

# REPORTS FOR ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 22 MAY 2015

## CHURCH REPORT

All Saints' Church, Thornham.

We have continued to alternate our services with Holme, but still remain hopeful that we shall eventually be able to return to regular weekly services.

Our usual fundraising efforts, Refreshments at Easter and the church fete, go a long way towards meeting our running costs but, with the devastating Quinquennial Inspection report received in 2013, we obviously needed to think of other ways of raising money. Thornham Village Cinema's Charity evening raised £1,550 for us and the response to our Appeal letter raised £4,675. Members of the P.C.C. organised an interesting Bat Evening with a talk by Phil Parker and, later in the year, a very successful Bridge afternoon was held. Together these events raised a further £1200.

In January we applied for a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. This fund was specifically set up to address issues with roofs and rainwater. We are delighted to report that our bid was successful and we have been awarded £97,000.

Following a request to the Parish Council for allotments, it was suggested that the piece of land in the churchyard known as The Orchard, would be suitable. With the help of Sam Staveley, the legalities of this have been agreed and 7 plots were measured out together with a further plot to be used as a community garden. The allotment holders are now hard at work and this piece of land has been totally transformed with a good variety of crops now growing. The allotments were blessed after a six-parish communion service on Rogation Sunday. This was followed by an enjoyable lunch attended by the congregation and most of the allotment holders and their guests.

The Parish Council has continued too support the church with a grant towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard.

## BOWLS CLUB

IN 2014 Thornham Bowls Club celebrated its centenary, with a presentation of the trophies, which had been played for during the summer, followed by a buffet, which was attended by both past and present member and our President Joyce Ward.

We were also sponsored for our Open Day by Mike McDonnell, with guests from other clubs taking part we raised £237.00 for club funds.

Fortunately for us the Countryside League Committee had agreed to reduce the number of rinks to three. 9 players as other clubs were short of players as well as us.

We still ended in the bottom half of the league, even though we won against some very good teams, but we enjoyed ourselves.

Ann Whiting  
Chairman

## **VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE**

Please see separate report.

## **PLAYING FIELD REPORT**

Events on the Playing Field have been very successful during the year. The Cricket Team was successful and now has established a second team to play on Sundays. The Football Club finished top of the league, won the league knockout cup and the Charlie Day Cup.

A Sport England Small Grant was awarded for the purchase of windbreaks around the MUGA. This has now been professionally cleaned and newly sanded.

Grants were awarded for nets, a roller and covers for the Cricket Club and floodlights for general use.

David Thompson has continued to cut the playing field, and John Warham and others have helped with strimming on the field. The Pavilion has been cleaned and lots of other maintenance jobs have been carried out.

The Committee have met infrequently throughout the last few months and as there has been no AGM, despite numerous attempts to hold one, the committee ceases to function. It is hoped that the Playing Field Committee will be restructured in the near future.

Cllr A Needham

## **RSPB REPORT**

Titchwell Marsh  
2014/15

### Storm Surge

The work caused by the storm surge was finally completed in late December 2014. New erosion measures have been put in place along the new seawall to stop it being damaged along the base. The eastern seawall had to be rebuilt and the Autumn Trail will be in operation again this year.

Access to the beach will continue to be through the dunes for the time being.

### Staffing

We have recently recruited a new Senior Sites Manager for Titchwell and Snettisham; Liz Appleton will be starting here in July and I'm sure she will be in touch once she has started. We also have a recent addition of a Visitor Experience Manager; Carrie Carey is now responsible to managing events at Titchwell and Snettisham

### Wildlife

*Marsh harrier* – an excellent year so far. 5 confirmed nests on the reserve with 2 very close to Fen Hide offering excellent views. Eggs should hatch in late May

*Bittern* - a male has been booming since late March although we don't know if we have a nest yet. The bird sounds different to recent year and could be new to the area.

*Bearded tit* – seems to be a late year but good numbers are present

*Avocet* – 8-10 pairs present on the fresh marsh although they are late this year too

*Otter* – although elusive there is still at least one individual present. It has been seen on the fresh marsh in recent weeks

Paul Eele  
Warden  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

## **SAMS**

Not Received

## **VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELD LTD**

My report last year referred to laying of the Hall foundations and the completion of the build process. At that time, we had built the Hall but were looking into the unknown – would the Hall be a success or not?

After our first full year of trading, I am delighted to report that we have had a successful year. Income has exceeded expenditure by a comfortable margin, and we have put funds aside to cover most of the depreciation costs on our assets. With additional funds accrued during the build process, we can cover any future “rainy days” which may be out there waiting for us. I would like to thank Ian Barrett and Sue Hardy for the outstanding work they have done throughout the year keeping the books in order and preparing an excellent set of accounts.

Fund raising efforts continue as we have a high level of expenditure and depreciation costs to cover.

During the year, we welcomed two new Trustees, Wendelien Bellinger and Alison Wakes-Miller. Wendelien has taken on the role of organising children's events, and Alison has taken on the mantle of H&S, a vital role. By coincidence, we now have the politically correct 50/50 split between men and women as Trustees!

