

# ANNUAL BERGH APTON PARISH MEETING 2017

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## BERGH APTON PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS – Philippa Fuller – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

### Accounts Commentary 2016-2017

During the year the Parish Council recorded Actual Income of £11,075.76 [£4,983.07] and Expenditure of £4,668.38 [£3,229.67] resulting in surplus of £6,407.38 [£1,753.40] on a precept of £3580.00 [£3600.00].

The surplus can almost entirely be attributed to one-off non-recurring CIL income totalling £6,508.76 as a result of two developments [The Barn at Sunnyside £373.02 and the 11 dwelling "Hawthorns" development at £6,135.74].

When this exceptional income is excluded, the Parish had an underlying loss of £101.38 [£1,753.40 surplus] for the year, largely as a result of £770 maintenance incurred on the play park and £175.29 on the Dance sculpture, some of which was undertaken by Community Payback [restorative justice] Offenders. In total regular and unplanned maintenance accounted for £1065.29 [£205]

The other contributory factor to the loss was the Queens 90th Birthday Celebration Event attended by over 150 villagers held in June 2016 for which grants and commercial sponsorship of £850.00 were received against costs of £1,189.48 [loss of £373.48]. The event included sporting events, Village hog roast and commemorative medals for children attending the event. Other costs were similar to previous years. Clerks Expenses were £115.95 [86% £134.15] and Clerks Salary £1,573.44 [103% £1,533.48]. Insurance costs were £361.65 [50% £728.88] as a result of a decision not to insure certain fixed Parish Council assets like the roadside waymarkers and to restrict the playpark insurance to Public Liability and bark replacement.

The Parish Council had year-end cash balances of £14,653.70, which includes a CIL Earmarked Reserve of £6,508.76 leaving £8,144.94 [£8,246.32 2016 & £6,492.76 2015] in the general fund.

Whilst the cash balances appear high as a proportion of income, following the actual receipt of the long-anticipated Cil monies, the council now has cleared funds to undertake infrastructural improvements in the parish to mitigating the impacts of new development in the village.

No VAT was reclaimed in the year but a claim for the two years 2015-2017 is being made post-year end [last year too small to claim].

I have been the Parish Clerk of Bergh Apton since 2004. Upon taking office there wasn't enough money in our account to pay the clerk. Since that time, the Parish's share of the Council Tax has remained constant at about £20.00 for a Band 0 property give-or-take a few pennies, which represents a considerable reduction in real-terms over the period. Now, thirteen years later the

bank balance sits at £14,653. 73, which includes a CIL Earmarked Reserve of £6,508. 76 leaving £8,144.97 in the General Fund. I wish the new Clerk every success and the Parish is in good shape to address the challenges of the future.

## **BERGH APTON PARISH CHAIRMAN – Elizabeth Robinson**

After thirteen years, four chairmen and a lot of Councillors Philippa has decided to step down as Clerk to the Parish Council, I would like to say thank you on behalf of all councillors past and present for her tireless work for the Parish. Whenever we have needed anything sorting out, sometimes at very short notice her response has been, no problem leave it with me. Thank you Philippa, you will be missed.

We have however someone who has volunteered to take over the role of Clerk. Julie Gosling has joined us this evening, welcome Julie, she will be taking over properly in June.

Queen's Birthday Celebration - A good day out for everyone, especially the youngsters who raced around playing old fashioned games, races and generally getting absolutely covered in dirt. Thank you to everyone who helped in so many ways too numerous to mention.

Thank you to Mr Austin for doing the internal audit for the Parish Council for last year.

The tree in the playpark and one in the village hall garden have been removed this should help reduce the algae and bird droppings which cause problems on the equipment. The Parish Council have also discussed putting money aside each year to maintain/replace the play park equipment.

Thank you to Hugh Porter for organising the repairs and maintenance of the dance and for organising the tree to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday. We hope to organise a plaque at a future date.

Thank you to Bob Kerry for his eighteen years as Hedge Warden for the Parish. Apparently, since 1999 the Conservation Trust have surveyed 24,750 metres of hedge (fifteen miles) and haven't finished yet.

John Fuller is going to explain to us about the boundary review and how CIL can be used.

Scop Hill - We received a letter from Norfolk County Council last year informing us that we had not been maintaining the closed landfill site as per the licence which had been agreed by a previous Parish Council and asking us if we wished to terminate the arrangement. We decided to do so as Norfolk County Council informed us that they would not alter any of the improvements that have been made to the site and we will still have free access to it.

When we read the original agreement, we realised that what would be required of volunteers regarding keeping the place up to the expected level would be a very large undertaking .

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR FOR BROOKE WARD - Cllr John Fuller**

South Norfolk finalist in Council of the Year Competition

I am proud that our small district Council in South Norfolk reached the last six of over 380 UK Councils in the LGC Council of the year awards. Sadly we were not successful in winning outright but we were pleased that the judges, distinguished figures from local government, recognised our outstanding achievements, leadership and value for money in making South Norfolk one of the best places to live and start a business in the country.

### **Parish Boundary Review**

A "Community Governance Review" started on 20th March. Whilst there are about 5 reasons to undertake a Parish Review including changing the name of a parish, the two main opportunities are to square-off any boundaries that no longer make sense, perhaps because of new house building or roads AND/OR whether it makes sense to ask parishes to join up with each other.

