



Snape Annual Parish Meeting 2022 Parish Council Chair's report

Last year's Annual Parish Meeting was held on Zoom. As we became more and more familiar with meeting in that format both for personal and business purposes we all looked forward to getting back to a more sociable lifestyle and to meeting face to face. For the Parish Council that has meant a series of meetings in the freezing cold with doors and windows open while we continued to pursue some key priorities which I will refer to in this report.

Covid is still having a serious impact on many individuals in our community and it is very good to see several people here this evening who have recovered from illness. The community in Snape has continued to support neighbours and friends in very many ways even as the worst effects of the pandemic have eased and it is a great tribute to a lot of people that we have well established networks capable of responding to a wide range of needs.

As you will see from the reports a fantastic array of activities has continued in spite of COVID and I would like to put on record my thanks and those of the Parish Council to everyone involved in making so many things happen here.

May I thank the Members of the Parish Council for their support, for their perseverance in keeping in touch with the issues which affect people here and for their involvement in many organisations around the Village. Caroline Meffan stood down from the Council this year as did Helen Stuart. Both made a major contribution to the work of the Council and we miss their specialist knowledge and experience. Many thanks to both of them. We welcome Margaret McKenna who joined the Council this year.

Tim Beach stepped down as our Chair in May. He continues to be a very active member member of the Council so this is not the time for a valediction but I must say that he has continued to maintain much of the work that he initiated and ensures that Snape Parish Council punches above its weight in influencing thinking among neighbouring Parish Councils and in leading collective action by Parishes in this part of East Suffolk. I would like to thank him personally for the support he has given me in my first year in the Chair.

And I would also like to thank our County and District Councillors who regularly attend our meetings. They have supported our work and helped us to respond to the concerns of individual residents.

And finally I would like to thank our Clerk Marie Backhouse who has made it all possible!



So to some of the Parish Council's priorities. These build on the priorities identified in the Village Plan and in many cases are delivered by the organisations reporting separately this evening. This partnership working is regarded as best practice and it means that limited resources can be used most effectively.

Highways and Traffic continue to be a major concern in the Village and to me represent one of the biggest long term risks to quality of life, the coherence of the Village and community safety, particularly as volumes of HGV and construction traffic grow. We have continued to work closely with Suffolk County Council on our proposals for traffic calming and safety improvements for the Bridge Road/Church Road area. We would like to see the 30 MPH zone extended to the Church and the advisory 20 MPH zone around the School extended and strengthened. We would also like to see better gateway marking in the area around The Crown and the Village Green. We have yet to persuade Suffolk County Council of these ideas but we are now waiting for detailed plans for road safety and parking improvements near the School. This has become a significant problem in recent months and we hope that some measures will be in place by the autumn.

Our Community Speedwatch (reported elsewhere) and our investment in Speed Signals have had a positive impact on driving speeds through the Village and are providing us with data about increases in volumes of traffic.

The Environment, sustainability and biodiversity are key priorities for the Parish Council. Working with GreenSnape and with funding from our own resources, the AoNB and others, work has continued at Priory Wood. Trees, bulbs and wildflowers have been planted on the Village Green, roadside verges and at Church Common. A draft Management Plan for the Common on Priory Road has been financed by the AoNB and will be discussed in the Village in the coming year. Meanwhile bird and bat boxes have been put up in the woodland. **The Allotments** are now fully occupied and there is a short waiting list! Thanks are due to all the allotment holders for their hard work which will be on view on Open Gardens Day later in the summer.

The network of **Footpaths** augmented by the Quiet Lanes give access to the wonderful river- and country-side in and around Snape. The Parish Council continues to work hard with Suffolk Rights of Way Team and landowners to ensure that they are properly maintained and with members of the public to ensure that they are properly used. Cycling and more recently e-biking are growing and individuals and bike hire businesses have to be constantly reminded that cycling is not allowed on footpaths on Snape Warren and on the river wall. The Priory Road Quiet Lane provides a very good alternative route to Snape Maltings!



We have also sought assurances from EDF about their continuing survey of recreational use of footpaths.

The Parish Council actively uses its right of consultation on **planning** applications to defend the uniqueness of our environment or where we think that a proposal would have a detrimental effect on the river, the countryside, wildlife and the neighbourhood in the Parish. It has to be said that our success rate is variable!

Genuinely affordable **Housing** for local residents and families in the Village is a priority identified in the Village Plan and in a subsequent survey. The Parish Council has continued to work with Community Action Suffolk, East Suffolk Council and Social Housing Providers to identify a project which would meet local needs.

Snape School continues to thrive and, with the completion of the nursery unit, expand. Although this presents some problems locally, the School is an important asset for the Village. The staff and young people have been a source of inspiration at many Village events in the last year. The Parish Council has continued to support the School as it has explored Academisation and this year agreed to the transfer of the lease under which the School operates from Suffolk County Council to Waveney Valley Academies Trust. After some robust discussions with the Trust, the Parish Council decided to enable the transfer by foregoing its annual rent of £5000. This will have a significant impact on the Parish Council's resources but it was ultimately agreed that this was in the best interests of the sustainability of the School.

The Parish Council, with Tim Beach's leadership, has continued to challenge through the Strategic Planning Process the negative impacts of **Major Energy Projects** proposed for our part of Suffolk. Tim has been very active in appearing in front of Planning Inspectors on the Sizewell C project and on Scottish Power's proposals for Friston. He has also made written representations to the Secretary of State for Business and Energy (BEIS) and met senior officials from the Department on our behalf. The Government's decision to grant consent to Scottish Power raises serious concerns for us in Snape. Sites for further projects dependent on Friston have been identified in the Parish close to Snape Church. And we will actively engage with project developers and Government to make sure we know what is being proposed and what the implications for our community are. Furthermore, we will make sure that we are familiar with the arrangements for accessing funds for mitigation projects (Deed of Obligation) if Sizewell C is given the go ahead.

These matters will continue to be a major priority for the Parish Council in the year ahead. We will continue to keep everyone informed of developments.