

Swaton Parish Council

Chairman's Report

Parish Council Year 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013

This year has seen the Parish Council remain the same with five Councillors, with no resignations or co-options.

It can finally be reported that after 12 years of lobbying, 'The Crown' (who own most of the land in the village), have relented and have agreed, in principle, to rent us some land to turn into a Children's Play Area. Many thanks to Cllr. Liz Harborow for finally 'wearing them down' ! This area is the corner of the grass field to the left of the Hut. We now have The Crown's legal hoops to go through and Solicitors to employ. This is taking MUCH longer and costing more than originally envisaged. This project will initially be funded with help from 'The Swaton Village Fund' which is administered by Cllr. Chris Richardson and ex Parish Chairman, Barry Jefferies. This Fund was set up many years ago to improve the lot of the children of Swaton and has received funds from fund raising events and The Swaton Vintage Day. Grants will also be sought from The Big Lottery and other charities. Other activities for young people are planned and 'The POD' which is NKDC's 'Activity Bus' has been organised to visit the village in April and May this year

You may have noticed that our village is regularly 'patrolled' by our mobile 'Speed Indication Devices'. These were purchased with funds provided by Lincs County Council and North Kesteven District Council. We believe that they do help in our constant battle with speeders in the village.

Flooding continues in the village..... In November a joint meeting was held in the Hut with representatives of The Environment Agency, Black Sluice IDB and Lincs County Council Roadways. Our local Member of Parliament, Stephen Phillips, was present and impressed us all with his knowledge of, and interest in, our problems. The various Agencies have since submitted reports concluding that there are several possible ways of reducing flooding. One would be to replace the village bridge to allow easier flow. There would also need to be further improvements to the Eau to the East of the village to take an increased flow away. Another option would be to re-direct the Eau to the South of the village. At the moment, though, funding (whether from Central Government or Lincolnshire) is not available for major projects such as these. Our discussions (and flooding) continue.

In February our District Councillor, Jim Cook, organised a visit by The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of North Kesteven District Council to Swaton. They were shown around and our flooding issues were further discussed. They will help in any way they can. Other than providing money ! They did, however, promise some help with our Play Area.

Once again we should thank Henk Buijs for his tireless (and mainly thankless) efforts in keeping the village free of rubbish. Henk's 'Rubbish Reports', are held up as a prime example of Swaton's efficiency throughout Lincolnshire.

Due to National spending cuts, LCC have drastically cut our grant for grass cutting in the village by almost £180.00 (27%). However, for 2013 we intend to continue to use our very efficient private contractor with perhaps one less cut per year. Unfortunately we have had to increase the Village precept (back up to where it was in 2002) to cover this loss of income.

The Queen's Jubilee was celebrated with a Village Picnic - A great success, albeit somewhat 'damp'. Swaton's Vintage Day and Egg Throwing Championships continue to make headlines around the globe and despite a very wet morning which kept people away, managed to raise almost £4000 for good causes. It's on June 30th this year. Our Village Newsletter continues (on a sporadic timescale) with its Editor's usual mixture of seriousness and humour. Thank You, Andy !

We are investigating the provision of an 'Automated External Defibrillator' for the village. This machine is used to shock the heart back into Sinus Rhythm in the event of a heart attack and could be a life-saver. Two options are being considered; Siting a self-use machine centrally (probably at the Hut) or setting up a sub-branch of LIVES in the village with on-call First Responders having a Defibrillator to hand. Meetings will be arranged to discuss this. We will also be providing CPR training.

In all a successful year for the Council. Please contact any Councillor if you have concerns or feel that something needs to change. We will do our best to help.

Swaton Parish Council

Responsible Financial Officer's Report

Financial Year 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013

The Council started the year with £2722.51 in the Bank.

During the year we received an income of £4746.24. This came from NKDC for the Precept and Litter Picking, from LCC for Grasscutting, from NatWest for Bank Interest and £2000.00 from a 'Big Society' grant from Lincs County Council which was fully used in paying for repairs and an extra SID (Speed Identification Device) on behalf of our area's 'Cluster' of Parish Councils.

We spent £5002.57 on running the Council and maintaining the village, this included paying our Clerk, Stationary, Postage, Insurance, Training, Subscriptions, Hut Rental, Grasscutting and Litter Picking plus £2000.00 for the SID and repairs mentioned above.

VAT was paid and reclaimed where applicable.

We finished the year with £2466.18 in the Bank. This shows a paper 'loss' of £256.33.

We actually budgeted to lose £564.12 in 2012/13 - So we are actually £307.79 better off than expected due to efficiencies.

The £2466.18 is carried forward into the 2013/2014 year.

Within the Budget for the 2013/2014 year we have planned a potential loss of £242.90 to bring Contingencies down to the recommended £700 for Staffing and General Costs plus Reserves of approx. 3 month's running costs.

Unfortunately the loss on grass cutting income (as mentioned in Chairman's Report) has meant that our Precept has had to be raised to £2000.00. However it should be noted that this is the same as it was when the Council was established in 2002.