Colin Venes has details on football and the number of activities carried out. Suffice to say, we have covered just about every interest and age group during the year, and have attracted people from neighbouring villages thus establishing Thornham as a “hub” for community activities. I am grateful to Colin Venes and his Hall Committee for the unstinting work they have put in over the year to make this happen.

The number of volunteers continues to grow and we are grateful to everybody for their participation – no volunteers, no activities! My grateful thanks to all of you. We would love to have more!

On the Playing Field, though strictly just outside the reporting period, it is worth mentioning that through grant awards (thanks Stephanie Mocatta and Ron Williamson) we now have a new roller, new cricket covers and a splendid two lane net facility. Meanwhile, Thornham FC completed a notable treble of the League and two Cups in their second season.

We continue to work with the new management at the Deli and have negotiated a one year licence with them, which has given us an extended car park, covers our maintenance costs as well as providing a small income.

I would also like to thank Alison Chesterman, our Bookings Secretary who works hard keeping our calendar of ever increasing events up to date.

We have three priorities for the coming year:

1. To continue our fund raising activities to ensure the long term sustainability of the Hall
2. To integrate TVH with all other village activities – business, Church, bowls etc.
3. To instigate a 5 year plan for the maintenance of the Playing Field to make it the best in the area.

Finally, my grateful thanks to all the Trustees and their partners. The amount of time and effort they have put into making the Hall a success is nothing short of remarkable – Thornham is very lucky to have them.

John Warham  
Chairman  
May 2015.

## **CHAIRS REPORT**

It has been another busy year in Thornham, which, while it occasionally seems exhausting, I hope continues for the coming year as we continue to make Thornham a good village for all the community, the visitors, the businesses and those simply passing through.

There have been many good news items, and some less good, however starting with the positive, some highlights from last year starting on the sporting front:

- Thornham Cricket Club goes from strength to strength, joining a Sunday league team, now with a superb practice net facility and actively recruiting new members.
- Thornham Football Club, also having a brilliant season, two great cup runs and winning the league.
- The Bowls club continues to thrive, as it goes into its 100<sup>th</sup> year and the Parish Council are looking to support it to ensure its continued success
- The table tennis club now has four tables and an active membership, while the tennis club re-formed last year with over 50 members, many of them juniors.
- The church had superb success with a grant application for £100K to help with the urgent repairs to the roof and the fabric of the church, we look forward to continuing to help support the church next year.
- The allotment society has had a great first year, culminating in the recent blessing of the allotments and has proved to be a great community facility.
- On the coal barn the council fought long and hard to ensure that the planning permission to convert it to residential use was turned down, and we continue with our efforts to get the Coal Barn listed.
- Around the village the Parish Council continues to support initiatives to improve our surroundings – taking over the cutting and maintenance of the greens, for instance, to ensure they are properly managed.

All of this has been achieved by Parish Council members, along with co-opted individuals and a large number of volunteers from across the village. Where possible the Parish Council has helped with funding, but on a total income of

£18,000, much of which is committed in advance to the running of the village, we can only help financially in the most modest way. Thanks and credit must go to all those many individuals who have raised grants, contributed at fund-raising events, donated items and given their time for free – of this we are truly grateful.

There are some negatives to report, and without going into detail here I would say:

We are a small parish council who work on a purely voluntary basis. Sarah, our Parish Clerk, does sterling work with all the background paperwork and regulatory work that is increasingly required of us, on only five hours per week.

We dearly want to continue with our efforts to make Thornham an even better environment and community but we have had significant amounts of our time taken up by aggressive challenges and combative positions taken by parishioners when they want to put their points across. We have spent a disproportionate amount of our limited time and resource on responding to individuals, to repeated queries, requests for meetings and even Freedom of Information Act requests. Whilst we are fully supportive for openness at the Council level and the need for accurate and complete information to be available to all our parishioners, this comes at a very high price when, because of the time and effort required, we cannot give other matters which are to the benefit of the entire community our full attention.

But into the coming year. We have a number of new ideas we would like to pursue, during the year and the term of this Parish Council. These include:

- Supporting village-wide fund-raising – perhaps Open Gardens, a Thornham Recipe Book and maybe even a Thornham Regatta.
- We would like to pull together all the community – the businesses, the individuals and the visitors – into a co-hesive group and are looking to form a Business and Community Group
- We want to help the Church continue in its efforts to maintain the fabric of the building
- And finally we want to continue to make Thornham the very special place to live that it is for all of us.

Finally, it would not be appropriate to finish without welcoming Bob Gulliver to the Parish Council. Bob is a great member of the community, participates at many levels and is most welcome to the council.

And it is with great sadness, but also pride in his achievements, that we say Good-Bye to John Warham. If I was to list all of John's contributions to the village and the Parish Council we would be here for some time; but John has been a stalwart of the Council, a voice of reason, a thoughtful colleague and most of all he has become a very good friend. We will all miss him.