

Community Connection: 9 January, 2018.

We hope you are all having a good start to the New Year! Our Parish Council Meeting on 08.i.18 included the following matters for discussion:

From the minutes of the meeting of 6.xi.17 we noted that we were still awaiting information on the planning conditions for 'Harvest House' We agreed to investigate further the establishment of a 'Neighbourhood Watch', possibly linked to John Kemp's item (see below). Our County Councillor, Beverley Spratt, spoke to us about three key issues: council tax will be increased in three areas: policing, county council and district council. Bev suggested a Band D rated property could see a rise of (at least) £100 – THIS HAS YET TO BE VOTED AND FINALISED. He discussed the issue of funding adult social care, and agreed to communicate with a member of the public on this issue. The meeting wondered why council tax continued to rise when service budgets were being cut....Beverley explained that many constraints lie outside of the local councils' control. (In passing did you hear that our county councillors have just voted themselves an 11% expenses rise – according to the BBC!) Beverley also asked us to be vigilant about the care of our roads.

Our District Councillor did not attend and therefore his agenda item was 'vacant' – as yet we have not heard from him. We had our own item on highways – a major concern is the vast amount of litter – coffee cups, drink (alcohol ones included), food wrappers and other more sensitive items, that are thrown down on and beside our roads. We had received a letter from a concerned member of our community who regularly collects dustbin-bags full of litter. Our clerk will raise the issue with the county council and we will pursue other avenues – which at the moment include members collecting litter.....We discussed a request for a 'dog bin' to be installed in Common Road, Bressingham, and agreed a £150 allocation to cater for this.

John Kemp presented his paper on caring for members of the community – particularly those people who are lonely. We agreed this can cover all ages, and spent a while on discussing the regulation and legal aspects of this. We agreed to carry out some research, and to hold a meeting on 29 January, which will include this. It was suggested the spirit of the proposal could be incorporated into a possible Neighbourhood Watch initiative.

Our financial position was considered very sound – this before the inclusion of 2018 funding – even though we supported community projects last year. In view of solvency and the rise in other areas financed through council tax, we will not be raising our precept for 2018: but, beware....accounting explanation from the district council when you get your council tax demand may make it appear that there is a small parish council increase when the sum is the same as for last year. In addition to the 'litter correspondence' we had heard from the volunteer medical team that responds to accidents and traumas and Citizens' Advice: we agreed to their requests for a £100 donation in each case (as for last year).

We have agreed to start our meetings at 7.15 in future – in part to accommodate village hall booking procedure. Anglia Water reports appear on the Website – we agreed to write a letter to the utility commending their process and approachability – excellent compared to some others we have experienced! We agreed a general plan to be more proactive in the community – as a small group we spend most of our time on red tape and administration – the outcomes for which are limited.

We would like to move on from this. We discussed the problem of horses on footpaths, and the problems this can create. Our next meeting will be Monday 29 January at 7.15 in the Village Hall.

Richard.