

CONEY WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING REPORT

THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2024

Peter Clarke, Chair, welcomed 37 residents to the annual village meeting to review activities in the last year and to look at what will be happening in the coming year.

Agenda

- Parish Council
- Village Groups
- Chair (West Suffolk Council)
- Joanna Spicer Report
- Tea/coffee and biscuits
- Residents views

A warm welcome was given to Roger Dicker, Chair of West Suffolk Council.

Andrew Smith our local West Suffolk District Councillor - joined us later

Tribute was paid to Fran Craig for her drive, enthusiasm and for the success of the Jubilee and Coronation events that Fran organised.

Fran's memorial service was held on 25 April 2024.

Meet the Parish Councillors and their responsibilities

Chris Flood	Parish website and Facebook page Chris will be stepping down and was thanked for all her efforts
Bren Francis	Community Development
Mark Lock	Planning, Speeding and Playing Field
Tina Bedford	Research
Peter Clarke	Defibrillator and Volunteers
Andrea Morris	Parish Clerk

Areas which were highlighted

- Flooding
- Defibrillator
- Volunteers
- Speeding

Flooding

We have had 11 named storms since September 2023.

Storm Babet in October was the worse. The whole village was affected by the flooding. The Fire Brigade was called out to a house in Swan Lane due to flood water.

Pictures and video were shown of the flooding starting from the village sign, outside the Post Office, and running down The Street.

A historic photo from 1912 provided by the History Group showed that flooding in the village has been a long-term problem.

The Street has had serious persistent flooding for fifteen years. Occasionally the jetting of the drains has given temporary relief.

Initially Kier Construction had prepared plans for the renewal of drains.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) have had the funds ring-fenced since 2021.

The delays have been caused by

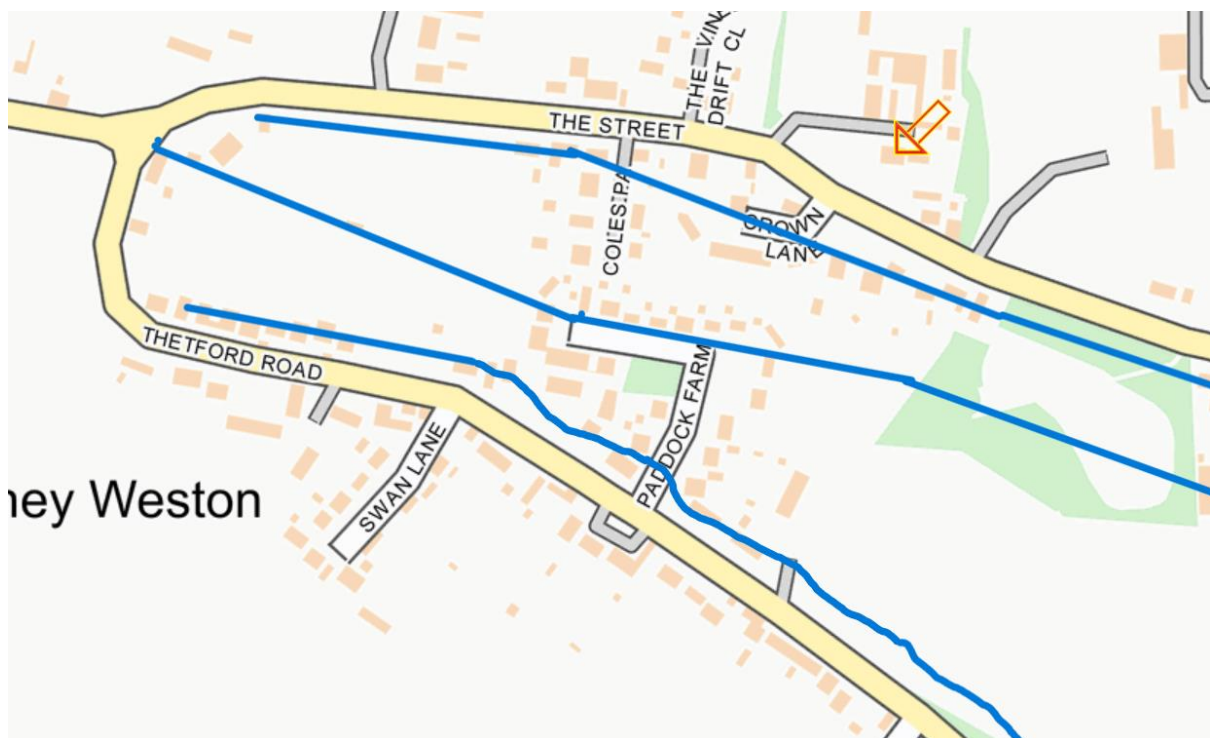
1. The landowner of the land next to the Village Hall
2. Kier Construction being replaced last October by Milestone, who are now producing their own plans.

After investigations an inspection chamber was found in the village hall car park which has been repaired. Information has been supplied to Highways showing the original pipework laid in 1917.

On Friday 12 April 2024, an engineer came to look survey the land.

