

## **Annual Parish Report 2016**

### **Chairman**

Good evening and welcome.

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It is with great pleasure and sense of privilege that I am able to present the Annual Parish Report for 2015 -2016. It has been an extremely busy year!

### **It has been yet another year dominated by the proposed development of the former HMS Ganges site at Shotley Gate.**

As you know we pressed for a Judicial Review of the decision made by Babergh District Council to give consent to the application to build 285 etc. at the former HMS Ganges site at Shotley Gate. The application is reviewed at an early stage. We were told there is an “arguable case” in a “difficult planning decision”. So, we now have a date for the High Court to adjudicate in this matter on July 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> .

The building of 150 houses and flats a Shotley Marina has already started with the planning consent being amended to allow alternative access to the site through King Edwards Drive. The additional traffic through our village from both developments will have a significant impact on us and on the villages along the B1456 to Shotley. Freston PC has supported us in our move to Judicial Review because concerns about the crossroads at Freston have still not been adequately addressed. Section 106 agreements were signed just before Christmas, which took nearly nine months.

Babergh and the Developers, Haylink, agree that mitigation of the impact is just not possible. We believe, the impacts of the increase in traffic have not been properly assessed. We also believe the scale of the development is too large. When, or if, we are successful, Babergh will have to take the High Court decision into account with any further planning application for this site. The current planning decision will be quashed

Now we have got through the first round in progress towards a High Court hearing, we will need to be involved in some serious fund-raising. Every house in Woolverstone has received a pledge form to offer support towards the financial cost if we should lose. All I would ask you is, if you feel the quality of your life in Woolverstone would be ruined by such an increase in traffic that you consider pledging your support on this last ditch attempt to halt this damaging scheme..

A final point to ponder: our counsel’s view is that if we are successful in our challenge – and we have a good chance - the former Ganges site will not be able to be developed in such an intensive way **at any time in the future**. In your PC view that is a prize worth winning!

Some question the mandate for this action. In July 2015, we circulated a set of simple questions to ascertain the level of support. 86% of parishioners thought we should continue to challenge the Ganges decision. That's not a bad mandate.

### **Village Questionnaire**

In the dark days of January we decided to make small steps towards a Neighbourhood Plan. The move towards "localism" is all about people and communities shaping their futures. We had a terrific response with 84 out of 1004 households making a return. We are lucky enough to have support from Dr. Will Thomas, University Campus Suffolk Business School who kindly organised Rob Bareham from Chelmondiston to input the data. Our thanks must go to both of them. This has given a true objectivity to the results and will stand up to independent scrutiny when the time comes.

Dr Thomas will take you through some of the headline information when I have finished my report.

### **Elsewhere in the Parish.**

#### **Ipswich High School for Girls**

Thank you to Ipswich High School for Girls for continuing to allow us the privilege of the use of their grounds. It is much appreciated.

#### **Community Speedwatch**

Speeding is a real problem through the village – now! The Police have really supported our efforts to reduce speeding through the village and this year we have seen the SafeCam for the first time. We have also seen greater attempts to enforce the 30 mph zone by our police. Our thanks should go to Adam Golding who has forged a link with the police and through his determination achieved what the rest of thought was almost impossible.

We now have Community Speedwatch off the ground. The team of seven has been trained; we have the hi-viz kit, speed camera and have several sessions under our belts. Two new volunteers have come forward. More volunteers welcome; it eases the pressure. Our thanks should go to David Wood for support the purchase of a speed camera through his locality budget.

We are, however, waiting for Suffolk County Council to complete a term-time Speed survey of the village to help pin-point speeding hotspots. This was promised in January but we have yet to see the results.

#### **Annual Spring Clean**

Our annual Spring Clean was successful with more volunteers than in previous years. The village roads, lanes and pathways looked great. We do our Spring Clean before

other Parishes to beat the Spring growth so we know we are thorough. The first weekend in March should be fixed in people's diaries: "Spring Clean Weekend!" Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

### **Scattered Orchards project @ Horse Pond Green**

We have taken part in the Scattered Orchards project which is an attempt to bring fruit trees into villages in the ANOB. A small team of parishioners planted three new fruit trees on the Green; a plum, a damson, and an apple. I am pleased to say that all are growing well. We take delivery of a Mulberry tree in the Autumn.

### **Donations**

We have made donations to: Home Start, Suffolk Accident and Rescue and the British Legion. We hope these small donations will help support these organisations. We also have an annual subscriptions to the "Stour and Orwell Society", Suffolk Preservation Society and Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

### **Planning**

There continued to be planning applications this year, many of them around trees. As we live in a Conservation Area all trees are protected and need permission for tree work. All trees, above three inches in diameter, in Woolverstone Conservation Area are protected. Permission is needed to remove them. We have our own tree warden, Anthony Double, who can advise.

Even so, the village continues to evolve. It will be a continuing responsibility for the Parish Council to ensure any development is consistent with principles that ensure the character of our village is "preserved and enhanced". This does not mean that there will be no development in the village, but that what there is must be of consistency and quality. The approach we adopt tries to ensure fairness and transparency in all cases. It must also be remembered that we operate in an advisory capacity only and do not make the decisions and cannot appeal. It is Babergh Planning Committee that makes the decision.

The following applications have been granted:

Deer Park Lodge	Various tree works and fell another ash tree with TPO
Park farm House	Remove dead stag head from oak, fell sycamore
The Old Kennels	Change of use from Granny Annexe to self-catering annexe

**"Thank you's"**

I would like to thank all the members of the Parish Council for the work and time that they have given in numerous ways. Thank you to people in the village who have helped in many different ways to move forward with different projects.

Every year we extend our very special thanks to Romy Blackburn who works tirelessly for our village as our Parish Clerk and keeps us in order. She does a marvellous job.

This is Romy's last meeting as Parish Clerk. She has been in post for 15 years - as long as we have been struggling to hold back the tide of development at Shotley. Romy has been fantastic to work with; unflappable, gimlet sharp and committed. She has always been a person to turn to for calm advice when things have got tense. I will miss her support enormously. However, nothing is forever. We wish her well in a future without minutes and agendas. All the best for the future!

“Thank you, Romy.”

Simon Pearce, Chairman Woolverstone Parish Council