

# Swaton Parish Council

## Chairman's Report

Parish Council Year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015

As of today, we have new faces on the Council. We say goodbye to Liz Harborow and Jayne Wilkinson and thank them for all the hard work, time and effort that they have put in over the last 7 or 8 years. We welcome Elaine Penketh and Alan Wilson. We are looking forward to outstanding service and inspiration from them.

I feel that I should commend our District Councillor, Kate Cook. She has attended almost all of our Parish Council meetings and has worked tirelessly in the background between meetings to get things done for Swaton. Thank you, Kate and congratulations on your re-election.

Broadband speeds which languish at unacceptable speeds (particularly down West End) are finally being addressed. At a meeting this year, we were assured that our current 1 to 6 Mbs will be upgraded to give us 15 to 50 Mbs before the end of June 2015. We await such progress with quivering mice.....

During the year Andy Dunlop on behalf of the Council took up cudgels against the might of The Crown Estate. At least one Crown tenant was saved from eviction and the Campaign spread throughout the Country.

I cannot report much progress on the Play Area front. There have been delays due to agreement on the 'appropriate' layout and wording on Application Forms for Funding for Phase 2. Complaints about littering, damage and foul language on and around the Play Area were received and immediately addressed. A Litter Bin has now been provided and regular cleanups are made. Our PCSO has been informed and is 'keeping an eye on things'.

Talking of Litter - what can we say..... Our Litter Supremo, Henk Buijs, has surpassed himself again. He was nominated for a Community Award and also invited to make a presentation on Rural Litter to NKDC and Councils from other areas. He has also helped a young man from Helpringham, with producing a thesis on littering as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Awards, by sharing his knowledge, experience and duties.

Henk has also been responsible (ably assisted by John Lukjaniec, John Wilkinson and others) for getting the footpaths along High Street tidied up and 'sided'. Many thanks to all of you.

We have had meetings with our PCSO (Patrick Welby-Everard) and his boss Sgt Rachel Green to discuss village matters and Speed Reduction. Speed checks have been done which concluded that half the vehicle travelling along High Street were travelling at over 35 mph. The next step will be for official Speed checks in the village with prosecutions to follow. We would like to have some 'Speed Signs' like Horbling's, but cannot 'find' the required £9000+ !

Crime was reported as being 'fairly low' in Swaton, however the recent spate of Heating Oil thefts has changed this. Please note ANY suspicious people and vehicles you see and report them to Peter Penketh (our Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator - and ex 'Old Bill') on 01529 417404 (this number gets him wherever he is) - or dial the Police non-emergency line on 101.

Our poor village Footway/Path Lighting has also raised it's head again. John Lukjaniec organised a Village Survey and report on the survey and Alan Wilson provided a mapped survey and comprehensive report with recommendations for improvements. Sadly this was blocked by 'lack of (or NIL) funds' from NKDC and lack of enthusiasm from the majority of Council members. However I believe that we will return to the subject later in the year.

Requests for village benches are being considered (lack of funding again, unfortunately) and the constant battle against Dog Poo MAY see the addition of Dog Poo Bins in the village.

The West End Flooding dialogues continue. We are 'Oh so slowly' moving towards action ! Chris Richardson and Barry Jeffrey have been appointed as our representatives to follow this through with The Environment Agency, LCC and Black Sluice Drainage

**Board.** There have been regular meetings and visits and they are expecting a 'Plan of Action' to be forthcoming 'soon'. Watch this space !

**Flash Floods** at the North End of High Street have actually caused more of a problem this year. After a half-hearted attempt to improve things, Lincs County Council have accepted that there is a collapsed drain and some fairly major remedial work has now been completed. Hopefully the problem is now cured.

Talking about half-hearted attempts by LCC to fix things..... The quagmire on the Southern roadside of West End has become an issue taken up by the Council, Kate Cook and even our Member of Parliament, Stephen Philipps. LCC have made two attempts to improve matters which we do not consider acceptable. Discussions (Old Chestnut of Funding) continue, but improvements continue.

Our Defibrillator is up and running and thanks to a kind donation from The Swaton Vintage Day, the budget on this has now been balanced. The number of attendees at the Training Evening was disappointing. Further training events will be held.

The Swaton LIVES team continue to save lives ! New members are, however, required. Why not join us ?

Due to the retirement of our previous grass cutting contractor, we have had to find a replacement. Their quality will be assessed and I have no doubt that I will be informed of any inadequacies. The Play Area has been added to their remit.

A request for House numbering to help delivery drivers in Swaton was met with little enthusiasm, but instigated the production of an excellent Village Map. Many thanks go to Alan Wilson for producing this. He spent a tremendous amount of time walking and driving around the village to ensure accuracy, playing with his mouse and making endless modifications to suit MY pedantic nature ! Thank you. This Map is available to all on request.

Our Council Newsletter has now been amalgamated with the excellent monthly Village Newsletter edited and distributed by Elaine & Peter Penketh. This goes from strength to strength and gets fatter by the month. It also means that I no longer have to cajole, threaten, shame and finally beg our EX Editor into producing a Newsletter every 3 (4 or 5) months. BUT - Thank You, Andy for the effort you put in until Elaine made you redundant !

**AND FINALLY.....** Many thanks must also go to our long-suffering, highly over-qualified Clerk, Shelagh, for doing her best to keep us on the straight and narrow during the year ! She steers us through the minefield of Governmental Bureaucracy - whilst hanging on to a (necessary) sense of humour.

In all, a busy and reasonably 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 2014 to 31st March 2015

The Council started the year with £8583.52 in the Bank. Of this £5492.62 was held on behalf of 'The Swaton Village Fund' who's Bank Account was closed down.

Thus the Council's balance was £3090.90

During the year we received an income of £3988.80. £2748.05 of this came from NKDC for the Precept and Litter Picking, from LCC for Grasscutting and from NatWest for Bank Interest. This was used for the Councils normal running expenses.

The remainder (£1240.75), was Income involved in setting up the village Defibrillator. Part of this came out of the Swaton Village Fund's balance. The internal 'Defibrillator Account' now balances at £0.00.

Our expenditure for the year was £3956.50. We spent £2715.75 on running the Council and maintaining the village, this included paying our Clerk, Stationary, Postage, Insurance, Training, Subscriptions, Hut Rental, Grasscutting and Litter Picking. The remainder was the Defibrillator costs.

We finished the year with £8615.82 in the Bank. £5212.62 of this is held for the Swaton Village Fund. This leaves £3403.20 as the Parish Council's Reserves and Contingency fund. This Contingency fund is a Statutory Requirement.

This £3403.20 is carried forward into the 2015/2016 year.

Within the Budget for the 2015/2016 year we have been obliged (by NKDC) to add a potential cost of £500 to cover the cost of the Council Elections. It is expected that the actual cost will be less but we were obligated to add this amount.

However we have only increased the Precept (the amount that we get for running costs from NKDC which is partly funded by our Council Tax) by £300 (to £2500).

It is expected that with no elections (hopefully) planned for 2016/2017 year, that the Precept required will be less.