

2025 PPC APM - Chairmans Report.

Well, I still seem to be here as Chairman, I've even found myself enjoying some aspects of the post, but others, not so much. If no other Councillor steps forward to be Chairman for the coming year later this evening, I shall again do my best with the challenge, however, if I am re-elected, I would ask other Councillors to step forward and deal with the various PPC responsibilities and keep me informed.

Carol Hume has worked well for PPC this year as Clerk and RFO, thank you Carol, we seem to have a system that now works efficiently, I am now more familiar with the many aspects of chairing and the PPC website is constantly being updated with new or amended policies. PPC now have a FB page and I hope that from this evening that its use and administration will be taken on more efficiently by one of our newer Councillors.

PPC currently have just one Councillor vacancy to fill with two past members re-joining us this year, we seem to work well as a team, we have a few differences of opinion but that is how a healthy democracy should work. We have a good relationship with our District & County Councillors, who attend meetings, when possible, in person or via video conferencing.

The Council and Parish Clerk's business has involved the day to day running of the Council's financial and budget affairs, planning, traffic, commenting on noise, parking and other complaints, Christmas Tree celebrations along with much work towards proposed new village amenity areas at Mabels Walk.

The Council regularly attends SZC meetings and SZC Northern Transport meetings, we remain committed to making small donations to locally connected charities or organisations that assist our village residents.

This year, we've introduced a major revision to how we handle the annual PPC grass cutting contract that we hope should save around £1500 over 2024 and give more flexibility to deal with the varied growing conditions, the saving should allow us to fund other items for the Parish, like a second bench or/and pathway additions, both in the cemetery where the agreed 2024 specification is to be continued. We continue to adopt earlier advice from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust when practical and we will now not be cutting this May, I just hope this 'no mow May' is not to be followed by 'Jungle June', cutting & collecting the long grass after each of the four annual contracts can become a complication, due to its excessive growth & and some further adjustment to cutting schedules may sometimes be needed.

Volunteers have again played their part in many ways this year, Sara and Beth Benstead continue to provide the community with the well-attended and sociable coffee mornings in the hall each month, I enjoy attending these events when I am able, please approach me about council issues if you see me there. Thank you to all our volunteers, you greatly enhance our community.

When we can, we help many worthy causes, including St Michaels, the Methodist Church, the Village Hall, with the defib installation this year and Charities or organisations directly connected in some way to the village.

Alas, our wish list for the past year, the two Mabels Walk amenities, the allotments and open space area have not materialised for reasons outside of PPC control, despite all our work, the District Council has recently informed us that the public open space land will be in private ownership in the future. I'm afraid this will put any proposed central play area there in doubt. However, the veg growers amongst you will be pleased to hear that allotments will be provided as planned, with that land transferring to PPC ownership. PPC are very disappointed about this change, ESC support has been offered for a play area at an alternative position in the village, when land becomes available. PPC are soon to respond about how we would like the Mabels Walk open space to be managed without a play area, the Parish Council will discuss this here tonight after this meeting and the public are welcome to attend. A grant award was made to PPC by SZCCF for Mabels Walk, it was a lengthy application process and there are a few conditions attached to this award that PPC must satisfy before we can access the money to help at Mabels Walk, the award may need some adjustment as it seems the play area there may be lost to the village, the fund should help supplement PPC's own funds towards creating the allotments and possibly elements of the public open space.

PPC are keen to play our part in preventing local flooding issues, EA cleared the Gull following requests from us and our ward Councillor, we are currently working on an emergency plan for the village, and we hope to share this with the village soon. We have several traffic issues that we are dealing with to make the village a safer & more pleasant environment. The Sibton Rd junction still needs to be made safer for pedestrians and SCC have been provisionally approached about alterations to this junction that might help. Traffic monitoring has taken place in the village to give us baseline figures for the future & similarly, air monitoring is currently under way

An agreement to tidy the privately owned verge parking area near the phone box in The Street has not yet been agreed, the Parish Council have some budget funds allocated towards making this happen & negotiations with the landowner & County Council are under way.

Despite rumblings earlier in the year, the future of the old school building is not yet known, we support its preservation and would like the building turned into something useful, but only without the loss of its historic character.

Please contact us or come to PPC meetings if you have something that you want to say or have a complaint that we can help with, we volunteer as Councillors to help the community & cannot do so without your input.

That's all from me for now, I wish you all well for the coming year and I shall now ask Individual Councillors to introduce themselves, with each giving brief reports about the village organisations that they are involved with, after which the public are welcome to ask questions or have your say.

Barry Rowing

PPC Chairman