

Earl Stonham Parish Council – Chair’s Report 2024

I am pleased to present my annual report for 2023/24. Following the Elections held in 2023 we presently have 7 Councillors – this means that we have 2 vacancies for Parish Councillors. We would like to hear from Residents who wish to apply to become a Parish Councillor – if you wish to know more please speak to one of the existing Councillors or contact the Parish Clerk by email parishclerk@earlstonham.org.uk.

Earl Stonham Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people who live in the Parish. It is the level of Local Government closest to the community, with Mid-Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council above it in the hierarchy.

On their own, Parish Councils have limited powers to make decisions, but we do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence other organisations that do make the final decisions. Probably the most common topics that we get involved with in Earl Stonham are planning matters (we are statutory consultees), crime prevention, roads, and highways.

In the year since May 2023, the Parish Council has:

- Held 8 meetings, including planning meetings and 1 Public Meeting about the proposed Willow Solar Farm development.
- Considered 20 Planning Applications and submitted views to Mid Suffolk District Council as part of the planning process.
- We are no longer able to access Google Analytics data about our website since the update, as it seems to have broken all the links that were previously in place and we have been unable to repair them. We are planning a refresh of the website, along with the information on it during the next few months.
- Work to replace all the street lanterns with LED Units has been completed. The Parish Council transferred the street light at the Village Hall to the Village Hall Management Committee and Tony has now completed work to replace this. This was funded through the Locality Funds of County Cllr Hicks and former District Cllr Morley during 2022/23.
- Speeding continues to be a significant concern to residents. The Community Speed Watch Team began operating in the summer of 2022. During 2023/24 the team carried out 27 sessions, reported 451 drivers for exceeding the speed limit to Suffolk Police. The average speed recorded was 39mph and 91 drivers (20% of the total) exceeded 40mph. The team has been given a second camera by the Police so they are able to set up in 2 locations at the same time, although this will need 6 people at a time to operate.

There is one major public consultation which is currently live:

1. National Grid began their Final Consultation on the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Project on 10 April and it runs until 18 June at 11.59pm. The route passes very close to the North-western boundary of the village, very close to Perfect Perennials and houses in Broad Green Road. This will have a devastating impact on the landscape as well as those who live close to the planned route. Each Pylon will be 50m in height and will

be visible for miles around. This is classed as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and will be decided at a National level by the Secretary of State. There will be a Public Meeting at the Village Hall on Tuesday 4 June, starting at 7.00pm which will enable residents to air their views on the proposal and feed these into a response that the Parish Council will be submitting.

Following the success of the events held to mark the Coronation of King Charles III in May last year, Tony Turner and his team are in the midst of planning events to celebrate the 80th Anniversary Celebrations of D-Day. Events start with the lighting of the Beacon on the Village Green on Thursday 6th June at 8.30pm. There will a special WW2 themed supper at the Village Hall on Saturday 8 June at 7.00pm. Events conclude with a Village Fun day at the Village Hall and Recreation Ground on Sunday 9 June starting at 12.30 – there will be a bring & share lunch and pay bar, a variety of stalls, 1940's themed music and dance, and vintage vehicles.

I must pay tribute to all those people in the village who give freely of their time and efforts for the benefit of the wider community in Earl Stonham. Whether it is the organising of the events and activities that take place at the village hall, the annual pantomime, the organising of events to celebrate D-Day, or those regular activities such as the production and distribution of the Recorder; none of these would be possible without the input of those individuals – my sincere thanks for all your hard work. We still have urgent need of more volunteers so please do get in touch to offer your services.

And finally, I should like to express my thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors, who also give freely of their time, for their support during my first year of office, ably supported by our Parish Clerk, Jennie, who endeavours to keep us under some semblance of control. I should also like to thank County Councillor Matthew Hicks and District Councillor Nick Hardingham for their support during this past year.

Mark Gillett
Chair, Earl Stonham Parish Council