Road, West Dereham, PE33 9RR	501287
Mrs Claire Cann Chairman	The Old Rectory, St Andrew's Walk, West Dereham, PE33 9RT	501540
Mr Tom Foy	10 Church Road, West Dereham, PE33 9RF	501222
Mrs Lorraine Hunt	Open View, The Row, West Dereham, PE33 9RH	07917-865025
Ms Paula Kellingray	9 Church Close, West Dereham, PE33 9RR	500256
Mrs Claire Page	1 Chequers Cottages, Station Road, West Dereham, PE33 9RR	500793
Mrs Pam Walker	Fiddler's Roof, The Row, West Dereham, PE33 9RH	501426

The clerk to the Parish Council is:

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**Record of West Dereham Annual Parish Meeting
held in West Dereham Village Hall on Thursday 10 April 2014 at 7.30pm**

In the chair: Mrs Claire Cann - Chairman of West Dereham Parish Council.

1. The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.
2. Copies of the record of the 2013 Annual Parish Meeting had been delivered to all households in West Dereham and copies were also made available at the meeting on 10 April 2014. It was agreed that the report was a true account of the meeting held on 17 April 2013.
3. **Parish Council Report (given by Claire Cann)**

The Chairman began by mentioning personnel changes to the Parish Council during the period. Councillor Tom Foy returned to the PC in June 2013 from deployment in Afghanistan. He would be absent again from May 2014 until October.

Councillor Mark Dawson resigned in July 2013 due to pressure of work. The PC was very grateful for his professional and expert contribution.

Councillor Lorraine Hunt was co-opted in September 2013. She works in local government and has proved a valuable colleague.

Mandy Maguire acted as Parish Clerk between May and August 2013 when she resigned. The new Parish Clerk is Sarah Thorpe who was appointed in January 2014. She is highly qualified and is already a valuable asset to the PC. Ben Peach was appointed as Village Handyman in December 2013. The village was already benefitting from his appointment, with new allotment gates fitted and some of the bridge railings painted.

Conferences and Seminars

Councillors and the Clerk between them had attended a number of conferences and seminars during the year. Many had been funded personally by the councillors. In July 2013, some attended the Norfolk Association of Local Councils summer conference and in the same month the Norfolk Records Office. In September 2013, WDVH hosted Norfolk County Councils Pathways talk and in October 2013, councillors attended a seminar on green burial. In November 2013, the NALC autumn conference took place and also in November representatives went to the University of East Anglia Historical Pathways talk. Finally, the Clerk went to the NALC spring conference in March 2014.

Allotments

A separate report will be made by the Allotments Liaison Officer, Richard French. The PC would like to extend its thanks to Richard for his invaluable voluntary work in this much needed role.

Parish Councillors carried out Allotment Inspections on 25 May, 28 September, and 7 December 2013, and 1 March 2014.

Recognising that the allotments are a valuable village asset, the allotment contract was reviewed and redrafted. It provides for quarterly inspections, a refundable deposit if plots are left tidy and plots to be deemed abandoned if there is no activity on them for three months. Clarification on sheds and greenhouses was also made.

Village Assets Inspection

An inspection of the Village Assets took place on 1 March 2014,

- a. Allotment Gates: East gate to be painted with Black Hammerite paint. West gate to have heavy duty washers and generously rewelded. New fixings to be obtained as incorrect ones supplied with new gates.
- b. Phone Boxes: Plan to adopt phone boxes. BT will need to remove phone fixtures and glass. Will need cleaning, repainting and Perspex fitting.
- c. Telegraph pole no 105: Old notices and drawing pins to be removed.
- d. Area around phone box, Church Road: immediate area is strewn with rubbish – to be cleared. Ditch behind the phone box is full of rubbish and needs dredging. Authority/owner responsible to be established and reported for action.
- e. Bert Starling Seat: needs urgent repairs to wooden slats and metal supports – family to be contacted.
- f. Joyce Smith Seat: in good condition – no action required.
- g. Village sign south: metal sign needs repainting.
- h. Millennium tree guard: removed by Bonnetts – to ask for return or credit note.
- i. Village Notice Boards, Church Road: southern board new magnetic fixings to be purchased.
- j. NCC signpost, junction of Church Road and Wereham Road: to be rubbed down & repainted.
- k. Stocks Bridge (footpath): brickwork in dangerous repair – Highways asked to action.