Delays to the start of works may be caused by birds nesting and an Ecological survey may be required. However, there is good communication between the Parish Council, SCC and Milestone.

The plan below indicates roughly the route of surface water drains



All the surface water from Coney Weston flows to Barningham.

It was highlighted that the excess water causes problems at the pumping station.

Parish councillors and volunteers have been working on the ditches and clearing blocked drains in the village to help reduce flooding. The local farmer was also thanked for clearing parish ditches.

Discussions took place about the flooding

Defibrillator

This was removed from the cabinet twice in the last twelve months but not used.

The Parish Council are looking to run a course on how to use the defibrillator along with basic First Aid. Anyone interested should contact the Clerk and once numbers are known a course will be arranged.

Volunteers

Thanks were given to the volunteers who work around the village and a call was made for more volunteers.

- Clive and Susi, Trevor and Clare are regular litter pickers
- Jane and Peter cut the grass on the footpath leading to the Village Hall
- Ben and Sally maintain the War Memorial at the Village Hall
- Dee and Penny look after Coles Path
- Ron has produced two new village notice boards at cost
- Kate maintains the flowers at the village sign
- Julian cuts the grass at the telephone exchange

Acknowledgement was given to Harry for clearing the ditch in Thetford Road.

Speeding

The speed device is maintained by Mark and Bren.

A record of speeds is posted on Facebook and the website and the data shared with the Police.

The Parish Council are currently looking to buy another speed camera. SCC are providing £2,000.00 and the Parish Council have budgeted a further £2,000.00.

Speed Watch

Requires volunteers

30mph signs for bins

These are available for those who wish to put them on their bins

Village Group Reports

These are available on the Coney Weston Parish Council website under Village Activities, Annual Village Group Reports 2024.

The Annual Village report is under News, Annual Village Meeting 2024.

Joanna Spicer SCC

Sent her apologies and her report, this will be read out at next Parish Council Meeting on 9 May 2024 and is posted on the Coney Weston Parish Council Website.

Roger Dicker – Chair of West Suffolk Council

Roger has been on the Council for 19 years and is also a Sub-postmaster in our area.

Roger's role has changed as currently being run as a coalition of Independents (19) and Labour (17). He stated that it has been a very successful administration and they are getting a lot done. He considers it a great honour, enjoys going to different villages, and he likes to promote West Suffolk.

County elections will be next May.

In the future the way we recycle will change with a separate collection for food waste, which will make our black bins less full and reduce land fill.

Roger said he believes in the Committee System and works with 64 Councillors. Meetings are available to view on YouTube

A short Q&A session followed.

Playing Field Committee

The Chair advised there are currently three Trustees, of which Tony Leslie was present and happy to answer questions.

The Trustees had sent a report which advised

- Dogs on playing field denied
- Mower purchased for cutting playing field had been sold
- Vertas now cuts the playing field and kills the weeds in the play area
- The tower is to be removed and quotes are being obtained
- The swing is to be repaired and painted
- The slide and football posts will stay

The three Trustees are supported by a Task & Finish group consisting of Parish Councillors.

The three Trustees have all declared their intention to resign due to personal circumstances.

The land is vested in the name of the Parish Council, so any funding would need to come from the Parish Council unless it was leased back to the Playing Field Charity.

The Chair said the options are:-

- Trust becomes dissolved under the Charities Commission Rules
- Transfer the charity to the Parish Council under a Custodian Trustship
- New Trustees

Advice is currently being sought by the Playing Field Committee from the Charities Commission.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee contact coneywestonpfc@gmail.com

The Chair called on people to become a Trustee if they wanted the playing field maintained

The Chair said the land was bought by the village as two plots in 1967 and 1972. It was not registered and committees drifted in and out. The title to the land registered in the Parish Council's name after taking legal advice

Lottery funding has not been able to be obtained because of who owns it/it is vested in.

If the land was no longer used for recreational purposes, then a village meeting would be held to decide what happens to the land

Tea and coffee was offered before the meeting closed.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANNUAL REPORT 2024

I am sorry to be sending my apologies for the meeting tonight. Firstly I would like to thank the chairman, members and clerk of Coney Weston Parish Council for inviting me to attend their meetings over the last year and for making me welcome. Andrew Smith

and I do our best to work in partnership with parish councils as we navigate the complexities of local government responsibilities.

The county council has had a challenging year as we meet our statutory responsibilities caring for vulnerable older people, those with disabilities, children, special education and young people. About 79% of our total annual expenditure is on these services which are provided 365 days a year.

This year we have had to make difficult decisions over the level of council tax and we are making some significant savings involving service cuts and reducing staff numbers. Meanwhile we continue to ensure we have adequate budgets for the fire and rescue service, highways, trading standards, the environment and climate change, school support and libraries. The total budget for 2024-25 is an increase of 8.6% to £752.8million.

Since October 2023 the council has had a new contract for highway services with Milestone and we are cautiously pleased with how repairs and resurfacing is progressing.

