



Castle Acre Parish Council

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Chairman's report to Castle Acre's Annual Parish Meeting May 2022

This report covers the 12 months to end April 2022 of the current four year term of Castle Acre Parish Council (PC) that runs to May 2023. At its meeting in May 2021, Councillors voted for Laurie Fisher as Chairman and Neil Patrick as Vice-Chairman of the PC.

The year began with the easing of Covid 19 restrictions and the gradual return toward normality; for the Council this meant the return to our usual monthly gatherings rather than on-line zoom meetings. To recognise the sacrifices, kindness and community spirit displayed during the pandemic, the village was awarded a Memorial token by the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk at a ceremony held in the village school in November.

The pace of progressing projects within local government has always been frustratingly slow, however due to the pandemic, this has slowed even further. The work on many of the successful projects coming to fruition in this report began many years ago!

Successes

The hard work by the Castle Acre Playing Field Association (CAPFA) (whose membership includes Neil Patrick and Martin Hickey) and the PC was rewarded by the installation of new playing equipment and smart new fencing. Grant funding was sourced from the FCC Communities Foundation Ltd and local government. The new kit is a real asset to the village. Good luck to Nigel Chambers, the new CAPFA Chairman, with his plans for further improvements.

The Castle Acre Heritage Project received approval and funding from the National Lottery. The project has already been highly successful in helping people explore the amazing natural and historic environment of Castle Acre. Well done to Anne Mason and her team.

The Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan finally came into effect following a successful referendum held in January. This will undoubtedly greatly strengthen the voice of the Parish Council in any future planning issues. Congratulations to Martin Tate and his team for their hard work.

Frustrations

Despite the PCs repeated requests to the Holkham Estate developers made over several years, the Section 106 agreement for the social housing in the new Bricknel Close development with Broadland Housing does not give local residents priority.

Dog fouling and littering by a selfish minority continues to frustrate. Thank you to our Borough Dog Enforcement Officer and Paul Slocombe and his litter picking team for helping to keep these problems at bay. Efforts to impose a traffic restriction order to close the South Acre ford to motor vehicles to help protect the adjacent SSSI slowed to a glacial pace - this will remain an ongoing project.

Holkham Estate declined the PC requests to give further PROW or written assurances regarding permissive paths in the Parish. The removal of the 2026 deadline to register public rights of way has ameliorated some of our concerns.

New projects

In addition to the PC routine business and ongoing issues there are some new longer-term projects that have been initiated this year:

Traffic speed limitations and safety measures on the A1065 junctions adjoining the Parish. This proposal has been taken forward by Councillors Ed Coleman and Mark Kiddle-Morris at County level.

Following on from work by the Heritage project, the PC has undertaken to oversee stewardship of the small burial ground located on Pye's Lane.

In addition to my fellow councillors, I would particularly like to pass on my thanks to the following:

Paul Slocombe, Len Rye and the small band of volunteers who help out around the village.

Jim Moriarty, our County and Borough Councillor for his continued support and assistance.

And finally, Libby Firth, our ever enthusiastic, patient and conscientious Clerk.

Laurie Fisher - Chairman May 2022