- l. Stocks Bridge (road): post and railings to be cleaned and repainted.
- m. Tree (nr Stocks Bridge): low overhanging branches to be lopped.
- n. Dog Waste Bin, Church Road: no action required.
- o. Planters, Church Road: removed bulbs will be replanted.
- p. Bridge Church Road, near Hudson's garage: to be cleaned and repainted.
- q. Bus Shelter, Church Road: outside brickwork to be cleaned, insert wood to be treated and inside to be cleaned and repainted.
- r. Post Boxes, Church Road & Station Road: both need cleaning and repainting and one needs repositioning – Royal Mail to be asked to action.
- s. Cemetery Gates, St Andrews Walk: one gate is off its hinges - temporary repair to be done as future plans involve new gates and pillars. Builders to be approached for tender for new pillars.
- t. Eddie Drew Seat: needs cleaning and wood retreating – family to be contacted.
- u. Doug Hawes seat: needs cleaning and wood retreating – contact details needed for family.
- v. Village Sign north, Lime Kiln Road: Cracks in plinth to be repointed and metal sign to be repainted.

Standing Orders

Standing Orders were reviewed in May 2013. The PC agreed to include the practice of a three year budget plan and quarterly allotment inspections.

Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations were reviewed in May 2013. In June 2013, it was agreed to nominate a Finance Councillor to work with the Responsible Financial Officer (the Clerk). In April 2014, Councillors approved the employment of an accountancy firm to handle the clerk's salary, a move which is approved by the National ALC.

Information Commissioners Office

In May 2013, the PC registered with the ICO as part of the Data Protection requirements.

Policy Documents

The Parish Council's Risk Assessment and Code of Conduct were updated. New policy documents approved by the PC were a Publication Scheme, a Business Continuity Plan, a Data Protection Plan, the Cemetery Risk Assessment, a Community Engagement Strategy, the Clerk's Contract and Appraisal Document, a Travel and Expenses Policy, a Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, a Health and Safety Policy, an Equal Opportunities Policy, and a Media Relations Policy. This had involved a considerable amount of work but formed a solid basis for Parish Council standards.

Core Strategy for Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

In September 2013, the BC published its 25 year plan. West Dereham was classed as a "small village and hamlet". It was considered that development "would have a negative impact on the countryside" and only "limited infill development" should be permitted.

Broadband

There has been constant dialogue with NCC/BT over the long promised broadband provision for West Dereham. The latest position was Superfast BB was to be covered by two different cabinets and implemented in two separate stages between April and September 2014.

Farm Business Tenancy

Councillors had the FBT contract amended to provide a two meter buffer zone adjacent to both the allotments and the gardens to protect them from crop spray.

Cemetery Extension

The cemetery extension was levelled, grassed and poppy-seeded between October and November 2013. Councillors planted 1200 spring bulbs which were currently in bloom.

Letters were sent to all local Funeral Directors and Stonemasons regarding removal of excess soil and levelling grave mounds.

Willow Lane Footpath

NCC notified a local family of an ancient Right of Way over their land where they wished to dispense with the permitted vehicular access and re-instate a public footpath. The PC had met with all the interested parties and were in negotiations with NCC in an endeavour to find an outcome which would satisfy everyone.

Grange Farm

In late November 2013, farmyard detritus from the new tenants was dumped in one of the old lime pits on Lime Kiln Road; the hedgerow was torn up and the established wildlife living in the old pit was displaced. The PC made a formal complaint to the Environment Agency. In all the PC's dealings with Norfolk Property Services it found them to be extremely unhelpful and they have consistently avoided the PC's request for a meeting. The EA has just produced its report and has directed that the waste dumped in the old lime pit must be removed.

