

Risby Parish Council
Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting on 5th May 2022

Suffolk County Council

Suffolk County Council Highways continues to perform badly with a slow response to highways reports and an increased reluctance to take any action.

Following a number of accidents at the junction with Crematorium (New) Road and Tut Hill, the Parish Council has asked to have the 40mph speed restriction extended to the Westley roundabout. To date this has not been resolved.

There have been ongoing problems with blocked drains/gullies in South St which have not been jetted, causing flooding at top end of South St. The repair to a gully 9 months ago has completely gone, which was a waste of time and money.

The Parish Council regularly receives requests from residents for new pavements/footways along Flempton Road and near The Green. As the county's highways authority, Suffolk County Council is responsible for the provision of new pavements/footways, however they have confirmed that they will not fund them and that the creation of new pavements can only be funded through developers' contributions. This means that rural communities are unlikely to get new pavements unless they have development taking place locally.

Overgrown hedges are an ongoing problem. Overgrown hedges are the responsibility of landowners. The Parish Council regularly reminds residents with hedges which are encroaching on roads and pavements that it is their responsibility to cut them back.

West Suffolk Council

West Suffolk Council is currently preparing a Local Plan which will provide a vision for growth and development until 2040. As part of this process landowners were asked to put forward any sites which they consider may be suitable for development (SHELAA sites). A number of sites were put forward by landowners in Risby, causing grave concern to residents. The Parish Council arranged a public meeting which was attended by representatives from West Suffolk Council who explained the SHELAA process. Pigeon requested a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the deferred site off School Road, but the Parish Council declined as it wanted to wait the outcome of West Suffolk Council's Preferred Options consultation will take place from May - July 2022. No sites in Risby have been included in the Preferred Options consultation.

Trees and Greens

Risby Parish Council is responsible for a number of trees and arranges an annual tree survey to check them. The last survey was carried out in April 2022. The Parish Council will carry out any recommended work.

A resident has requested that the poplar trees around Welham Lane pond be pollarded or removed. This is still under review.

Some of the wooden bollards on Upper Green are rotten or missing. They will be replaced by recycled plastic posts. The work is scheduled for June 2022.

A Cherry tree was knocked over by a vehicle on Upper Green It was removed and replaced along with some bollards, and new turf provided by the residents of Holly cottage.

Wildlife areas have been created on some parts of the greens. Concerns were raised by some residents about their unkempt appearance and because they obscured visibility. The Parish Council has agreed to review these areas after 2 years.

Platinum Jubilee Project

Wildflower areas have been created on the Greens, trees, bushes and reading trees planted and contemplation benches installed. Four cherry trees were planted in Quays road and one on Upper Green. We hope that residents will enjoy these areas as they start to grow and flower.

Poppy wreath

Each year the Parish Council purchases a poppy wreath for Remembrance Day and makes a donation to the Royal British Legion.

Village ponds

The metal gabions in the ponds have eroded because of saltwater running off the roads causing stones to fall out. Possible solutions have been sought and information and quotes received.

Housing needs survey

West Suffolk Council and Community Action Suffolk asked Risby Parish Council if it would be willing to carry out a Housing Needs Survey to find out whether there is a housing need in Risby. This caused consternation to some residents, however the Parish Council felt it was important to know whether there is a need for affordable housing for Risby residents and what types of homes are needed.

The survey indicated a need for additional housing by 24 households (48 people), with respondents in favour of homes for older people, small family homes and homes for couples.

Planning

West Suffolk Council consults the Parish Council on planning applications in the village. The Parish Council objected to plans to convert the grain store at Charman's Farm to 5 dwellings on the basis of highway safety.

And finally...

I would like to thank all the residents who work so hard to make Risby an attractive village to live in, including speed monitoring, litter picking (The Risby Rangers), cleaning bus shelters, planting trees, clearing paths, running the village hall, organising village activities and running clubs, looking out for and helping neighbours, and all the other things that go to make our village special.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their support and for giving up their time to become councillors. Last but not least I would like to say a huge thank you to our clerk Joanne for keeping us organised, legal, efficient and approachable and helping us work together as a team.