

Great Wratting Annual Parish Meeting minutes Wednesday 26th May 2021

These minutes consist of a mix of verbatim reports given at the meeting, where copies of the reports were available in full; and concise notes of reports given at the meeting, where copies of those reports were not available.

Welcome

Parish Chair, Terry Holloway welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Attendance:

- i. Terry Holloway, Parish Councillor
- ii. Marion Holloway, Resident
- iii. Dawn Fisk, Parish Councillor
- iv. Anne Start, Resident
- v. Barry Judge, Parish Councillor
- vi. Tim Hayes, Parish Councillor
- vii. Lee Roth, Resident
- viii. Bobby Bennett, County Councillor
- ix. Peter Stevens, District Councillor
- x. Margaret May, Parish Councillor
- xi. Patricia Corbett, Resident
- xii. Tim Barling, Agent for Thurlow Estate

Great Wratting Parish Council Report by Terry Holloway

'A very warm welcome to the Great Wratting annual parish meeting. I think most of you know that I am Terry Holloway the Chairman of the Parish Council. I joined the Parish Council around 15 months ago and was elected Chairman on the retirement of Diana Curtis earlier this year.

I am particularly pleased to welcome to this meeting this evening Councillor Bobby Bennett, our newly elected County Councillor, Peter Stevens our West Suffolk District Council Councillor, and Tim Barling the Agent for the Thurlow Estate

The Parish Council operates within strict guidelines with the sole aim of looking after the interests of everyone who lives within the parish boundary, and we are guided by the Village Plan and a set of annual Objectives which are on the website. I hope you have read them and we will be very happy to discuss them at the end of the meeting if you wish.

Individual parish councillors hold specific lead responsibilities, and these are:

- In addition to being Chairman I take the lead on planning matters.
- The Vice Chairman Margaret May looks after highways matters
- Dawn Fisk looks after village communications
- Tim Hayes keeps us all in line by taking the lead on Compliance and Governance matters
- Neil Curtis has the lead on environmental and wildlife
- and Barry Judge who joined the Parish Council 3 months ago leads on projects.

It has been a difficult year because of Covid and it is a great shame that we have not been able to meet as a Parish Council in person, or to have any strong engagement with all of those who live in the village. However, it's great to see you here this evening, and those members of our community who are not able to be present will be able to see the summary of this meeting, which Tim Hayes is producing, and which will be published on the website.

Our overall aim is to provide a happy and safe environment in our wonderful conservation village which we all enjoy living in. Highways matters take up a great deal of our time and we are doing our very best to try and control the number of heavy goods vehicle movements through a village as well as the unacceptably high level of speeding vehicles. In addition to potholes and their repairs, the County Council also has responsibility for drainage, and we are concerned by the high degree of flooding we have encountered in the village this winter which may be a consequence of the lack of preventative maintenance conducted by the County Council Highways Department. You will hear a little more about those topics from Margaret May and Bobby Bennett shortly

Fortunately we have not been badly affected by rural crime in this last year, and in part this is undoubtedly because of the efforts being made by Clare Egloff as the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator. She does a fabulous job, and you will hear a report from her shortly. We are enormously grateful to her for everything she does for the village.

We have a number of initiatives underway which we hope will improve the quality of life for all residents of the Village. These include the creation of a Heritage Trail, a tree planting program, obtaining better broadband within the village, improving village communications particularly for those who do not have access to or use the Internet, holding discussions with the Thurlow Estate on the possible creation of some permissive footpaths. Alongside this, we will continue to make efforts to keep our conservation village tidy and presentable through organised litter picks and individual initiatives, and we will shortly complete arrangements for the refurbishment of the village sign. We will also be installing a defibrillator in the telephone box just outside the pub.

We continue to monitor and comment upon planning applications and in particular major development projects in neighbouring villages which may cause increase in traffic in our village. In that role we are supported by our district councillor Peter Stevens. In common with our neighbouring village Kedington, the Parish Council is deeply concerned about the planned industrial development on land previously owned by Karro foods on which there has been no local consultation, and which has the potential of bringing more commercial vehicles through our village as well as through the Thurlows and Bradleys.

During the last year we were saddened by the death of George Sykes, the very popular landlord of the Red Lion who did so much for the village and we are planning to erect a memorial bench in the churchyard.

In concluding my report I would like to pay a huge tribute to my fellow Councillors

who all work tirelessly on a voluntary and unpaid basis on behalf of the village. I would like to include in those words of thanks Diana Curtis who stood down as Parish Council Chairman during the last year after some years on the Parish Council and also Beverley Griffin who stood down a few months ago. I would also like to thank Mary Evans, who stood down as our County Councillor after an eight-year term at the elections in May. Mary has been a staunch supporter of our village and has been a strong voice on our behalf within the County Council.