Just think about how many changes there have been in our lives over the last 20 years. Twenty years ago the Internet had just started, mobile phones were as large as a brick and John Major was still the Prime Minister.

Now imagine what changes might come in the next twenty. I say this because every twenty years South Norfolk Council has to think about the boundaries of the Parish Councils within it and whether it's sensible to alter arrangements.

It's to straighten out simple lines on maps that a "Community Governance Review" provides an opportunity for South Norfolk Council to work with its parishes to make practical sense of its area. At its simplest a Parish Boundary might be tweaked a bit because new homes have been built on the edge of the village. I know of one person who extended his home at Little Melton with the result that his kitchen is now in Bawburgh!

But there is another angle that we cannot ignore. There are 119 parishes in South Norfolk. In 2015 only 19 held parish council elections. And many of those didn't have elections in 2011. Or 2007 either. Bergh Apton is one of those parishes. It's not good for local democracy if those that govern us are not subject to election.

It shines a light on the wider fact that we all live such busy lives. The internet allows us to live much more individual lives communicating with people much further away as if they were neighbours. And the result is that fewer people serve in local voluntary capacities in sporting clubs, the cubs & brownies, the WI and, yes, Parish Councils.

And there's another angle. Not only are many of our smallest parishes not elected, the proportion of the tax they raise that they spend on their own administration has got out of control. In the smallest parishes like Bergh Apton about 2/3 of the tax it raises is spent on the Clerk, Insurance and other subscriptions leaving just one third to be spent on the village. If it was a charity it would be closed down. And Bergh Apton is not alone. With well over half the precept going on running costs in the smaller parishes, my informal feeling is that rural villages should seek to club together on a canvass of about 1000-1250 electors -perhaps on the footprint of the village school catchment.

Now is the time to consider whether Bergh Apton should invite the smaller neighbouring parishes to join together to form joint Parish Councils. There's no question of removing the road signs and the village boundary would still exist. It's just that several parishes would club together to have a single Parish Council serving all of them.

We need arrangements that are going to hold good for the NEXT 20 years that address the realisation that it's difficult to get people to serve and to solve the problem of smaller parishes spending over half of their income on running costs.

South Norfolk is encouraging Parishes to think deeply about their future and want the initiative for any changed arrangement to come from you, a bottom up, not a top down process. Our consultation opens on 20 March and you can have your say by visiting [www.south-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk) I will be attending the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 19th April to discuss this.

A local authority covering areas such as planning Council Tax, rubbish and recycling, housing, tourism, leisure and other local services.

### **District Council Boundary Review**

The Boundary Commission has issued its final guidance regarding the District Council ward boundaries. Subject to Parliamentary Approval, their recommendations will result in 26 wards in South Norfolk with 46 Councillors. There will be more multi-member wards including some in the Waveney Valley, which has traditionally been single member territory.

It means that it's most likely that the 2019 elections will be fought on these new boundaries that is if we have elections in 2019 assuming that there isn't a Local Government Reorganisation before then, which some MPs called for on the Sunday Politics show the other weekend.

In our case, Brooke, Seething, Mundham, Bergh Apton & Kirstead will be joined with Alpington & Yelverton and Howe will leave us and go to Shotesham. It's a shame about losing Howe but the "independent experts" are blind to comments and primarily focus on getting the wards the same size even it means there are some anomalies.

### **Business Rates Review**

There has been a lot of angst in local businesses about the publicity over the business rates review. I asked our expert to give me an idea of businesses in South Norfolk and the effect on business rates. In aggregate, bills in South Norfolk have reduced by 5% although some have gone up a bit. To take Harleston as an example, a typical shop with a rateable value of, say £5000, has seen a reduction of about £200. But that's misleading in that, singleshops [not part of a chain] with an RV of less than £12000 pay nothing at all.

It's only places like Southwold where the Brexit-Boost to tourism has seen Rateable Values exceed £12000 for the first time that has taken shops from paying almost nothing into the territory where no discounts are allowed.

And in the meantime, your council still foregives the rates bill on a discretionary basis to the last pub, club, garage or shop in the village and most of Bergh Apton's facilities are rates-exempt.

## **The Next Local Plan**

Councils have canvassed landowners to suggest land they'd like to be considered for building. It's work that precedes the decisions Councils will take about where new homes are built in future. In the recent past development has been focused in a small number of places and villages which used to see a lot of growth like Brooke [100 homes per year from the 1940's to 1980's] were bypassed.

Taking Brooke as an example, the school roll has fallen and the pre-school closed down there's a realisation that we need a proportionate number of homes in EVERY village, regardless of size. Obviously that means more in villages with services. And more in villages along transport corridors - especially closer to Norwich.

But a more evenly-distributed pattern of growth if Villages are to grow and to help small builders, who take more care over design and build more quickly. Larger allocations >20 allow room for a better mix of homes -not just 5-bed Executive Homes because wide choice to the market is important. And more smaller sites will reduce the price for land enabling people to build their own homes.

We'll start to put flesh on these bones later in the year with our detailed ideas, which will need to take into account the Government's latest 'White Paper' policies in the new year.

