

Strumpshaw Parish Council

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting, 15 April 2025

1. Councillors

Martin (Olly) Page resigned from the parish council May 2024, which meant that the parish council had two councillor vacancies for several months.

We are very pleased to advise that these two positions were filled by co-option at last month's council meeting, held on the 18 March 2025. The parish council warmly welcomes Russ Blake and Bob Morgan onto the council and sincerely thanks Olly for his time served as a councillor and more recently vice-chairman.

Olly helped with the initial setting up of the Speed Awareness Message Sign (SAM2) with Martin Kentish and, through Pages Garage, generously purchased the new dog poo bin on Mill Road and kindly agreed to cover the bin emptying costs for a period of five years.

2. Pedestrian safety

2.1. Footpath on Norwich Road

Having been a priority for many years (since 2008), the 100-metre footway on Norwich Road (near the Mill Road junction) was installed last August at a total cost of £24,000. This project was completed through Norfolk County Council's Parish Partnership Scheme, where town and parish councils are invited to submit bids for highway improvement schemes. The town/parish council is required to fund 50% of any scheme costs, with Norfolk County Council funding the other 50% (upper limit of Norfolk County Council funding support is £25,000).

2.2. Long Lane trod reinstatement

In December 2024, the parish council submitted a bid to the 2025/26 Parish Partnership Scheme for the reinstatement of a trod along Long Lane. Last month (March 2025) we received the very welcome news that our bid was successful. The total cost of the scheme has been estimated at £14,000, which means the parish council must now pay £7,000 (as its share of the scheme costs) for the scheme to progress.

The Clerk has submitted six grant applications. To date, we have received generous donations from The Paul Bassham Charitable Trust (£2,000) and The Adnams Community Trust (£700). County Councillor Andrew Proctor has once again agreed to support our Parish Partnership Bid project with a £1,000 contribution from his Members Highways Division Fund.

Decisions are awaited from The Strumpshaw Trust, National Lottery Awards for All and The Charles Littlewood Hill Trust for the remaining £3,300 to cover the parish council's 50% share.

3. Review of Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group along with Rachel Leggett & Associates (Consultant and Project Manager) have been busy working on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan that will cover the period 2025 to 2045.

The Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation was launched with a drop in exhibition being held in the community hall on 1 February, and the six-week consultation for online or written responses closed on 17 March 2025.

The next steps and estimated timetable)are as below:

- Late March: collate responses (Rachel Leggett & Associates, Consultant)
- Early April: Steering Group to consider all responses and whether they want to amend the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly. This may take several meetings.
- May: Amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan
- May/June: Prepare Consultation Statement (Rachel Leggett & Associates). Prepare Basic Conditions Statement (Compass Point Planning & Rural Consultants).
- June/July: submit Neighbourhood Plan and all supporting documents to Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority
- Summer: Broadland District Council to check Neighbourhood Plan and undertake consultation of their own
- Autumn: Examination followed by amendments
- Late Autumn/Winter: Referendum - if needed. This will be up to the Examiner, depending on the significance of the change since the previously adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- Adoption

We are very grateful to the members of the Steering Group (Will Faulkner - Chair, Michael Green, Jenny Hill, Bob Hunt and Simon Rump) and our consultants (Rachel Leggett and Andrea Long) for their many hours spent conducting this review.

This project has been funded by grant funding from Broadland District Council (£6,000) and Locality (£6,000 in 2023/24 and £10,000 in 2024/25). *At the end of each financial year, any unspent Locality grant monies have to be returned to Locality and a further grant application submitted in new financial year once funding agreed.*

4. Strumpshaw Community Hall

Whilst the parish council owns the Community Hall building and site, the day to day running is undertaken by The Community Hall Committee (CHC). We are grateful to the members of the CHC who all work tirelessly in their free time to keeping the building and site looking immaculate, showing prospective hirers the facilities and opening and closing the building before and after bookings. They would welcome new volunteers to join the team!

The Community Hall has many regular bookings for popular weekly activities or classes for parishioners and neighbouring communities. These include art classes, pilates, yoga, tai chi, Yare Folk Play Along, Strumpshaw Brownies and a monthly sound bath.

The CHC team works hard to organise a variety of community events. Most recent was the popular cheese and wine quiz in February, which received a number of positive feedback comments.

5. Other volunteers

Whilst we acknowledge the important role, time and commitment our parish Councillors undertake in working hard to improve Strumpshaw, Buckenham and Hassingham for all our parishioners, businesses, charities and visitors, the Parish Council also wishes to acknowledge our volunteers with a big thank you, namely:

- Alasdair Fraser, volunteer Tree Warden
- Bob Hunt, for overseeing the Speed Awareness Message Sign (SAM2).
- Bob Cameron and customers/team members of The Shoulder of Mutton who look after the community orchard in the parish council owned Stone Pit.
- Blofield & District Conservation Group (BADCOG) who carry out work parties in Strumpshaw, including Stone Pit, Buckenham Wood and Railway Wood.