You all have a copy of the agenda in front of you and there will be a series of individual short presentations, with a brief question period at the end of each one. At the end of the evening, there will be an opportunity for all of you to put any other thoughts and ideas to us.'

County Council report by Bobby Bennett

Bobby has been in post for three weeks and has been visiting as many parish's as possible to listen to their issues so that she can best represent them.

The County council Highways team is back up to full capacity and plans to deal with a backlog of work by end of July. There is a Boundary commission consultation currently ongoing which will affect Great Wratting parish council in that it may stay in Clare Division or move into a new division with part of Haverhill and surrounding villages.

Bobby will be sending a report on behalf of the County Council to our Parish Council each month.

District Council report by Peter Stevens

Last year was dominated by Covid in delivering our services and supporting people. £105 million pounds in grants and donations were given to support businesses and communities. Many people were rehoused in emergency accommodation, some in purpose designed containers. Now we are pulling out of the pandemic services are coming back to normal routine. Waste services have continued throughout. There was a shortage of HGV drivers during initial stages of pandemic. We are concentrating on building back market town capacity and trade and looking forward to the wealth of the high streets coming back. Bury St Edmunds has some shop spaces available.

Peter attended a presentation on the Karro factory redevelopment. It is for class B1, B2 and B8 usage which is light industrial and distribution warehouses. He is waiting for a full application to come before the district council. Peter takes on board the Parish Councils concerns re HGV traffic.

The District Council is consulting on a new emerging West Suffolk local plan. They are seeking comments on our view of our village in the future over the next 10 years. Integrity of villages are vital as Haverhill expands. We need to make this known to

the planners. We need breathing space between the town and the surrounding villages.

Peter will ask the planners to consult with Great Wratting in future on Little Wratting planning in light of Little Wratting not having a Parish Council of own but can't insist on this.

Rubbish cleaning equipment for villages looking to do a litter pick is available this coming weekend, but collection of rubbish not available.

- Question from a resident re Karro site application:
 - Answer: Likely to be a mix of research and storage and distribution, not heavy industrial. Similar to the research / science park site near Haverhill.
- Question from a resident – do these uses involve HGVs
 - Answer: yes they do. A question was asked at yesterday's Karro meeting about where will the HGV traffic go as Linton is currently not suitable.
- Question from a resident – There is a historic matter re the concrete path up to the water tower, as a byway open to all traffic initially. A bar was put across with locks for users. Can this locked restriction be lifted easily to turn it into an access road?
 - Answer – Peter hasn't heard anything about this being proposed. He thinks that the new Western bypass should manage the future traffic. The status of the byway would be a matter for the County council.

Questions regarding the Thurlow Estate answered by Tim Barling

- Question from a Resident: Farm vehicles and damaging to grass verges – is there anyway the damage can be avoided?
 - Answer: They try to avoid this where possible. Reversing large tractors and trailers sometimes causes issues down small roads such as the Street. Students are employed to drive tractors and are briefed.
- Question from a Resident: Grass verges – does Thurlow estate cut some of the grass verges?
 - Answer: The edge of highway for 1 metre is for Highways Agency to cut. Beyond that it is the adjoining owner, so it depends where ditch is. Thurlow estate doesn't tend to cut the verges.
- Question from a Resident: Each end of Withersfield road was churned up last year. A Resident recorded tractors at 45mph.
 - Answer: Students are trained on tractor training courses. Limiters are not put on tractors. They have changed substantially the way materials are carried around. Tractors now don't carry wheat. Lorry's do it now and are told max 20mph. A Resident says they have recorded them driving faster. Tim Barling says to let him know in future and he'll take it up. Tim Barling will emphasize that the drivers should slow down.
- Question from a Resident: We regularly have people walking on field margins in Moor Pasture Way. Great Bradley have signs. In Great Wratting Thurlow

estate had signage put out but it was destroyed within a few days. Tim Barling would welcome suggestions on appropriate wording for future signage.

- Question from a Resident: What is happening with the barn conversions at Rook Tree Farm?
 - Answer: New tenants have been in for last 3 months.

Tim Barling and Peter Stevens left at this point for other meetings

St Mary's Church, Great Wratting report, written by Simon Corbett and presented by Neil Curtis

Last year, church services were seriously impeded by the pandemic and general Covid 19 restrictions. Inevitably this has had adverse implications to the church income, so critical in meeting the continuing running costs of this building. This together with the absence of 2 church fetes has seriously depleted the reserves and a circular letter distributed around the village earlier this year inviting contributions via the Parish Giving Scheme has resulted in a modest but nevertheless encouraging participation. Whilst thanking those in the village who have contributed, perhaps I can encourage others to help preserve this wonderful building which is so important to the whole village. Appropriate forms are available from Neil Curtis – Church Treasurer.

