

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Joint Parish Council
Reports for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Chair's report for the year

This year has, like all others, seen many changes; some foreseen, others not, but on balance it has been a positive year.

We said goodbye to Cllrs. Barne, Scuffil and most recently, Cllr Parsons; we thank them for their service to our communities and wish them well for the future. We welcomed Cllrs Becky Mather, David Drane and Richard Ellis to the Council and work to keep them supported and involved in Council activities. While some continuity is good for the smooth running of the Council, it is rejuvenating to have fresh blood and the enthusiasm and new ideas that new members of the Council bring.

I am happy to report that our Clerk, Steve Blackburn, has brought a welcome sense of calm and organisation to the position in the 16 months that he has now been with us, and I hope we will continue to enjoy his professionalism and support long into the future. Thanks to Steve's professional qualifications, we were able to adopt the General Power of Competence last year, which enabled us to financially contribute to the Judicial Review that overturned ESC's permission for the IPU's on Mill Lane.

We will continue to look carefully and objectively at all planning applications and respond to them based on material considerations and to reflect the opinions of our residents. To this end, I can only encourage our residents to make their feelings on planning applications known to us; the original plans for a new residence on Woodfield Close were initially thought to be acceptable by myself, but the views of residents in opposition were enough to swing a vote in opposition. Following some open and constructive meetings with the applicants and residents, a revised plan on a nearby site that was more acceptable to neighbouring residents was submitted and earned the support of the Council.

Planning in the future will likely be shaped by the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), and our thanks to the NDP committee for all their work bringing this to fruition. The plan is now in its final stages, and I can only hope and encourage as many of our residents as possible to respond when it is presented for referendum. A number of issues not strictly within the remit of the NDP arose during the consultation, and the Parish Council will be taking these on board when the plan is finally ratified, so we still have plenty to keep us busy in the coming year and beyond. Included in this is the 'Quiet Lanes' initiative which will be pursued when funding becomes available.

We welcomed Dr. Helen Bynum to be our representative as the Tree Warden for our parishes, and this has dovetailed with the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year, with the planting this spring of 3 trees in a corner of the playing field as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. We will install a 'friendly bench' in front of the trees, overlooking the play area. A further planting of a 'Treebilee Oak' in Ellough churchyard is planned, subject to the approval of the CCT (the relevant authority).

Traffic (and the speed of it) remains a concern in the villages, particularly on the A145. At a recent meeting with our local PCO, Officer Amy Yeldham, we explored where community speed monitoring might be located. This was useful, informing Steve and I of various restrictions on how this can take place and also demonstrating to Officer Yeldham some of the issues – despite her wearing a high viz jacket clearly marked 'Police', she was able to observe a number of vehicles speeding through the village, many of these being heavy goods and commercial vehicles. While we will continue to push for more action to control speeding through the village, I fear it will take a fatality or serious injury to a human before the authorities act more decisively.

My sympathies again to the family who recently witnessed their pet being killed by a speeding motorist on this road. If we are to address this as a community, we need our residents to step up and take on some of the work running the Speedwatch scheme. Our Speed indicator signs (SIDs) have now reached the end of their life and have been responsibly disposed of; we have some money in the budget for replacement signs and will need to decide what models are selected for replacement in due course.

East Suffolk Council conducted a Community Governance review earlier this year, inviting comments from residents and Parish Councils on several issues, including Parish boundaries and the number of Councillors representing each Parish. To this end, we canvassed the dozen or so households in Redisham village that fall within Shadingfield for Parish purposes. The overwhelming majority opted to have the boundary redrawn putting them into Redisham, despite them having only Parish meeting status, and ESC were informed accordingly. Also, since we have no Sotterley residents on the Council, despite many appeals, we have asked that the number of Councillors for Sotterley is reduced from 4 to 2; this is also more representative on the Council of the number of residents in our Parishes.

The twice yearly Litter Picks continue and thanks to Tom Barne for organising these and arranging for the collected litter to be taken away. Sadly, our verges and neighbouring green spaces and fields continue to be soiled by thoughtless motorists and unscrupulous fly tippers from time to time.

Our Jubilee Picnic on the Playing Field is planned for 5th June and we want to see many of our residents and their friends and families there. I hope the weather is kind to us. Progress on separating management of the Playing Field has been slow, largely due to issues around ownership and the duration of the licence (currently on a one year rolling renewal), but we will continue to pursue this.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic necessitated the suspension of the previously successful Shadingfield Lunch club. Sadly, by the end of lockdown a number of volunteers had withdrawn their support, leaving us without enough people to service the various roles – financial management and record keeping, setting up the hall, prep and cooking the food, serving, washing up and clearing up the hall afterwards etc. and this led to the decision to close the lunch club. The Parish Council are holding the residual funds until a decision is taken by the remaining Lunch Club trustees on how funds should be dispersed.

