

Community Connect: Supplementary for end of February, 2018.

We have not actually had a Parish Council meeting in February (we had two in January): the next one is on Monday 5 March (1915 in the Village Hall). There is a considerable amount of things going on, so I felt a general update in advance of our next meeting (please come if you can) would be useful. So....

We'll start with the items to which we have to react: these mostly concern planning issues (the South Norfolk District Council department is now called 'Growth and Business Development' – note the hint in the title,) and Highways issues (the responsibility of Norfolk County Council). The two items are closely linked in many cases.

Planning matters: (may I stress again that your Parish Council is NOT the planning authority – SNDC is! We are consultees, with the added term 'statutory', but we can only express an opinion on a scheme – the same as the members of the public. This opinion can be ignored, as in the case of Harvest House.....which is an ongoing source of huge concern.) At the moment this proposed development is generating many a worry, not least over the planning-linked issue of access to the site from the A1066. Very briefly, the proposed lanes for the approach to the site are far too narrow, articulated lorries have insufficient room for turning and trailer 'backswing' and there are no apparent verges for 'refuge' use. Reasoned objective opinion from experts (other than the planners) suggests a high probability of accidents!

Highways: we will all have heard of the accidents on the A1066 which result from frozen water covering the surface of the carriageway. Apparently this water originates from fields bordering the North of the A1066, and apparently the powers-that-be say it is the responsibility of the owners of the fields and ditches. Not a reason for no action to be taken whilst we await the injury or death of some unfortunate travellers. If anyone can find the time to make feelings felt to Norfolk CC Highways, it would be excellent.

We have big problems right through Fersfield concerning heavy vehicles: mainly connected with the grain store on the airfield (the Simpson malt lorries are self-regulated and try very hard to cause minimum disruption); some farm traffic such as beet lorries and the articulated lorries which come right through the village and across The Common on their way to Kenninghall – using a part weight-restricted route and not the planned access! Lorries often make noisy progress from five a.m., causing considerable vibration, disruption and inconvenience – especially when trying to pass another vehicle. (This development was processed by Breckland DC – just like Fersfield Airfield grainstore!) We are trying to design a unified community response to alleviate this issue.

You may be surprised to hear that our very cordial invitation to both the planners (sorry, Growth and Business Development Officers) of the District Council and the Highways department of the County Council to attend our PC meeting and explain publicly the plans for A1066/Harvest House, met with a refusal: the district council considered it 'inappropriate' (they offered me a private meeting with NCC and themselves – I refused, wanting transparency and the public ear) and the county council was 'unable to offer attendance at the meeting'. I'm sorry, but who are the public servants, and

who pays their salaries round here? We have responded – I may just publish the correspondence – and we will keep you all informed.

So, to a few items where we can be proactive and not just chasing the bureaucrats We are very concerned about the effect on our (sole remaining) village shop of the water mains replacement. Takings over the last eight weeks or so have been well down. As a PC we are looking to support this local treasure, and at the same time 'encourage' Anglia Water to make full restitution. Please support our shop all you can.

Our district council has come up trumps and given us a grant to do 'something' special for this year's remembrance Day – some enhancement, perhaps, for the two 'church parade' events in Bressingham and Fersfield, and a midday lunch or similar for us all at the Village Hall. We would like to get a group of people – of all ages – together to plan and make the event work...please do come forward and help!

We are looking to establish an effective Community support scheme, possibly linked to a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. There is separate information about this on the Website – please respond if you are able to take part.

We would all like the most efficient Broadband Link: please see the item about this also on the Website.

Please take care on the roads!

Richard.