The proposed Village Picnic which will take place in the field opposite the church on Sat 3rd July will generate some funds albeit rather less than the annual fete.

The Church and churchyard have been described by the vicar as the cleanest and best kept in the Benefice which is credit to our regular cleaner Chris Braybrook and Barry Scholes who maintains the churchyard as well as the village green throughout the year.

The Parish Council has committed to installing a bench in the churchyard in memory of George Sykes who died recently. The exact location has yet to be finalised and is subject to diocesan approval.

Terry Holloway thanked the Church for the use of it as a venue for this meeting.

Heritage trail and footpaths report by Terry Holloway

Last year we have been working on developing a heritage trail using public paths. Aims to provide opportunities for villagers to walk on footpaths and provide information on our rich history. It should also provide connectivity with other neighbouring paths. The broad plan is for QR codes where you can scan the code and a voice will tell the user what you are looking at and a bit about it. The trail will either start at the village green or the pub. There will be a large sign showing the route at the start of the village trail. Concerns re any crime implications have been discussed with Neighbourhood Watch and we don't think there is a crime risk. We will be discussing with the Estate and Withersfield parish council regarding the route shortly. We hope to make progress over the summer. We are appealing to villagers

to help Margaret, Tim and Terry with this project. Over the summer we will be taking photos to load onto website. The whole things should be done electronically and align with the county council footpath scheme.

Neighbourhood watch report written by Clare Egloff and presented by Terry Holloway

There have been no reported break ins. Rural south watch e-mail information is pasted onto the village Facebook page. These contain descriptions of cars and registration numbers linked with hare coursers, uninsured and untaxed vehicles or more recently scams related to Covid, with one man trying to gain access to people's homes.

We have had no complaints regarding drug activity in the village which in the past has occurred along Withersfield road or the Ford by the Street. Often drug users park up in the entrances to fields, and the Thurlow Estate has been very quick to act if they are made aware, having moved some barriers forward in the past to make it more difficult for parking. The police are also quick to move them on.

Speeding through the village continues with motorbikes in good weather, which has been reported to the police. Speed checkers have been out at Coronation cottages a fortnight ago, though the effectiveness of this is uncertain as they are very obvious and at 10am it is unclear what speeding they will catch.

On the 21st April a lady and her dog were attacked by three dogs. The lady received a puncture wound to her hand and the dog received extensive abdominal injuries that vets said could have been life threatening. There have also been at least four other different dogs seen loose around the village without their owners, including a miniature Dachshund, a black Labrador in the field behind Little Acorns two springer spaniels running around Withersfield road, and a large hound like dog coming from the field behind Little Acorns and leaving via Withersfield road. A post has been put on the village Facebook page informing villagers of the legal requirements of controlling dogs.

Additional information was provided by Terry Holloway: we have had agreement from the police for a speed camera van in Withersfield road to take place shortly. The parish council is concerned about dog mess on footpaths and roads not being picked up. It is also concerned about it being picked up and put in a bag and then just hung on posts and not picked up on the way back. DNA testing is available to test and track dogs. The parish council thanks Clare for her tireless work looking after the village and Little Wratting

Village fete report by Tim Hayes

This year due to Covid restrictions we decided that we were unable to hold our usual village fete. We have instead decided to hold a village picnic with the dual aim of providing villagers with an opportunity to get together this summer in person and

rekindle and make new friendships; and also raise much needed funds for St Mary's church.

On 3rd July from 12pm to 3pm in the large field at the front of Hall Farm we will hold our Great Wratting Village Picnic. Villagers are invited to come along and bring a picnic with them. There will be some tables and chairs provided but if villagers have picnic blankets then it would be great if they bring them as well. Entry is free. The Haverhill Silver band will be there to play, socially distanced if needed. There will be a small selection of stalls such as Summer Cocktails, a plant stall, and a raffle as well as the Great Wratting Stakes game. Due to Covid catering restrictions we are unable to sell or serve food, so please bring your own with you for your picnic. Subject to Covid restrictions there will be a bouncy castle and a selection of races for the children to take part in.

For Covid security is necessary to register in advance to come, so please let Tim Hayes know your names and a contact number in advance either by e-mailing timandlornahayes@gmail.com or dropping details through the letterbox of Wheel Cottage, The Street, Great Wratting.

The event has already been publicised on the e-mail tree. Adverts are going out in the June editions of the Village link and the Benefice news. Flyers will be hand delivered to each address in the village in early June.

Highways report by Margaret May

I believe that we are all concerned about the volume and speed of traffic passing through Great Wratting particularly along the Thurlow and Withersfield Roads. This has significantly increased with the housing developments on the outskirts of Haverhill as drivers seek to avoid the A1307 bottle neck at Linton en route to Cambridge or the A14. They are using our village as a 'rat run'. Our concern is shared by nearby villages, Thurlow, Withersfield, and the Bradleys.