Police Matters

Incidents in the village requiring a police presence over the year under report have included constant motorbike activity late at night, a small house fire, theft of tools from a shed, a road traffic accident, theft of bikes from a shed, and an attempted garage break-in with crowbars.

Glazewing

There have been continued unsatisfactory relations with Glazewing. In May 2013, GW told one of the councillors that if the PC continued to criticise them, they would not co-operate with the PC. In July 2013, there were complaints from residents of food-waste smells coming from the lorries and the company was subsequently visited by the Environment Agency. The planting that had been agreed to screen the row of skips at a meeting in April 2011 with Elizabeth Truss MP was not in the agreed place. The PC's suggestion to put large numbers on the sides of GW vehicles to identify them was refused with no explanation. The PC received regular complaints from residents of very early morning traffic between 01.00 - 02.00 and 03.00 - 04.00; GW refused to provide figures to show the number of vehicles because they claimed the PC would use the information against them. No progress had been made on requests for vehicles to have safety netting in the face of metal poles and rubbish falling from them.

Precept

The PC had reluctantly doubled the precept because of attempts in Parliament to cap the same. The precept was discussed at the three PC meetings prior to setting it and all households in the village were advised of this. The PC followed numerous other local councils who took the same action. Last year the PC had reduced the precept and for the two years previous to that it had not raised the precept above the rate of inflation; there were therefore insufficient funds. There was a need to invest in the village and the PC would be working from a five year plan.

The Chairman concluded the PC Report by thanking all the councillors who contributed so much of their time to the voluntary duties of the PC. She also acknowledged the personal contributions made by councillors to alleviate expense for the village such as paying for training, providing free tea, coffee and biscuits every month, planting the cemetery bulbs, litter picking and printing documents and buying stationery.

4. Handyman report (summary of the report given by Benjamin Peach)

Since starting the role in January I have installed new gates at the allotment, painted the bridge railings at Stock's Bridge and tidied up the wooden plant boxes. I have now been given a list of work that needs doing in the village following the annual inspection of village assets carried out by members of the Parish Council on 1 March 2014. As I carry out work within the parish I am looking out for other items that need doing and am happy for any additional items to be referred to me.

5. Allotment report (given by Richard C. French)

A very cold start to the growing season was a challenge to most of our tenants and the weather did not really return to normal temperatures until late April. However sowings soon caught up with near normal rainfall during the summer and way above average during the months before Christmas. This left all the rain water butts full to overflowing for the coming season.

There was an influx of four new tenants in March including two from the village and the others from Wretton and Downham Market.

There was a case last year where a tenant decided to stop cultivating their plot without informing the Parish Council or myself. This resulted in the plot being left untended for at least three months. The Council had no other option but to invoke rule six of the tenancy agreement and terminate the tenancy as from August 13th. By this time the plot was in an appalling condition with rampant perennial weed infestation and will take weeks to clean before it can be offered to another tenant. In view of this the Parish Council have agreed to implement a deposit system whereby incoming tenants pay a sum along with the first years rent according to the size of the plot rented. This will be returned should the tenant decide to give up the tenancy, but only if the plot is in the same state of cultivation as at the start of the agreement. If not the money will be used to clean up the plot. A plot is weed free and well cultivated by me before anyone is offered a new tenancy.

New double gates have been fitted to the West end entrance and the East side gate has been given a fresh coat of paint.

There are two vacant plots, one of which is a quarter (11 x 18 yards) and is available now, and the other is a half (11 x 35 yards) and will be available in September.

6. **Village Hall Report (given by Paula Kellingray)**

The Village Hall has had another very successful year.

