

Risby Parish Council - Chairman's Report

Highways

Risby Parish Council reported damage to the edge of the road opposite the war memorial caused by the parked vehicles on the other side of the road, as passing cars had to move further over towards the verge. Highways' solution to this problem was to fill the gap with asphalt planings as it was not classed as part of the carriageway.

There are ongoing problems with the gullies/drains in South Street, partly due to the fact that the roads are not swept regularly and grass, straw and leaf litter blocks the gullies and drains which need jetting out to clear the pipes.

Potholes in the village continue to be a problem as often they are only temporary repairs.

The weed problem on footways has got much worse as the new spraying strategy does not appear very effective.

Vehicles cutting over the top of Lower Green have caused damage but Highways have said that the Parish Council cannot put boulders/bollards up to stop this happening.

Trees

All the trees on land the Parish Council is responsible are surveyed annually and work carried out to ensure that the trees remain safe and healthy. One sycamore tree on Lower Green was felled for health and safety reasons and a new oak tree has been planted to replace it. Wildlife areas under the trees are to be cut 4 times a year to keep the weeds in check and encourage flowers to grow.

Risby Charity

Ben Ramsay was nominated to represent the Parish Council on the Charity Committee.

Parish Council

Steve Smith agreed to carry out the annual inspection of Council property. John Fairlie continues to check the defibrillator in School Road.

Planning

Several planning applications came in, the main one being DC/23/0657/FUL for a new steel storage and processing facility on the other side of the A14 behind the White Horse. It will be classed as B2, general industrial usage, unlike the businesses at Saxham Business Park and Risby Business Park which are B1 (offices/research and development/light industry) and B8 usage (storage and distribution).

District Councillor Susan Glossop was surprised that with a development as large as this, the applicant AJN Steelstock did not engage with and consult the community prior to submitting the application.

Risby Parish Council has asked West Suffolk Council why planning permission for a truck stop and roundabout was allowed after the three year time limit had elapsed and why Suffolk County Council Highways did not object to the extra lorry movements at the South Street junction.

An open meeting was held on 15th February 2024 to ask questions and discuss the application and its implications. 61 members of the public attended along with Mr Mike Burt, Chairman of the Saxhams Parish Council, District Councillor Susan Glossop and 4 representatives for the applicant and Risby and Saxham parish councillors. The biggest issue is the use of good agricultural land which is not allocated for any sort of development in West Suffolk Council's Local Plan and the B2 usage which will result in increased noise, particularly at night, light pollution and increased lorry movements which will impact the whole area.

Another planning meeting was held on 4th April 2024 to consider amendments to this application. 38 members of the public attended. Risby Parish Council objected to this amendments as they do not confirm with West Suffolk Planning Policies DM2 and DM5. The Parish Council was asked to consider

a judicial review but does not have the funds to cover the predicted cost of £40,000. Residents were encouraged to submit individual responses as these will carry more weight when the application is considered by West Suffolk Council.

I would like to thank our clerk, Joanne, for all the hard work and extra time and effort she has put in throughout a tough, hectic and busy year, finding out information, pointing us in the right direction and helping and encouraging us to keep going. I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for using and pooling their different expertise and the effort they have put in to attend meetings which all goes to make a really good and supportive team.

Thank you also to the many volunteers in Risby who pick litter, cut grass and hedges, weed footpaths, deliver leaflets and notices, and deploy the VAS around Risby to tackle speeding. Without the help of these volunteers Risby would not be the special place it is to live in.