LUDHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Chairman’s report for the year to 31st March 2019.

The Parish Council set a precept for the year from 1st April 2018 at a significant % increase on the previous year, mainly as the grant from central government to North Norfolk District Council had been reduced and this formerly made up part of the funds made available to parish councils. The precept pays for clerical and administrative costs (including pension contributions), insurance, room hire for meetings, subscriptions, donations, general repairs and maintenance, children’s play area maintenance, events, audit fees and a grant for the maintenance of the Village Hall.

The Parish Council took on the responsibility for “urban grass verge” cutting from Norfolk County Council, with a small grant from NCC, and the village now has a much tidier appearance.

The Parish Council maintains sufficient reserves to pay for future election expenses, general repairs and maintenance, audit fees, and other contingencies.

The Womack Staithe Charitable Trust continues to give substantial financial assistance to the Parish Council to cover the majority of expenditure incurred in the maintenance and upkeep of village grass cutting and amenities, the Parish Churchyard, and the balance of funds required to pay for the urban verges grass cutting.

The Parish Council applied for a grant from North Norfolk District Council’s Big Society Fund for the refurbishment of the Children’s Playground, and Councillors agreed to replace the majority of the existing equipment with new facilities. The grant application was successful and, with the assistance of parish fund raising events and the generosity of many individuals the work was completed in the Autumn of 2018. The project was underwritten by funding from Womack Staithe Charity and Parish Council’s reserves,

The Parish Council held a total of 11 council meetings during the year, and dealt with a wide range of subjects including:

* Correspondence/emails to and from parishioners, Norfolk County Council, The Broads Authority, North Norfolk District Council, the Environment Agency and many other organisations,
* planning applications, for which the Parish Council is required to express support or objection, with or without comments. In the absence of parishioner’s or parish councillor’s objections, the council would normally support, or not comment on, planning applications. Consideration is always given to opinions expressed by parishioners, if known,
* maintaining the children’s playground, and arranging safety inspections,
* reviewing allotment provision, and maintaining surroundings where necessary,
* reporting, requesting and monitoring road maintenance, public rights of way maintenance/signage, and flooding of highways (all Norfolk Highways),
* organising and monitoring grass, hedge cutting, urban verge cutting, and tree pruning where appropriate,
* organisation of the Christmas tree & lights, and the New Year’s Eve fireworks, supported by the Womack Trust, and time given by many volunteers,
* the provision of bottle banks and their continued financial benefit to council tax payers, and the addition of a textile bank at the village hall,
* footpaths generally (including investigating public rights of way), with particular emphasis on the ongoing concerns to the line of Footpath 3 and the Norwich Road properties affected by the NCC definitive map.
* Councillor attendance at Police Safer Neighbourhood meetings.
* Councillor attendance at flood warden meetings.

I would like to record my thanks to my fellow Councillors for their support and the various tasks they willingly applied themselves to throughout the year, to the parish clerk for her support, hard work, and unfailing patience, and to the internal auditor (Alex Cordiner) for ensuring that the parish finances are monitored.

There are many people in the village who give their time to help keep our village a good place to live. I would like to thank them for their generosity and public spirit.

I would also like to thank our District and County Councillors for attending Parish Council meetings when their other commitments permit them to do so.

M J L Flett

15th April 2019