Events in the Village Hall over the last 12 months have included:

- Whiskey and port tasting evenings
- 2 x carpet bowls competitions
- Easter, Summer, and Christmas Draws
- Monthly bingos
- 6 x quiz nights
- Coffee mornings since October 2013 on the third Saturday of the month

Musical events have included:

- Bizet To Broadway - An evening of operatic arias and hits from the musicals.
- Timescape - Music from the 1940s to sing along and dance to.
- Gemma B (twice) - A local female vocalist singing hits from the 1960s to the present day.
- New Years Eve - with dancing to music played by Funky Diva Jukebox. A ploughman's buffet is provided and a glass of bubbly at midnight.

Food events we have provided are:

- Pie supper
- Italian night
- Bangers and mash
- Quiche supper
- Soup and pudding night
- 4 x summer barbecues

In addition to the above we have continued with our popular Fish and Chip nights which this year have raised £1,600 for local charities. The following charities have been helped this year:

- Spinal Injuries Association
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- Psuedomyoxoma
- 1st Wereham and Wretton Scout Group
- The Village Hall
- Aspires

Our regular Village Bar nights are very well supported. This is an opportunity to meet other villagers and make new friends. If you have not visited us yet please do so. Teas, coffees, and soft drinks are always available as well as a good range of beers, wines, and spirits.

After the success of Christmas at the hall in 2012, we decided to extend our Christmas opening hours and included some fun quizzes in 2013. The response was overwhelming and everyone had a really friendly and enjoyable time.

Other village organised events that have taken place at the hall include:

- Armed Forces Day
- Heritage Open Day
- Church Harvest Supper with a talk from the Bishop
- Remembrance Day Lunch
- Church Christmas Bingo

Our regular hirers include:

Parish Council

Heritage Group

Keep Fit classes twice weekly

We had eight private parties booked last year plus give outside bookings for training days and seminars.

The hall has several private bookings in already for the next 12 months, these along with our regular programme of events, should see the hall grow in strength over the next year with your support. All Village Hall events are put in the Parish Magazine for your information.

Please remember this is your Village Hall, so please come along and join in the fun in a nice and friendly environment.

All that remains for me to do is to thank the Village Hall Committee for all their hard work in making the hall the success that is.

7. West Dereham Village Trust Report (given by Pam Bullas)

The Village Hall Committee has started to make repayments to the Village Trust following the large loan made to assist with the extension and improvement works to the Village Hall. One thousand pounds has been repaid to date.

There still remains on deposit a sum of money promised to St Andrew's Church to assist them in the provision of a WC and a further sum set aside for the provision of children's play equipment.

8. West Dereham Heritage Group Report (given by Pam Walker)

The Heritage Group has continued to expand, gaining several new members both locally and from new residents to the village and is in a very healthy position.

There has been a varied, extensive and comprehensive programme in the last year.

Not only have we continued our popular round table discussions, where members bring subjects and opinions for the benefit of the group but we have had a wealth of speakers on many subjects such as a slide show of old Downham Town, a talk on ghost hunting, a local Game Keeper gave an excellent presentation on the history of nature and best of all Paddy Murfitt brought Medieval England alive with a history lesson illustrated with clothes, utensils and weapons of the day.

There was also conducted walk of Kings Lynn by Dr. Paul Richards and another excellent walk and talk around West Dereham by our own Richard French.

All this was backed up by holding an open day with stalls and classic cars. The summer BBQ and the Christmas social.

There is more to come and we welcome visitors to talks.

9. Saint Andrew's Church Report (given by Pam Walker)

This year has been a very quiet one with no building work to disturb the atmosphere and everything looking good after so many years of restoration and repair. There is no doubt about it; the church is probably in the best condition it has ever been since 1902 when the roof was replaced. However things cannot stand still, as parts reach the end of their life we need to replace, repair or renew. The inner porch is our next target with the project being split into three stages. Firstly we need to renew the 1940s electrics so that the church does not burn down one night. We then need to replace the wood wormed inner porch with a larger version which will contain the new electrics and have space for a

toilet. Due to regulations we have to build a disabled access version which means the last three pews in the church will have to go.