We are currently consulting on the proposal from Government for a "Devolution Deal" for Suffolk which will bring investment in Suffolk of £480million over the next 30 years. In return for this new money and devolved decision making we will be required to have a directly elected leader of the county council from May 2025.

The biggest concern for me with Coney Weston over the last year has been to ensure the county council was making proper progress with the plans for a new drainage systems (and other work) to prevent flooding of the kind you have had in recent years. I am grateful for help from parish councillors and also John Hogg for his local knowledge and time. I hope by the time I write another annual report all will have been completed.

I am pleased to report that some progress has been made with dealing with damaged signs and also the signpost at the Rushford crossroads has been replaced using my local highway budget.

Joanna
Spicer,

County Councillor, Joanna.spicer@suffolk.gov.uk

VILLAGE GROUP REPORTS FROM THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 17TH APRIL 2024

Village Hall Report for the Annual Village Meeting in May 2023

- Regular hirers are Indoor Bowls, POTS gardening club, the PC and Tai Chi.
- The Village Hall puts on at least 2 events a month sometimes it's . Since May last year there have been 24 events which is 6 more events than the previous year.
- The most popular events seem to be anything that includes food!
- We added Film Nights in Sept 23 and attendance has been sporadic. Ideally we need at least 20 people each month to cover the costs of each screening. People can bring their own drinks and snacks and we supply ice cream at the interval. The next screening is The Miracle Club. Film choices are made by the audience.
- The most recent changes to the hall: we now have sensor lights in the toilets and a shed. This means that we have been able to remove little-used items out of the hall.
- Future project - upgrading the toilets
- Future events - Games Night this Saturday - tickets are still available. We now accept in-person card payments as well as cash. Flyers are on table - please help yourself - if you want to be added to a circulation email - email addresses are blind copied - please let me know and I'll add you.

- The committee work very hard during the year to put on events, maintain the hall, and carry out unseen work. Alongside them, we have 'honorary members' who we can call upon as and when. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and anyone else who has helped with the village hall.

Tai Chi

- Tai Chi is a complete whole-body exercise, which is practised by millions of people and has been proven helpful to your body's health.
- I've been an instructor since 2011 and have recently set up a new academy with another instructor.
- To give you a flavour of how we are sharing our Tai Chi: we held an international Zoom workshop last Friday. 138 people attended from Canada, US, Spain and the UK. Coming up we are hosting a 6-day in-person workshop in Newmarket in May, with a lead instructor from Canada.
- I run 2 classes a week every Tuesday morning and approx 20 people are registered. If you are interested in joining - please let me know.
 - *Bren Francis*

CONEY CRAFTS

Coney Crafts has been going for just over a year now and seems to be going from strength to strength. We have members not only from our village but from the surrounding villages too. We meet on 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Village Hall from 2-4pm, and there is a charge of £5 to cover the hire of the hall, running costs and refreshments.

Sometimes we have to charge more for demonstrators/speakers but this has only happened once and was well advertised in advance.

We have amongst our group florists, embroiders, painters, quilters, felters, seamstresses, toy makers, jewellery makers, costume designers, paper-makers, potters, book binders, card Makers, macrame workers, some of us have doll's houses so all of the above in miniature ...sometimes we knit....

We are working with the church and the village hall to make a fine display of Poppies for the November Armistice, this year being the 80th anniversary of D day. We'll be starting knitting and crocheting from about August onwards, so if anyone would like to contribute that would be very much appreciated. But let's not restrict ourselves, any alternatives are more than welcome and utterly encouraged! I think we've seen plenty of knitted poppies, (although I could happily keep going for ever) so anyone with a lathe perhaps, what about carved wooden poppies? Metal Poppies? Enamelled Poppies?

Come to us for ideas or bring your ideas to us!

We generally work it so that we bring our own crafts on the 1st Wednesday and have a demonstration or speaker on the 3rd Wednesday. At our next group session we'll be making journals, the group session after that we'll be making paper to use in future journals, in June we're planning pebble painting and then in July I plan to demonstrate how to make dream catchers. Some outings are planned too as well as making Dorset buttons, and of course we have the Christmas Mini-fair to work for.

We have been afforded considerable space in the Village Hall re-fit in order to store our equipment and materials, so thank you as always to the Village Hall Committee for their continued support and in particular to Roger who has customised our cupboard to suit our needs.

In the meantime, if any group needs any displays or promotional material for their events, bear us at Coney Crafts in mind, and if we can help, we will.

ST MARY'S CHURCH

John Wallace, Churchwarden, reported:-

The church was a thriving entity with congregations of an average of 12-15 people. There was a service once a month, usually on the second Sunday. He encouraged people to attend. He made the point that the church was an asset to the village and one did not have to be a regular church goer to help with its upkeep.

He also spoke of the finances. The recent Quinquennial review had revealed that there were a number of repairs needed, including a repair of- or demolition of- the chimney. A Faculty (Church planning permission) was being sought for demolition.

He appealed for help with the upkeep of the church, for instance establishing a team of regular grass mowers, and mentioned that some capital items could be gifted in memory of a loved one.