

Swaton Parish Council - Chairman's Report 2008 / 2009

We have, once again, had some changes to the Council. Sandra Hardy and Stewart Shield resigned and were not replaced. For several years, now, NKDC has been hinting to us that having 7 Councillors is unsustainable for such a small village. On the resignation of two Councillors, we took the opportunity to lower the numbers to 5. This 'Change of Numbers of Councillors' has now been officially ratified by Electoral Services at NKDC. We thank Sandra and Stewart for all the work they put in during their time on the Council.

We have attended several 'Cluster' meetings. These are where 13 Parish Councils get together to 'air their views' with NKDC. We have continued to make our presence known and have instigated and bought (with NKDC funding) a Speed Gun and a Speed Sign (showing speed of motorists). These are being used regularly by the Police in the area with good results. We also 'stirred up' the debate on a new Planning Restriction which restricted new developments in small villages to being sold ONLY to residents of the village. This Restriction has now been rescinded. The issue of our local Phone Box being scrapped was also taken up by the Cluster and has been saved - for now.

The Cluster has also donated around £1500 to support LIVES in the area. An additional Responder has now been set up in the Helpringham and Heckington area. This will be ideal for any Swaton emergencies.

Any emergency will also be easier to respond to now that the Council has had the A52 to the bridge part of the village renamed to its official title of 'Swaton Lane'. The mix up has caused problems in the past with mis-deliveries.

The Grass Cutting Contractor for the village has been sacked, due to his unreliability and inefficiency! A new one has been employed for 2009 and he has already improved the look of the village.

Two litter picks were organised during the year, resulting in about 25 bin bags full of rubbish being collected from road verges. Thanks must go to Henk Buijs, for organising these.

These last two actions will help our application for a 'Best Kept Village' nomination. We are proud of our village and hope that residents will back us up on this by keeping verges and gardens as tidy as possible!

Liaison with LCC and NKDC has instigated improvements to paths and roads. I can report that AT LAST 'No-Man's Land' in West End, which has caused MUCH frustration with residents and Councillors over the years, has been satisfactorily returned! . Other work is also planned for paths in West End and to the North of the village this year.

Councillor Dunlop's review of the flooding of West End has continued to be acted upon - BUT at present the Environment Agency is letting the side down. A Report on progress will follow.

After last year's Lighting Review, it was decided that extra lighting is needed around the junction of West End and High Street. This will be done this year.

The Arts NK project for an 'artistic' ornamental seat along High Street has been scrapped. There was little enthusiasm for this and when the quotation for the work quadrupled it was decided to manage without it. Many thanks to Councillor Harborow's efforts throughout this process.

Windfarms in the area have caused much discussion in the Council. Our opinions on these are divided. If any resident has strong feelings, please let a Councillor know.

During the year we have had meetings with the PR company for The Crown, who own much of the village. We have continued to press for some land to be made available as a Children's Play Area. No progress yet - but watch this space!

Your Quality Council has now complied with and signed up for The Freedom of Information Act. Most of the Council's 'paperwork' is now published on our website www.swaton.org.uk and anything else is available to view (by appointment) with either the Clerk or Chairman.

In 2008 Swaton Parish Council won the prestigious LALC Community Involvement Award for the most councillors attending training and seminars throughout the year.

Our Village Newsletter continues (with a blip due to the illness of the Editor). Our esteemed Councillor Dunlop has taken over this thankless task and would like to hear from anyone who would like to have anything added to this quarterly Newsletter. Thank You, Andy!

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 Finance Report 2008 / 2009

We started the year with £2731.37. Our Income (which includes the Precept, Bank Interest, Charge to LCC for grasscutting and the NKDC grant for the Speed Gun and Sign) was £8469.85. Our expenditure (which includes our Clerk's salary and office expenses, various subscriptions and insurances, Rental of the Hut for meetings, Auditor's Fees, Councillor and Clerk Training, grasscutting charges and the Speed Gun and Sign) was £8118.62. In all a 'profit' on the year of £351.23. This 'profit' is mainly due to our 'old' grasscutting contractor not making enough cuts and not sending bills ! We finished the Financial Year with £3082.60 in the Bank.

Although we have had an unprecedented 50% increase in the Rental of the Hut for meetings and will be paying our Grasscutting Contractor about 30% more per (better) cut, the Council's savings in previous years has allowed the Precept to remain the same (at £1500) for the 2009/2010 Financial Year.

It should be noted that we are perhaps the ONLY Council in the Country not to request an increase in the Precept and are now running the Council at a cost saving of 25% on previous years.