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR LODDON DIVISION – Barry Stone**

A Year of Achievement – 2016/17

The last year has been a year of achievement for Norfolk County Council.

While a great number of changes have taken place, the culture of the council has been driven in a much more responsive, flexible direction. While there is much still to do, our reputation has improved significantly. We have received recognition as a listening council, a caring council, a courageous council and one that is looking forward to a more positive future.

We have not ducked the extremely difficult decisions that have been needed, including in Children's Services, where we are determined to deliver that step-change needed to bring about the required improvements to see the service out of special measures and restored to full council control.

All achievements over the last year must be seen against a backdrop of ever-shrinking budgets and growing demand for a number of our services.

At a service level, achievements have been seen across our service areas.

### **Children's Services**

More children than ever are being educated in good or outstanding schools - big improvements in Norfolk schools were highlighted in the Ofsted Annual Report in December 2016, with Norfolk the fifth most improved county nationally for the proportion of pupils at good or outstanding secondary schools over the past four years, and the 18th most improved for primary schools. Norfolk is also one of the most improved in the region for children at the end of the early years' stage achieving a

‘good level of development’. And Norfolk’s colleges and sixth form colleges are all rated ‘good’ by Ofsted.

Norfolk moves into top-half of the GCSE league table - Provisional GCSE results for 2016 have put Norfolk above the national average for the first time in a decade. The government has introduced a new method for measuring performance, called Progress 8, which ranks schools according to the progress made by students during their time in secondary education. Under this system, Norfolk had a score of 0.02, compared with a national average of -0.03, where the higher the number, the greater the progress.

A unique partnership - Norfolk County Council and children’s charity, Barnardo’s, are developing an imaginative new approach to working together to better support children and their families. The new service, which we anticipate having in place by summer 2017, will focus on edge of care provision; supporting more children to remain at home with their families (where it is safe to do so), as opposed to coming into the care system.

Children’s University - raising children’s aspirations by supporting them to carry on learning outside the normal school day and encourage a passion for learning is what our Children’s University is all about. Norfolk Children’s University is run by Educator Solutions - a traded Norfolk County Council service – and is working with over 12,000 children in Norfolk. In February 2017, another 80 five- to 12-year-olds graduated from the university, marking the completion of more than 30 hours each of extra learning outside school.

Getting more of Norfolk’s young people into top universities - the Norfolk Higher Education Scheme has gone from strength to strength this year. It was founded to link up sixth forms and colleges in Norfolk to share opportunities for university applicants - such as mock interviews, workshops, outside speakers and university visits. All 33 schools and colleges in the county have signed up to the scheme, which is run by a partnership of Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Education Leaders. Its pilot year, which was open only to applicants to the ‘most-competitive’ and ‘high-demand’ universities, saw 350 students sign up. This year, having opened up to all Norfolk students applying to any university, 1,220 have already registered. In summer 2016, 48 Norfolk state school students were offered places at Oxford or Cambridge University. Increasing numbers of care leavers are moving into higher education; over 50 of our care leavers (11%) are doing university courses, compared to a national average of 6%.

Transforming school buildings - we’re also supporting children’s learning by investing in school buildings. In February 2017, for example, we completed £1.99m of improvements to Southtown Primary School. This two-phase project, designed and managed by NPS, has transformed the school into a modern all-through primary for four- to 11-year-olds – which is better for their learning – and increased the number of places from 180 to 210. This is part of our £144m programme of improvements.

NEET and unknowns - Norfolk has done exceptionally well in the first year of a new

measure for local authorities, which combines numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the number of young people whose activity is unknown. This

gives a much more accurate picture of young people's circumstances. In Norfolk, we have a combined NEET and unknown percentage of 4.9%, much better than the national figure of 6.8%.

Growing our own social workers – recruiting and retaining social workers is a challenge for many councils. In Norfolk, we are doing something about it – by growing a bank of talented social workers and developing them through their entire career. In summer 2016, we launched our own social care academy which offers training and mentoring to social workers, not only new to the profession, but at all stages of their career. The academy builds on the work of the highly successful Norfolk Institute for Practice Excellence (NIPE) scheme, an innovative partnership between us and University of East Anglia, set up in recognition that the first year of a social worker's career is crucial. 110 social workers have been employed through NIPE since it was set up two years ago.

### **Adult's Services**

In Good Company - Loneliness can cause ill health and reduce people's ability to lead fulfilling and independent lives. In November 2016 we launched our IGC campaign – working with partners, including charities and the local media - to combat loneliness and raise awareness of the wide range of support on offer in Norfolk. Since the campaign launched, we've received hundreds of pledges from individuals and organisations – all of them promising to do something, no matter how small, to help tackle loneliness in their community. Now Norfolk businesses and community organisations are being urged to apply for a new quality accreditation mark for their work to combat loneliness in the county.

Our adult social care twitter day - County Council staff and partners took to Twitter in October 2016 to raise awareness of adult social care services countywide. They tweeted experiences of their typical day, giving followers an insight into how diverse the care sector is, and also shared a wealth of information about what's available. More than 14,000 people looked at the tweets on the day and the site is now being followed by the media and social work organisations. This was our fourth successful Twitter day, following Children's Services social care, schools and roads earlier in the year.