So far there is no solution in sight for the A1307 and the long-term solution of a guided busway or the reopening the railway from Haverhill to Cambridge seems 'pie in the sky' long into the future to me. Prior to her retirement, Mary Evans started an initiative to get the local villages working together on traffic issues and we hope that Bobby Bennett will continue this good work.

In the meantime, the Parish Council is seeking measures to limit 'heavy traffic' and slow traffic down passing through the village. You'll have been pleased to see that we now have 'Not suitable for HGVs' signs at both ends of The Street and Withersfield Road.

Quite Lanes Scheme

We are also progressing with the Quiet Lanes Suffolk initiative which was covered by a local public consultation in March. With your agreement, the Parish Council has requested the QLS designation for both The Street and Withersfield Road, the later in conjunction with Withersfield Parish Council. Both lanes have been accepted into

Wave 2 of the project and you should now be aware of the next stage, a public consultation launched by Suffolk County Council on Monday. Residents of the lanes have received a letter, there's been a message via the village email tree. More information can be found on the village website. The SCC consultation is necessary to comply with Highways legislation and will last for 3 weeks.

Speeding/ANPR cameras

Eagle eyes will have spotted police speed enforcement cameras in operation on Thurlow Road occasionally. I trust no-one has been caught out!

We regularly record vehicle speeds on our Sid cameras and share the data with the police. We are in the process of relocating the cameras on Thurlow road to more suitable locations.

Suffolk Road safe are undertaking a trial project sighting ANPR speeding cameras in areas of concern identified by local councils. The Parish Council intends to apply to be included in this pilot scheme and are consulting with residents of Withersfield Road closest to the Sid post which we propose to use to site the camera.

If included in the pilot project, an APNR camera will periodically be in situ for one week. Data from the camera will be analysed. Drivers of vehicles that exceed the agreed threshold will receive a letter badged with SCC & Suffolk Constabulary. Data on drivers who have received more than 2 letters in 12 months will be forwarded to the police who, resources permitting, will contact the drivers directly. Finally macro data identifying sites of regular infringements will be forwarded to the SafeCam team to aid the deployment of Community Enforcement Officers. It is this team that carry our enforcement; offenders will be caught and prosecuted or offered an alternative to prosecution.

Potholes

Another serious problem for drivers through the village. No sooner one is repaired then another appears & they get deeper so quickly! We encourage you all to report the location of any potholes you spot to SCC Highways via their website. Don't be concerned if it's already been reported.

Tree Planting report by Neil Curtis

Our plans for the planting of 75 mixed deciduous trees in the Parish to commemorate the end of the Second World War are at discussion stage with the Thurlow Estate. We are in the process of drawing up an agreement for the planting and ongoing maintenance of an avenue of trees on their land.

We would then aim to do the planting this autumn and will be calling for volunteers to assist.

The Parish Council are committed to this scheme and regard it not only as an act of commemoration but as a contribution to our landscape for future generations.

Defibrillator report by Tim Hayes

Following a consultation carried out by BT on the usage of the listed phone box in the village, which is situated near the pub, the Parish Council has now been able to purchase the phone box for £1 from BT. We are eagerly awaiting them removing the phone from the box, at which point we will install a defibrillator in the box, and change the 'telephone' signage to reflect its new usage. The defibrillator will be registered with the ambulance service control room. In the event that someone suffers a cardiac arrest and an ambulance is called, where there is more than one person available the ambulance service will send one of the people to the phone box to collect the defibrillator and provide them with the code to gain entry to the secure box that will house it. Public access defibrillators are designed to be able to be used safely and effectively by members of the public who have had no prior knowledge or training in their use. They are very easy and safe to use. If needed the ambulance service control room can provide additional support and instruction over the phone whilst the ambulance is on the way to you.

Other issues that residents want to discuss and bring to the attention of the Parish Council

A Resident expressed the view that the County Council has a record of road inspections as well as repairing potholes. They suggested that if a car is damaged you can request the pothole record and it may help you in a claim for the damage to your vehicle. It has however been an uphill struggle to try to recoup your costs.

Potholes can be reported using the Suffolk County council website:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/potholes/report-a-pothole/>

There is also a phone 'App' called 'fill that hole' that can be used to report potholes. The 'App' 'What3Words' is also very helpful if you include that location in your pothole report. Smart phones can be used to identify the grid reference of where you are as well to assist with accurate pothole location reporting.

A Resident expressed concerns about the expertise of the repairs that are undertaken

A Resident suggested that speeding in Withersfield road may be people heading out of the village rather than into it and feels that speeding has got worse in the last 18 months.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for their hard work on resident's behalf

The meeting was closed at 21.12.

