

Bawdsey Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2015-2016

Overview of Council Activities

- A. Greater use of sub-committees
- B. Greater complexity of financial governance
- C. Greater use of website
- D. Development of BQVC gathering speed

These changes have come about for several reasons. Over the last two years Council meeting have become longer, generally as a result of greater workload or in response to Government guidance on Parish Council Governance.

Different sub-groups have been referred to in item 4 of the agenda. Their purpose is to spread the load of BCP business between Council members, in several cases with help from non-Council members and to reduce the amount of matters for discussion at Council meetings. Some detailed matters are more efficiently dealt with in a smaller group than whole Council.

The website has been developed partly because it is the easiest way of communicating with the greatest number of people; partly because Parish Councils are required to post certain items such as Accounts, Reports and Minutes on a website.

Council Meetings

Bawdsey Parish Council (BPC) met six times for regular Council meetings plus the Annual Parish Meeting and held two extraordinary additional meetings. In addition six planning meetings were held which included site visits. A list of all these meetings plus minutes and other details are posted on the village website (bawdsey.onesuffolk.net)

External Meetings

During the course of the year Councillors attend external meetings to represent BPC and to keep the Council informed through report backs. These include Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership (AOEP), Police Forum, Green Print Forum, Suffolk Coast and Heaths (SC&H) East Anglia One and Three (Scottish Power) and Bawdsey Coastal Partnership (BCP). The Clerk and several council members have also attended Training Workshops on Council practices and regulations.

Council Sub- Groups

Several sub groups operate to advise the full Council. These groups include The BQVC Working Group(WG) which includes non councillors, the Finance Group, Website Group, (includes non councillor member), Windfarm Group (includes non councillor,) Emergency Planning Group (largely non councillor members).

Planning Matters

Planning matters take a considerable amount of time. The whole Council is involved in planning and details can be accessed through the village website.

There have been no fewer than 13 planning applications and 2 appeals against refusals. SCDC has issued 4 refusals, 9 approvals with 1 application pending. BPC comments on all these in writing and has spoken at SCDC planning committees on 3 occasions.

Negotiations have taken place with SCDC as part of the consultation process on 'Site Allocations and area specific policies, Preferred Options.' This largely concerned village Physical Limits Boundaries. The final version of this document was received two days ago.

The most significant application was the one for School Meadow. Outline Approval was given for 13 residential units, contrary to considerable opposition from parishioners and formal objection by BCP. Suffolk Preservation Society strongly objected to this proposal which is outside the parish limits and within an Area of Outstanding Beauty. Details of the scheme are yet to be considered.

During the year SCDC introduced a new process for dealing with applications following an ever increasing number of applications; there were over 4000 last year. There is an emphasis on deciding as many applications as possible under delegated powers i.e. by Planning Officers without going to Committee. The Council and District Councillor are advised of the Officer's recommendation and given the option of asking for the application to go to Committee or not. The final decision on this is taken by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Chair of Planning Committee. The whole process will be reviewed this coming year. BCP is not wholly in favour of this new system, it is clearly less transparent than the previous one.

The Council has started to look into the possible production of a Neighbourhood Plan and invited Heather Heelis from Rendlesham Parish Council to describe the process and the work involved. Rendlesham is the only council in SCDC to have produced a neighbourhood Plan. The new Clerk of Alderton Parish also attended.

A Housing Needs survey was sent out to all households with the March issue of the Bulletin. The purpose of the survey is to provide up to date information for both SCDC and the Council to help in responding to planning applications. The response has been disappointing so far. Would those residents who have not responded please do so?

Bawdsey village website (bawdsey.onesuffolk.net)

A Website group has been set up this year to oversee the development of the website. The site is open for all groups in the village to use and we would encourage greater use. Information for the site can be sent to the Parish Clerk (bawdsey-pc@hotmail.co.uk). Thanks are due to Rod Webb who up-loads new information received. Richard Tricker and Graham Turner are also on this group. The Council has made full use of the site where you will find details of all Council meetings, planning applications and accounts. The group has recently been joined by Rob Johnson who has recently moved into the village and runs an IT Company.

The general information on the history of the village has been expanded recently and we

are grateful for the gift of some very interesting historic photographs which Liz Mark has provided.

Parish Precept

The Parish precept for the forthcoming year has been raised from £6,600 to £6,900 to meet increased anticipated expenditure and to boost reserves. Parishes are recommended to aim at reserves of 50% of the precept; we are a long way from that ! The precept for a band D property for 2016 is £36.64.

Donations

Donations were increased this year to a total of £500.00, made up as follows:-

Bawdsey Radar Trust. £100.00

East Anglia Air Ambulance £85.00

Age UK Suffolk £100

Felixstowe Coastal Patrol £100

SARS £100

Poppy Appeal £15

Reports from Others

BQVC, Radar Trust, Village Hall and Recreation Ground, Emergency Planning. A written report from Bawdsey Coastal Partnership will be posted on the website

Other Village Groups

See Minutes

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for their attendance and all their work in full Council and in sub groups as follows

On the Working Group advising on BQVC -- Peter Wain, Graham Smith, Graham Turner, Rawdon Saunders, Liz Mark, Jacky Mercer, Di Clouting. Tony Osmanski and Christine Block

Particular thanks must be given to Peter who over 3 years has encouraged and pushed the development of BQVC and led the group through 27 closely-minuted meetings and several sleepless nights and to Di Clouting for her business advice and work on the business Plan.

On the Finance Group, Tony Osmanski, David Baker, Mark Dovey

On the Windfarm Group, Richard Tricker, Sandra Carter

On the Website group, Richard Tricker, Rod Webb, Graham Turner

On the Emergency Planning Group, Jason Horncastle, Liz Mark

On behalf of the whole Parish Council I would like to thank:-

Tony Osmanski who was able to bring his experience as Strategic Director at SCDC to Parish matters and to lead the Council for two months during my absence overseas

Christine Block, our District Councillor, for her tireless work and advice on all issues, for speaking on our behalf with District Council officers and staff including Cabinet members

which is invaluable. She is our ear on District Council matters. We have also benefitted by a grant from her locality budget.

Andrew Reid, Our County Councillor who attends most Council meetings and keeps us abreast of SCC business. We have received a grant from his locality budget and an enabling grant from SCC, both for development of the BQVC project and a promise of £1,500 towards a new village sign.

PC Karen Clabburn , her reports to Council meeting and keeping us informed about the changes in Police administration,

Ray Kay for acting as internal auditor for our accounts prior to their submission to the external Auditor, now his tenth year.

Our Parish Clerk, Jenny Webb, without whom I should have given up months ago. With increase in turnover due to BQVC, her role as Responsible Financial Officer has become much more demanding, certainly more demanding than she was expecting. She has been on several training workshops and as a result the governance of parish affairs has been improved. As a former English teacher she watches my my grammar carefully.