Healthy Home Assistance – we've been working with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, East Coast Community Healthcare and NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group on the 'Healthy Homes Assistance' project, set up at the end of 2016. The project is helping facilitate early hospital discharge, reduce admissions and / or readmissions and provide preventative measures to reduce risks around the home. A study of one of the cases already completed by the project where falls prevention works were carried out at a cost of £465, has identified potential savings to the NHS of £12,000.

Giving a warm welcome to Syrian refugee families - Norfolk has a long tradition of extending the hand of friendship to those in need and this has held true in this case of welcoming Syrian refugees to the county. At the beginning of February, the first five Syrian families arrived in Norwich to begin their new life in Norfolk. In preparation, extensive work was done with district councils, health authorities, schools and voluntary groups to get everything in place to welcome the families, all of whom have young children. We were also inundated with offers of help and support from Norfolk residents and local faith and voluntary groups.

Acting against domestic violence – in December 2016, we reached the 500 mark for training domestic abuse ‘champions’ in frontline professions to help people suffering abuse. Our domestic abuse change coordinators are working across the county with people in professions who come face-to-face with the public, training them to become ‘champions’ so that they can look out for signs of abuse and take action to improve the safety of anyone affected. Champions are given free training to learn how to ask, respond to, and support people affected by domestic abuse, and to use their knowledge to also help their colleagues know how best to respond.

Norfolk Community Learning Services celebrates ‘Good’ Ofsted report in major turnaround - Education in Norfolk has received another boost with the news that Norfolk Community Learning Services (NCLS) has achieved an Ofsted inspection judgement of ‘Good’, providing Norfolk County Council with the security and sustainability to achieve its long term objectives for the service. This follows a previous judgement of ‘Inadequate’ in January 2015. At the recent inspection (April 2016), Ofsted inspectors said that “Leaders and managers have dealt quickly and very effectively with key issues identified at the previous inspection”.

Inspectors were impressed by the new vision, strategic objectives and operating model for the service, formerly known as Adult Education. These were approved by Norfolk County Council’s Communities Committee and implementation will be complete by September 2016.

### **Community and Environmental Services**

Better broadband - the latest tranche of Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) will see high-speed broadband coverage reaching more than 95% of Norfolk home and businesses by spring 2020. This brings the total investment in the BBfN programme to £68m since it launched at the end of 2012. Currently, 87% of households and businesses in Norfolk can get a superfast broadband service, more than double the number four years ago (42%). We won’t be satisfied until everyone in Norfolk has access, so we will continue to push for more investment and make the money we already have go as far as possible.

Integrated transport strategy – along with Suffolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP, we have commissioned Mouchel to research and produce an integrated transport strategy, covering air, road, rail, buses, sustainable transport and ports, which will be used to lever in transport investment from Government. The work was commissioned in October 2016 and is due to be published shortly.

Good progress on the NDR - it was a productive first year for the construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road which will provide Norfolk, Broadland and Norwich with high-quality infrastructure that will serve the county, its people and the economy for years to come. Work is going well, with most of the 1.5 cubic metres of bulk excavation complete, three roundabouts in use at the western end, bridge beams installed or imminent on four of the eight bridges and nearly 9km of carriageway complete to base asphalt layers. A new Tarmac plant at Postwick will this year supply nearly 150,000 tonnes of asphalt for the 20km dual carriageway. Planting of the 300,000 shrubs, trees and hedgerow plants is well under way.



## **Our transport infrastructure priorities**

A47 - Norfolk County Council leads the A47 Alliance, bringing together key stakeholders from Lowestoft to Peterborough to lobby for improvements to this trunk road. Throughout 2016 we have been lobbying Highways England for early delivery of three sections of dualling, as well as junction improvements in Guyhirn, Thickthorn and Great Yarmouth. These schemes are programmed to begin in 2020. The Alliance Steering Group is currently gearing up to influence the trunk road programme for the next round of improvements due to be delivered between 2020 and 2025. We have already met Highways England to lobby for our two priorities in Norfolk in this period: the dualling of the Acle Straight and Tilney to East Winch.

Towards the Norwich Western Link - now that the NDR is under construction, we have begun to consider the business case for a Norwich Western Link. This would both ease local traffic conditions and provide a strategic link to the west of the city. Initial work has focused on gathering feedback from local communities and developing a stakeholder group. We are also beginning to assess the economic viability of the project, and if the business case proves positive, we will press for funding and scheme delivery.

Long Stratton bypass - a bypass for Long Stratton would benefit residents and road users alike, and is firmly on our list of priorities. Along with improvements to the Hempnall crossroads, it's also required for the village's planned growth of 1,800 new houses and 12 hectares of employment land. We are keen to lead on the design and delivery of the bypass, and work is currently ongoing to set out how we, South Norfolk Council and the developer will collaborate to support the process of approvals, design, funding and delivery. Once the process is agreed, preparatory work will start towards the planning application – with a view to submitting it by the end of this year and delivery around 2020.

Podium position in highways and transport survey - an independent survey of Norfolk residents resulted in the County Council being ranked third out of 28 similar councils for satisfaction with highways and transport services – the third year in a row that Norfolk was in the top three. One of the biggest increases in satisfaction was for street lighting which saw us move up from 18th to 9th position in the rankings.