Lastly, despite not increasing the precept in recent years (in fact the precept has fallen slightly), our financial situation remains healthy although improvements to the playing field will need investment several times more than our reserves; how we achieve that remains to be seen. What we do know is that we have much to keep us busy in the coming year. I thank each of my fellow Councillors for their support and work improving our communities and Steve for his support and work running the Council.

Caroline 'Cally' Ellis
Chair
Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham & Ellough
jt. Parish Council

Wednesday 18th May 2022

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Joint Parish Council

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2020/21	General	Earmarked	Total
RECEIPTS				
Precept	7,544	7,291.56	-	7,291.56
Cemetery Fees	1,700	2,450.00	-	2,450.00
Other Income	5,506	-	-	0.00
VAT Recovered	2,341	1,669.44	-	1,669.44
TOTAL RECEIPTS	17,092	11,411.00	0.00	11,411.00
PAYMENTS				
Administration				
Staff Costs	5,008	4,069.80	-	4,069.80
Payroll Costs	186	90.00	-	90.00
Mileage	50	180.90	-	180.90
Printing Stationery & Postage	108	131.76	-	131.76
Insurance	575	562.06	-	562.06
Hall Hire	192	2.00	-	2.00
Web Hosting	-	50.00	-	50.00
Membership &Subscriptions	258	445.28	-	445.28
Audit	155	279.00	-	279.00
Training	303	25.00	-	25.00
VAT Paid	1,468	418.72	-	418.72
	8,303	6,254.52	0.00	6,254.52
Maintenance				
Playing Field Maintenance	1,105	1,010.20	-	1,010.20
Playground Inspection	-	80.00	-	80.00
Bin Emptying	40	39.96	-	39.96
Cemetery Management	116	2,362.33	-	2,362.33
Other Expenses	7,026	-	-	0.00
	8,287	3,492.49	0.00	3,492.49
Community Events				
Grants and Donations	200	1,500.00	-	1,500.00
Picnic	-	100.00	-	100.00
Neighbourhood Plan	-	-	519.36	519.36
	200	1,600.00	519.36	2,119.36
TOTAL PAYMENTS	16,790	11,347.01	519.36	11,866.37
Deficit For The Year (2021 = surplus)	301	63.99	-519.36	-455.37
Brought Forward	19,751	11,452.00	8,600.00	20,052.00
Deficit For The Year	301	63.99	-519.36	-455.37
Carried Forward	20,052	11,515.99	8,080.64	19,596.63
Represented by:				
Lloyds Bank Account				19,596.63

Notes to the accounts

Staff costs were inflated in the previous year due to the need for locum cover in late 2020 and during a handover to the current clerk in February 2021.

The modest saving in the insurance premium is due to us finding a new broker and signing a three year deal which will stabilise premiums, especially in the event of a claim. A number of insurers have withdrawn from the local authority market and finding cover is increasingly a matter of concern to parishes.

Hall Hire: The incidence of Covid 19 caused meetings to be held by Zoom. The Village Hall Committee have kindly carried over prepayments for hall hire against future bookings. The cost of £2 relates to the need to pay for electric heating during meetings.

Membership/Subscriptions:

Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£265.28
Society of Local Council Clerks	£95.00
Community Action Suffolk (website etc)	£50.00
Information Commissioner	£35.00

Audit costs: The underlying fee is £199 with a penalty of £80 relating to issues arising in 2020.

Cemetery: Costs include an inspection and repair of headstones (£1,736) which required some rebuilding or laying flat to reduce the risk of a collapse and possibly injury to passers by. The chapel was re-valued for insurance purposes at a cost of £225.

Grants and Donations:

Ringsfield School outdoor activity improvements	£500.00
Crowdjustice – Judicial review	£1,000.00

Figures for the previous year 2020/21 include and payments relating to the theft of a lawnmower and damage to stained glass together with receipt of the insurance claim monies.

Significant fluctuations from year to year impacts the receipt of VAT repayments which have been shown separately to allow a better comparison from year to year.

Funds earmarked for specific purposes at 31 March 2022:

Playing Field		5,000.00
Neighbourhood Development Plan		980.64
Neighbourhood Watch		250.00
Good Neighbour Scheme		600.00
Friendly Bench		750.00
Picnic		500.00
Total		8,080.64

S C Blackburn

Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

April 2022