

Risby Parish Council
Chairman's Report by Mr Derrick Abrey

I would like to thank my fellow councillors and the Parish Clerk for all her hard work and support.

I would also like to thank all the residents in the village who support the village in numerous different ways and help to make Risby such a lovely place to live and be a part of. In particular I would like to thank:

- The resident who keeps the bus shelter clean
- The volunteers who keep the village free of litter
- The volunteers who distribute flyers
- The resident who cuts the grass by Welham Lane Pond
- David Letley and the volunteers who take part in Community Speed Watch
- Risby's tree wardens Roger Shuttler and Chris Sutton
- Sophie Flux and the volunteers in the Risby Wildlife Group who have worked hard to make Risby a wildlife friendly village.
- The people involved in running village organisations such as the church, the village hall and the many clubs and societies in the village.
- Darren Matthews, editor of The Stile newsletter and all the people involved in producing and delivering it.

I am writing this report at a time when we have all been asked to stay at home to protect the NHS during the Coronavirus epidemic. There is no time in recent history when it has been more important for the village to work together to support residents who have to self-isolate for whatever reason. In particular I would like to give special thanks to Jean Savigar and the large number of volunteers who are helping residents who are unable to go shopping, collect prescriptions or who just want to chat to someone during these lonely times. I hope that the strength of the community in Risby will continue to grow once this crisis is over and that we will all recognise the benefits of supporting one another.

The role of a Parish Council is varied. Highways problems in Risby continually dominate our agendas and sadly there has been little improvement since last year. Pothole repairs are poor, drains are still blocked after 18 months, grips and gullies have not been dug out resulting in more water on the road, damage to the road surface and roadsides eroding away. Suffolk County Council's response to many Highways reports is that the work does not meet their criteria for repair or that they have no money to deal with them.

Local issues dealt with by the Parish Council included problems with cars parking on The Green and damaging the surface. Despite numerous requests for vehicles not to park on The Green we continued to receive complaints. We made the decision to purchase new bollards to stop this happening. The bollards were funded from County Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger's locality budget.

District Councillor Susan Glossop also gave the Parish Council some of her locality budget to fund the Risby Wildlife Project. Bulbs and seeds have been purchased and planted to create wildlife friendly areas in the village.

Shortly after Christmas 2019 we received reports of contamination in the pond next to the war memorial. The advice from the Environment Agency and West Suffolk Council was to let nature take its course. The pond was fenced off for a couple of months to prevent access to people and animals. Thankfully due to the heavy rain at the beginning of 2020 the oil dispersed fairly quickly.

Parish Councils are consulted on planning applications by West Suffolk Council. The final decision is made by West Suffolk Council and the Parish Council's views may or may not be taken into account.

Parish Council meetings take place every two months in January, March, May, July, September and November in the Gift Horse Room in the Village Hall. Residents are always welcome to attend. Meetings start with an Open Forum which is an opportunity for residents to ask questions or raise any concerns they have. Residents can also ring or email our parish clerk, Joanne Kirk, if they have any queries.