### **Emergency Services collaboration - Medical co-responding trial**

Since July Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has been participating in a national medical co-responding trial which sees our fire-fighters mobilised to suspected cardiac arrests alongside the East of England Ambulance Service. We have 10 fire stations with 99 firefighters participating in the trial, the greatest number in the region.

By mobilising our firefighters with the ambulance service we are can deliver an early intervention using cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillators giving the casualty the best chance of survival.

Since July we have attended over 230 co-responding incidents and initial analysis would indicate that our crews are delivering effective CPR. The national trial concludes in February 2017.

Awards - The Library and Information Service won the national Libraries Change Lives Award for its pioneering work in partnership with Norfolk Public Health to promote healthier lifestyles. This work is being taken up as an example of good practice by libraries across the UK. Enhancing the reputation of NLIS

Customers - Each year Libraries run the Summer Reading Challenge to encourage children to continue reading during the summer holidays and to make a significant contribution to improving literacy. In Summer 2016, 14,413 children and young people took part in the challenge. 57% were girls and 43% were boys.

Libraries as cultural hubs - In 2016, the potential of libraries as cultural hubs started to be realised. A number of theatrical and music performances were held in libraries across the county. The most recent being Librarian Theatre's 'A Christmas Carol' which played to sell out audiences in three libraries before Christmas. Earlier in the Autumn 5 libraries played host to an interactive dance performance aimed at early years.

## **ALPINGTON AND BERGH APTON VA SCHOOL – Teresa Osborne**

The school continues to thrive, we have a great deal of interest in places at our school, in September 2016 we took 26 new pupils into our reception class. The Governors took the decision to expand places for this year in order to safeguard the financial position of the school. Our maximum admission number from 2017 onwards will be 20 pupils. In order to accommodate the children we are moving from four to five class bases and will be appointing a new teacher from September 2017.

Standards of education remain high and we were delighted that summer 2016 once again saw Alpington & Bergh Apton Primary School achieve at amongst the highest standards both locally and nationally.

Approximately 50% of our pupils live in either Alpington or Bergh Apton. Almost all the children who live in Alpington and Bergh Apton attend our school, we also attract pupils from the wider community ie: Framingham Earl, Poringland, Brooke and one or two children from Loddon. Parents have the right to request a place at any school in accordance with the school's admissions criteria. The school has a good reputation and record for supporting children with Special Educational Needs and the friendly, inclusive ethos helps children of all abilities to thrive and enjoy their primary education.

The children enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum, we have a number of visitors to the school during the year ranging from music teachers, artists and authors, Open the Book for assemblies, sports coaching and even Cave Men setting up their yurt overnight. This year the choir took part in the Norfolk County Music festival and did very well, they also participate in various sporting competition activities with and against other schools in the area. The children also go on a wide range of visits and this summer the oldest pupils will once again be away for a week's residential at Brancaster.

The old school hall has had a much needed makeover and continues to be used by Cottontails pre-school who also use our premises for their annual sports day. Our two local Churches are enjoyed

when we attend to mark festivals throughout the year, inviting families and friends to join the services.

The school is fortunate to recruit strong Governors who live locally and understand the context of the school and the community it serves. The following parents/staff and members of the community are currently on the school's governing body: Michael Hibbin (Chair), Aaron Widdows, Andrew Barker, Michael Stowers, James Debbage, Teresa Osborne, Michala Warner, Sian Aldis, Greg Roper, Joy Shreeve, Rev Chris Ellis, Patrick Philips, Elaine Horn.

Our Friends Association continues to be very active and organises fundraising events during the year which helps balance the budget. The Christmas Fayre was once again very successful and it was pleasing to see the numbers of community members coming along. Funds raised are used to help make our children's education enjoyable, enhancing the indoor and outdoor curriculum, buying equipment for the School and supporting trips throughout the year too. This year we are working towards the major project of resurfacing our playground area, meaning that we can create exercise and play areas on an even surface for our children to enjoy lots of fresh air, fun and sports.

Since 1981, the villages of Alpington and Bergh Apton have together enjoyed the merits of a successful and friendly school, recently judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and we hope that you agree it is an asset to our beautiful villages.

Regular newsletters are issued and can be found on our website <http://alpington.norfolk.sch.uk/> - a great area which tells you all about us! The school is currently badged on the Bergh Apton website as 'Alpington Village', for clarification to viewers this would ideally read Alpington and Bergh Apton Cof E (VA) Primary School – please feel free to use the website link for visitors to the site, particularly those with younger families looking to see what BA can offer (aside from a beautiful, friendly village!)

Our fundraising activities allow us to involve our community and to reach out to younger and older members alike, enabling them to join in the school's social events. Likewise, we are pleased to support village activities and this summer we will be attending the Alpington and Yelverton Summer Festival and Bergh Apton Fete, hosting a cake stall (our speciality!).

This term, we invite you to make a date and join us for our 3k Fun Run .... Some of walk, we use scooters, we even piggy back!....(Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May) and the Summer BBQ Fayre (Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June) where you can enjoy delicious food, fun, games and merriment in our gorgeous school grounds.

