

Chairman's Annual Report 2020

1. Introductions of the Parish Councillors:

Paul Watchman, Chris Stembridge, Laura Perry, Carol Sharp, Hayley Mablesen, Annie Lee Moore.

- Our thanks go to the parish councillors who have served the village of Lidgate so diligently.
- 2019/20 has seen a change to the make-up of Lidgate Parish Council in the last year with Steve Child retiring after 17 years as a parish councilor. On behalf of the village, we would like to extend a big thank you to Steve for his hard work and dedication to the community.
- We have welcomed Hayley and Annie to the parish council in the year.

2. The role of the Parish Council.

The central necessary duty of the PC is to satisfy its administrative duties and comply with the rules and regulations. Our parish clerk, Joanne Kirk is steering the ship through waters such as administration, planning, GDPR, audits and grants etc, and our many thanks are extended to Joanne for all her help.

The parish council is actively involved with matters such as:

- Coronavirus Community Support Group. I would like to thank those volunteers that have formed this group to help with the vulnerable in the village. This has included opening Lidgate Market after closure in 1420, that has served the village well. Our thanks especially to Alex at The Star for organising this service. A trio of coordinators have been arranging food collections, prescription collections and much more beside. This group is a cross organisation group, representing members of the parish council, village hall committee, parochial church council and the community.
- Planning Applications. Our thanks are extended to Lidgate Archaeology Group for their production of archaeology reports into the Norman Mere and Dam that exists on this area of the village have increased our knowledge of Norman and Medieval Lidgate. Historic England has actually extended the SAM area to include Bailey Pond and the area towards the castle, which is positive news for the preservation of the village for the future generations.
- Highways. Speeding. We are very grateful to Chris Stembridge and his team of volunteers who don high viz jackets and operate the village speed-gun on a regular basis. This has been supported this year by the VAS unit. This is the box that clamps to a post and displays the speed of the passing vehicle.
- Rights of Way, footpaths. The three villages of Lidgate, Dalham and Ousden walk was held again last year on the bank holiday Mondays in May and August. Our thanks to Alex for opening The Star for the walkers on these days.
- A new circular walk has opened as part of a village project to include the archaeological features of the Norman castle, The Mere and Dam. Our thanks are extended to The Wills

Trust for allowing two new permissive footpaths to create this circular walk. We plan to hold an opening event when the coronavirus lockdown is lifted.

- The Playing Field. First, I would like to thank Chris Bliss for his voluntary grass cutting skills on the village mower. This saves the parish council some £400 per year as we used to contract this out. Our thanks also go to Angus MacDonald who services and adjusts the mower each year. Our thanks also to Graham Flux and Wills Trust for the storage space for the mower. I would just like to add that the cricket nets and AstroTurf, which have been financed by Lidgate and Ousden Cricket Club, are available for the village to use. Practice is normally Thursday evenings, currently suspended.
- The Defibrillator. This has now been in place for over two years and to the best of my knowledge hasn't been used.
- Lidgate Tidy Group. This was formed by the parish council to improve the appearance of the village. This year's project has been the clearance of the old road, see map of 1780, into Lidgate of vegetation and the building of a new bridge, steps and two gates for access through the sheep fencing, to create the circular walk. This has enabled the new Castle and Dam circular walk to be opened before the coronavirus lockdown. The volunteers have donated over 250 hours of their time for the improvement of The Street and the circular walk. Our thanks are extended to The Wills Trust for providing the telegraph poles for the bridge across the stream and to Rob and Claire for the oak for the bridge steps and gates. We also thank Steve Mableson for his carpentry skills in making these features of the walk.
- Litter Picking. We held a litter pick earlier in the spring and autumn. collecting over 40 bags of rubbish on each occasion. Our thanks to all the volunteers who braved the cold.
- Village Welcome Packs and Newsletter. We have written a welcome pack, thanks to Bob Hall here, and we have been delivering to new residents along with the village newsletter that Bob writes and edits. Out thanks to Bob for all his efforts.
- Pilates Fit Village Class. We are pleased to have facilitated the re- introduction of Pilates in the hall on a Tuesday evening.
- We have continued to support village organisations with donations to the Village Hall of £500, and £150 each for the Parochial Church Council and The Friends of Lidgate Churchyard.

3. St Edmundsbury BC and Suffolk CC.

We would like to thank our local councillors, St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor Mike Chester and Suffolk County Councillor Mary Evans for their continued support. Both Mike and Mary have supported Lidgate with their funding streams.

Parish Council meetings.

The Parish Council is here to represent the members of the village, so it is important that Lidgate residents feel that you can make your concerns known to the parish council.

There are 6 Parish Council meetings each year, not counting planning meetings, and villagers are welcome to attend and have their say at the beginning of each meeting. Advertisements are

always placed in the village notice boards giving at least 3 days notice in advance of each meeting or you can look on the village website and click on the Parish Council link.

We know that Lidgate is an active and welcoming village, but if there is anything you think we should be doing, please do let us know.

John Whitefield
Chairman
23rd April 2020