

ELSING PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMEN'S REPORT '21 - '22.

1. Normalisation after Covid. Last July's Fun Day (organised with the VH Committee & the PCC), followed by several PUPs, have helped restore Elsing's social life. We recognise the many initiatives undertaken by individuals in this respect. We have registered the Mermaid pub with BDC as a community asset, and will try to keep abreast of any developments. Preparations for the Jubilee are in hand.

2. Infrastructure. We have prevailed upon NCC to fix the drainage problem in Moor Lane, and we continue to maintain the defibrillators. We have had a number of dead trees felled on the Highway Surveyor's Land, where children frequently play. We have discontinued attending NCC's consultations on the North Western Link road, which are still on Zoom, but we receive the minutes.

3. Regulation. We have adopted new Standing Orders (for the conduct of meetings) and Financial Regulations. These are more complex than necessary for a small village, but we can be sure they include everything that is legally necessary. We have also appointed a data protection officer.

4. Planning. Applications were passed by BDC for:

- a building extension for Hall Farm
- on St Mary's Church, a small phone mast and a telephone cabinet in the grounds;
- an extension at Mermaid Cottage, Peaseland Green
- an extension at Holmwood, Rectory Rd.

The PC supported all these.

5. Allotment Committee. Activities here have expanded, under the auspices of the PC:

- A 'Friends of the Allotments' bank account has been set up, separate from the PC's account. Its income is from grants, donations, PUPs and similar events. Its expenditure is for allotment requirements generally, but currently for the cost of the borehole.
- A tree nursery has been established and stocked, with much help from a parishioner.
- A tree policy is in place to minimise the risks from dead or dying trees on PC land. Logs from these trees may be collected by parishioners.

6. Finance.

- There has long been a reluctance to raise the Precept (the amount we ask BDC to collect on our behalf). The two Covid years made this a necessity, and we had begun not to cover our budget, and to make fewer donations, etc. But general price increases and the employment of a professional Clerk have raised our expenses such that our Precept has had to go up from £2,900 to £4,600, an increase of roughly £17 per household. This is in line with villages similar to Elsing, and we are now well in the black.
- The PACE company, which now has planning permission to run a solar farm, has promised the PC a 20-yr annual donation. However, we are certainly not counting on this, as we have heard nothing of the project for some time.

BH & OL, March 22