It is important to us that our children also value the generosity of giving and they have been very keen to support causes close to the hearts of some of our pupils and staff - we have raised collections for the Naxal Orphanage in Kathmandu and recently we all had a 'Bad Hair Day' for Great Ormond Street Hospital. On a regular basis, we distribute bags for a textile recycling collection and we share the proceeds with The Salvation Army and their good causes in the UK -please look out for one coming through your letterbox in June!

The support of parents and neighbours is fundamental to the continuing success of our School and visitors to our events are always welcomed with open arms!

Teresa Osborne, Headteacher, values the community links which the school is central to and is keen that a representative attends and supports future Parish Council meetings and discussion. We hope that PC members will enjoy updates on how the school is performing and ways in which we are linking in with the Bergh Apton community, via our everyday activities and our Friends Association. The school are also linking in with Alington with Yelverton Parish Council.

Our school has a wide reaching, outstanding reputation, bringing many new families into the community -potentially this could be a way in which consultations and/or key pieces of information are communicated, reaching school parents/carers for their comment and, potentially, spark their interest to join in discussions and meetings too!

## **BERGH APTON CONSERVATION TRUST – Tony Davy**

Two significantly new activities of the Trust come to mind since I last reported to you, one aimed at a wide conservation audience and the other focused on our own nature reserve. Perhaps the most novel has been participation in the 'Wild Patch' project, a project initiated by South Yare Wildlife Group and the Broads Authority, that aims to raise public awareness of the immense conservation value of being a little less tidy in the garden, among other things. Our involvement has been in the production of a short animated film, designed and animated by Phoebe Halstead. This was commissioned and funded by our member Rodney Aldis, through a charitable donation to the Trust. The video runs for a little over 3 minutes and has been kindly voiced-over by local resident and BBC presenter David Whiteley, on a pro bono basis. I think you will agree, when you see it, that this is a beautiful production that could have a lot of impact. You can watch it on You Tube.

The exciting development on our reserve was the excavation of a new pond on Valley Marsh in November 2016. The pond, in the deep valley peat between the south dyke and the river Chet, is about 20 m in diameter and 1.5 m deep at its centre. However, it has tiered shelves giving a range of water depths and features a small island. This arrangement will provide valuable new habitat opportunities for many types of wildlife. We also expect that, being ground-water fed, it should avoid the intractable problems of nutrient enrichment experienced by our existing pond, which takes surface run-off from the closed landfill site, and thus provide habitat complementary to it.

The Trust was delighted to receive a magnificent oak bench seat in memory of our founding member and loyal friend, Phyllis Ride. We are grateful to Phyllis' executors and Lorie Lain-Rogers for this bench, which will be installed in a scenic spot at Valley Marsh for the benefit of members and visitors seeking a quiet moment.

We have seen increasing local engagement, including visits by the Brooke scout group (12 -14 September) at the start of their new season's programme of events. Over the three evenings nearly sixty youngsters along with numerous leaders and parent helpers gathered in the Church Field before going down on to various parts of the Trust land. The groups were excited to find slow worms and grass snakes on the site, not to mention seeing numbers of bats flitting about while they worked, and hearing the tawny owls calling. We forget how lucky we are to have these things on our doorsteps, and the boys' excitement was great to see. First came a group of Beavers (aged 6-8) on the evening of Monday 12 September. They took turns on the marsh to do some raking and pond

dipping in the dyke. Plenty of sticklebacks and impressive dragonfly nymphs were found and admired, along with a good selection of pond beetles. Tuesday evening saw a group of Scouts (11-14 years) split their efforts between raking on the marsh, trying their hand at some scything, and clearing steps of brambles, bracken and nettles on the plantation. A lively group of 20 Cubs (8-11 years) came on Wednesday evening. They completed the raking on the marsh and repaired the steps on the plantation. We are grateful to Jacquie Ratcliffe, Shirley Rimmer and Lisa Flatman for managing these initiatives.

Of course, we have not neglected our important more traditional activities. Amongst other things, we have had (in no particular order): breakfast with the moths, pond-dipping, a fungus foray, monthly work days, installation of nest boxes, visits to local sites of conservation interest, and erudite talks -not to mention the ever-popular summer barbeque and Christmas party. Details can be found in our published programmes. We look forward to an exciting summer as the new pond becomes populated with wildlife.

## **BERGH APTON HEDGE WARDEN – Bob Kerry**

Members of Bergh Apton Conservation Trust continued with the hedge survey last year and since 1999 have now surveyed an incredible 24,720 metres of hedge, that's over 15 miles, but we have not finished yet so the survey will continue for a few years yet. In 2001, we surveyed the hedge opposite the Village Hall, a lovely thick mature hedge which has now been destroyed by development. Other planned developments along Threadneedle Street and other places in the village will almost certainly result in the destruction of more hedges. I have therefore decided to stand down as Hedgerow Warden and resign as of today. If the Parish Council decides to appoint someone else in this post I wish them well. My work surveying hedges will of course continue with the Conservation Trust.

## **BERGH APTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP – Linda Davy**

Bergh Apton Local History Group continues to pursue its research, advisory and social activities. We join with other local history groups for some of their activities, as well as organising a number of events of our own .. Several members are involved with the activity at Caistor Roman site and other members joined Alington and Yelverton History Group on a visit to Gunton water powered sawmill, an impressive piece of equipment restored and run by volunteers. We continue to be a member of the Centre of East Anglian Studies based at UEA. Television programmes are continuing to foster an interest in people's own family history and we continue to receive a substantial number of visitors to the village who are seeking their ancestral roots.