Once we have the toilet we hope to continue on to a fit the organ we obtained many years ago with the pipes going above the toilet and a new console being fitted next to the font. To give this space we will have to balance out the pews by removing the other back three. This will allow us to have a very useful circulation space near the font and stacking chairs will restore the seating capacity. Money is very tight and we need to address this problem soon. We should have enough to carry out the electrics and with money from the village and some other donations we should be able to complete the toilet.

The organ works have used a fair amount of money already in the design work by our architect but we have some time to raise the rest to complete this very ambitious project. While talking about money the church is now under threat of closure as a new regime at Ely has decided that each church must pay its own way and raise the full parish share which is used to pay for the clergy, support from Ely and the "cure of souls" in the parish. This money comes from the parish and is paid directly to Ely. This is nothing new and everything raised is used the following year by the Diocese in our parishes. However up until now we have raised around 2 to 3 thousand pounds per annum to pay our share. This is on top of money we raise to pay for heating, lighting, repairs and insurance for the church itself. The short fall has traditionally been paid for by larger and richer parishes elsewhere in the Diocese who voluntarily pay two or three times their share.

These parishes would now like to use their own money in ways that will increase their own parishes and we may have to find up to £15 thousand pounds per annum to stay as we are. The simple solution to this is to have more bums on pews; the hard bit is finding them. We must not despair; St Andrews has been here for centuries and has probably faced this sort of challenge. With faith, good management and goodwill we can find a solution that satisfies everyone. Ely knows this is an impossible dream and its answer is to close uneconomic churches – We will not allow this to happen here.

10. Royal British Legion Report (given by Nick Cann)

On 2 November 2013, at the inaugural meeting of the the West Dereham Branch of The Royal British Legion, 17 people from our village confirmed an interest in joining. Subsequently, 16 applications were received and these were forwarded to Norfolk Headquarters of the Royal British Legion (RBL) in Norwich. Any man or woman over 17 years of age who was willing to accept the aims and objectives of the RBL and who was prepared to support their own Branch could become a member. On 13 February 2014, confirmation was received that West Dereham had been granted the RBL branch number B3689.

For its first year in existence, Peter Starling was elected the Branch Chairman, Nick Cann was elected as Branch Secretary and Paula Kellingray was elected as Treasurer. West Dereham already had its own Standard, which was the original Standard from 1955. This referred to the Village as being a sub-Branch of Downham. It was decided that, if possible, the wording on the Standard should be changed, deleting the prefix 'sub' of 'sub-Branch'. If this proved impossible then a new Standard would need to be commissioned and properly dedicated in St Andrew's Church while the former Standard would be 'Laid-up' in the Church. Paula Kellingray, who had been the Standard Bearer in her Ladies Branch, was confirmed as West Dereham's Standard Bearer.

The RBL members' annual subscription, payable to the RBL, was £14.00. It was agreed that the West Dereham Branch's annual subscription for administrative purposes should be £1.00. Thus the annual subscription was to be £15.00.

The frequency of meetings was discussed and it was proposed there should be either 3 or 4 meetings annually. Months suggested were April, June, September, November and December. Members are currently awaiting confirmation of the date for the next meeting when the frequency and dates of meetings will be decided upon.

West Dereham Parish Council

Dates of Meetings

West Dereham Parish Council meets monthly, 11 times a year, on the first Thursday of each month with the exception of January. Meetings are held in the Village Hall. Agendas for meetings are posted on the Parish Council notice boards and on the Parish Council's website: www.westderehamparishcouncil.com. Every household in the village receives monthly notifications of the meetings including Parish Council news.

Dates for 2015 are:

Thursday 5 February

Thursday 5 March

Thursday 2 April

Thursday 30 April - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Thursday 14 May

Thursday 4 June

Monday 9 July

Thursday 6 August

Thursday 3 September

Thursday 1 October

Thursday 5 November

Thursday 3 December

Meetings start at 7.30pm unless otherwise agreed

No meeting is held in January