Our Remembrance Sunday service is always a special event attended by many parishioners and visitors from afar and our hospitality here, after the church service, is always much appreciated. Our 2017 winter dinner celebrated the birthday of Lewis Carroll with a menu featuring flamingos, hedgehogs and mock turtle soup. Guests appeared in many guises including Alice in Wonderland, White rabbits and other fanciful and imaginative characters. A re-enactment of the mad hatter's tea

party was greeted with loud approval. A Bring and Share supper accompanying local films will take place on Friday week (April 28th) to which all are welcome to join us .. Last year's outing was a guided walk around the city walls in Great Yarmouth led by Dr Mary Fewster. and was a fascinating day. This year we are joining with the Conservation Trust visiting West Stowe on Sunday July 16th. Each year we have a guided tour of Norwich following a particular theme. Last year's walk had to be abandoned due to torrential rain; we hope to repeat it with more success this summer. The Hare, in August, was at Royston House (by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Waters) and was an extremely enjoyable evening, to be repeated this year.

We are still pursuing our idea of erecting a small structure in the corner of Church Field to house our archives and act as an information and research centre.

## **TREE WARDEN'S REPORT – Linda Davy**

The Tree Warden Group has moved from under the umbrella of South Norfolk Council and morphed into a new format under The Tree Council. The activities have moved more towards helping ensure that more trees reach maturity by taking part in tree care activities such as mulching, pruning, adjusting stakes and ties and managing the effects of extreme weather. Meetings are held several times a year where subjects such as tree maintenance, hedge planting and tree diseases are discussed. Local planning issues are still covered by the Council and I have, on several occasions tried to intervene when concerns have been raised about tree and hedge removal but I fear with little positive results.

## **BERGH APTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – Hilary Ling**

The Village Hall is used for Wedding Receptions and Wakes. Lots of private hires, with Children's birthday parties, Christening parties,

Well used – Regular - Dog training, Painting class, Singalong group, Yoga, Microscopy Group, B.A. Society, Parish Council, BACAT workshops.

Rental income continues to exceed expenditure. Monthly Coffee n Catch Up is very popular.

### **OTHER USERS INCLUDE:**

The Church Unity lunch, Harvest lunch and the Quiz & Chips for Church funds and 11 Says is now put together here.

Thurton & B.A. Players Race nights and concerts History group Annual Dinner and film night Christmas Lunch and New Year Breakfast (organised by the Parfitt family) Conservation Trust AGM

It was used as a Polling Station Various walking groups use car park and give small donations Amongst other things we celebrated the Queen's 90th Birthday with a day long party, we had a

Christmas Garland workshop (and Tiff will do one again this year), a Jumble Sale and our Christmas Bingo.

The Committee had a Spring Clean Day and a Garden Pruning Day. Thanks to John Ling for continually improving the Hall.

Everyone will have noticed all the cars and vans in the Car Park. Pentaco, who are building the houses opposite, approached us to use the car park for the duration of the build. They have offered to pay our Water Bill, and renew the entrances, and top dress the car park at the end of their stay. Fortunately, Pentaco only use the car park during the week, leaving it free at weekends for the majority of our rentals.

So the finances are in good order, thanks to Peter Lyle, and the Hall has been well used and well looked after.

## **BERGH APTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - Patricia Waters**

The Church in Bergh Apton continued to flourish in 2016 and the average attendance at regular services increased to twenty, one more than last year.

There are thirty-five names on the Electoral Roll (the same as 2015); six people reside out of parish.

At the Annual Vestry Meeting, the appropriate Nomination Forms having been tendered for Mr John Ling and Mrs Shirley Rimmer and there being no other nominations, Mr Ling and Mrs Rimmer were unanimously elected to serve as Churchwardens for a further year.

Services were held in the Parish Church most weeks. The exceptions, unless they were held at Bergh Apton, were once a month when congregations from the Benefice met together in one church and on fifth Sundays when a combined Service was held for all parishes in the Bramerton Group. The Unity Service was attended by worshippers from various denominations in the area and was followed by a "Pot Luck" lunch in the Village Hall. Over one hundred and thirty people gathered for the Remembrance Day Service and the Christmas Carol Service by candlelight was attended by nearly two hundred.

Four Services were specially planned with children in mind. The first was on Mothering Sunday when posies, prepared by children the previous day under the guidance of Maria Phillips, were blessed and given to their Mothers and to everyone at the Service. The second was the Pet Service when adults too brought an array of well-behaved animals. The third was the Shoebox Service in November when shoeboxes filled with presents for children in Novi Sad were blessed and sent on their way. The Crib Service on the afternoon of Christmas Eve attracted over fifty people of all ages. Shirley Rimmer's story of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus was interspersed with the game of "pass the parcel" and as the story unfolded the children opened a layer of wrapping paper and removed figures of people, animals and angels which they put into the stable Shirley had made.

The Archdeacon's Visitation took place in September. The Churchwardens had everything laid out ready for his inspection, e.g. Registers of Services, Burial Plan, Quinquennial Report, Health & Safety

Policy, Accounts, Minutes Book, Holy Communion Vessels. He was pleased with everything he saw and commented that it was the best Inspection he had done.

The P.C.C. met seven times during 2016. The subjects exercising members this year were the toilet area, the notice board inside the churchyard, a new ramp for better wheelchair access, repair of the Denny-Cooke tomb and the church field.

The toilet area was refurbished in July. Shirley Rimmer spent many hours investigating the most suitable wash-basin, toilet, water heater and floor covering, and sourcing them at the most economical cost. They were installed by Groundhog of Poringland and we are pleased with the result. The notice board itself was in good condition but the inner board and lettering needed replacing and have been purchased and installed. A new ramp to accommodate scooters and three-wheelers was purchased. The Denny-Cooke tomb was restored and in view of the generosity of the family over many years to the Church and Village Hall, these two organisations and the Bergh Apton Local History Group agreed to assist the family with the cost.

The surface of the church field is a continuing concern. The area has become muddy and slippery following persistent and heavy rain over the last two years, creating difficult conditions for parking and walking. Various suggestions were mooted and eventually it was agreed that a trial area of matting be laid to the left of the gravel drive. In addition, in view of the extra traffic expected during the winter months for Services, Concert and unforeseen events such as funerals, eight tons of gravel was raked over on an area to the right of the driveway.

The usual three main Fund Raising events organised by Milton Harris were held again in 2016. The Horse Show and Fun Dog Show in May which are very popular and the Fete in July were well supported, as was the Quiz and Chips in October. In addition, Lardal Kantori, the Norwegian ChOir, once again entertained an appreciative audience in Church in November.

Charitable donations for the year from collections and planned giving were given to the Sanyu Babies' Home in Uganda, the East Anglian Children'S Hospice towards the building fund for their new premises in Framingham Earl, Bramerton Youth Group and the Royal British legion. In addition the proceeds from the Raffle at the Horse Show were sent to Riding for the Disabled.

The monthly luncheons, known as "Tuesday Friends", continue to be enjoyed by villagers who appreciate the opportunity to meet together in the "Welcome Area" at the rear of the Church for a meal prepared by members of the congregation and others in the village.

The P.C.C. likes the Church to be used for events as well as Services and willingly agreed that Bergh Apton Community Arts Trust could stage a Play there. Three performances of "Midwinter Dreamings" were held at the beginning of the year.

The Churchyard was kept tidy by work parties of parishioners and the Community Service Teams on seven Saturdays in the Summer and Autumn. They were sustained by refreshments mid-morning and afternoon and bowls of soup at lunchtime. As well as strimming and cutting the grass, they renewed the rabbit fencing in the church field and helped with the installation of the trial matting. Between the workdays John Ling cut the grass. The annual D.I.Y. spring-cleaning day inside the church was held in May when furniture was polished and cobwebs in high places were removed. In



addition, the floor tiles in the sanctuary were stabilised and the scaffold was erected to enable repair to a hole in the ceiling of the chancel.

There would be little point to all this activity if the Church was not well used. Fortunately, Bergh Apton can rely on continuity of Services; our Rector, the Revd. Christopher Ellis, works hard ensure this is maintained and members of the team of Authorised Worship Assistants prepare and lead a Service once a month -more frequently if no clergy is available. During the year Revd. Chris also officiated at three weddings, two baptisms and six funerals. We often have worshippers from other parishes attend our Services and they, like those people who visit our Church while touring Norfolk, feel welcome here. It is a good place to be -and long may it continue.

## **THE CHRISTOPHER TENWINTER TRUST – Carrie Kerry**

The Christopher Tenwinter Trust is a parish charity arising from the Will of Mr Christopher Tenwinter dated 22nd June 1599, where the income from a parcel of land owned by him was left "for the use and behoof of the town of Burgh-Apton" .

The five Trustees currently are: Revd Chris Ellis, Carrie Kerry, Chris Johnson, Richard Crome, Kevin Parfitt

This charity continues today with a modest annual income of approximately £1,000.00 from investments, Building Society Interest and the rent of just over 11 acres of land owned by the Trust.

The Trustees meet annually in November in order to make donations for associations and individuals of Bergh Apton, ie, donations towards the pensioners Christmas lunch, occasionally for specific requests from Alington and BerghApton School or Playgroup (which benefits BerghApton children) or smaller donations towards the cost of hospital car parking for residents who find themselves frequently attending hospital with long term health conditions.

For the year to 31 st December 2016 the income was £1,090 and the Trustees donated £901 for the benefit of those who live in the parish of Bergh Apton.

If anyone knows of any need of help from the Christopher Tenwinter Charity please contact any of the Trustees.

## **BERGH APTON PARISH CHARITIES – Paul Blazer**

The Bergh Apton Parish Charities is financially sound and continues to receive a good return on the investments currently held. The charity distributed £2,150.00 to 29 recipients during the year end 31 December 2016. During the AGM held in November 2016, it was noted that both Paul Blazer & Bob Debbage's 4 year term as Parish Approved Trustees ended in November 2016. Both offered to continue in office for another 4 years and the Rev C Ellis is to seek approval from the Parish Council for both to continue for another term.