



Poringland Parish Council

Annual Report 2015

Contacting the Parish Council

If you have any comments about Poringland Parish Council and its work or you have any issues you wish to be raised please contact one of the Councillors or the Parish Clerk, contact details are below.

Chairman

John Ellis 11 Rectory Lane 493684

Councillors

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Clerk

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OFFICE OPENING HOURS:

Monday – Wednesday 9.30am to 12.30pm; Thursday 9.30am – 4pm

Friday: By Appointment

Chairman's Report

Dear Parishioner

It is with much pleasure that I can report to you on what has been a very busy and successful year. The first thing that I would like to say is that I hope that you find this new style report is more informative, as your Council endeavours to increase the availability and access to information on Parish Council activities. This report, together with the new Parish website, forms two of the ways that we are hoping to achieve this.

During the year our previous clerk Caroline Milton retired after 28 years valuable service, and I thank her for her commitment and dedication to the Parish Council and the Community. Caroline has been replaced by Catherine Moore, who has brought some excellent experience from other Parishes and work places, which will ensure that we continue to operate in a manner befitting the Parish.

We also saw some changes in Councillors in the past year, with 3 Councillors moving on, who were replaced by 3 members new to the work of the council. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Parish to thank all Parish Councillors and staff for their hard work - much of which goes unseen by the majority.

I write this foreword in the last full month of your current Council, knowing that an election for Parish Councillors will not be taking place in May as insufficient nominations have come forward, which is a great shame. However, with contributions from yourselves I am sure that your new Council will continue to move forward in a very positive and productive way to enhance our Parish for yourselves.

Thank you all once again for the contribution that you all make to make Poringland the village that it is.

John Ellis, Chairman

Your Council

Poringland Parish Council is made up of 11 elected representatives who decide policy and oversee the running of the civil parish of Poringland. The Council has a system of Advisory Committees which consider recommendations that are referred to Full Council for decision. More information about the Advisory Committees is set out below.

The Council has five members of staff: a Parish Clerk, who is responsible for the day to day management of staff and the implementation of the Council's decisions; an Assistant Clerk / Community Centre Manager who is responsible for the day to day management of the Community Centre including bookings and finance; an Administrator who assists the Clerk and Assistant Clerk; a Caretaker who looks after the operational running of the Community Centre; and a Street Cleaner who litter picks in the parish including the bus shelters and play areas.

Advisory Committees

Poringland Parish Council operates a system of Advisory Committees which report up to the Full Council. None of these meetings are decision making, however they do carry out research and consider recommendations to Council, to ensure that council meetings can act as efficiently as possible without having to become weighed down with small detail. The Advisory Committees that the Council operates are:

- HR Advisory Committee – tasked with reviewing all staffing matters including contract variations, staffing structures and management of vacancies.
- Finance and Governance Advisory Committee – tasked with drafting the Council's budget together with recommending appointment of routine contracts such as grounds maintenance; reviewing the Council's policies and governance arrangements; and reviewing banking and investment arrangements.
- Open Spaces, Recreation and Environmental Advisory Committee – tasked with overseeing the Council's open space including play areas, Welcome Home and Memorial

Playing Field, and Rectory Lane Cemetery, as well as the external assets of the parish such as bus shelters and grit/dog bins.

- Facilities Strategic Advisory Committee – tasked with the strategic management of the Council’s buildings (Community Centre and, in the future, the buildings at the Welcome Home and Memorial Playing Field).

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committees is available on the Council’s website at:

<http://www.poringlandparishcouncil.gov.uk/council-committees.html>.

Community Centre

2014/15 has been an exciting year for the Community Centre on Overtons Way. In September, as part of the staffing restructure, the role of Community Centre Manager was created, and the Centre has gone from strength to strength. In addition to a schedule of routine maintenance, some improvements have been implemented including electric windows and internal CCTV. The planning conditions for the site have been amended so that the Centre can open from 8am to 11.30pm each day, and our premises licence allows functions to take place until 11pm, with 12 extensions to midnight per year. Staffing of functions has been reviewed and general efficiencies have been identified. A Working Group was set up to review the overall operation and staffing of the Centre, recommending amendments to working practices to ensure maximum availability of the Centre for everyone, together with a very small increase in hire charges to reflect an increase in overall costs. The Community Centre hosts a very successful Community Café which is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 2pm, offering coffee, cake and light lunches. The Community Centre website – www.poringlandcommunitycentre.co.uk – was launched in February 2015 – visit and see what the Centre offers!

Community Right to Bid

As part of the national localism agenda, local councils have the opportunity to register ‘community assets’ that they feel should be preserved. This means that any registered ‘community asset’ that is

subsequently offered for sale has a moratorium period placed on it where the Parish Council can decide whether it wishes to buy the asset. Should they choose to do so, they then have another set period of time to collate the money for the purchase.

Poringland Parish Council has identified a number of sites in Poringland that it feels are of community significance, and will be making an application to South Norfolk Council to place these on the Community Assets Register in the coming year.

Fiveways Roundabout

For some time Poringland and Framingham Earl Parish Councils had been expressing dissatisfaction with the state of the Fiveways roundabout next to the Nightingale Centre. During 2014 the Councils worked together to lobby Norfolk County Council to tidy the roundabout, leaving the grass short and ensuring that weeds did not grow up and obscure visibility again. Discussion regarding future landscaping had taken place with Framingham Earl Parish Council, with the suggestion from Poringland of a 50/50 split of costs between the two parishes, to reflect the parish boundary being directly down the middle of the roundabout. However it was not possible to agree an acceptable division of costs between the parishes, so this project has been put on hold until this changes.

Local Council Award Scheme

In January 2015 the National Association of Local Councils, of which Poringland Parish Council is a member, launched the Local Council Award Scheme. This replaces the former Quality Council scheme, and Poringland Parish Council has agreed to make an application for the 'Foundation' Award. This demonstrates that the Parish Council is meeting the minimum standards in providing good value and best practice, and provides a recognised benchmark within the parish council sector against nationally set criteria. It is intended that as the Council continues to review its procedures and practises, it will consider applying for the intermediate 'Quality' Award as it qualifies for this.

Pedestrian Crossing Points and Shared Use Path

The Parish Council has been consulted on the concept of a shared use footway / cycle path being installed along The Street, resulting in a narrowing of the road to accommodate this. The Parish Council has expressed its objections to this proposal, and has written to the Chairman of the Environment, Development and Transport Committee at Norfolk County Council asking for this matter to be looked into further. The Parish Council will continue to actively object to this proposal.

As a result of this proposal, the Parish Council has been participating in discussions with the Strategic Six Group regarding crossing points along the B1332. Following a child being struck on the zebra crossing outside the church, the Council has been lobbying Norfolk County Council to make improvements to this, as well as reviewing crossing points along the B1332 generally. These discussions will continue and will be reported in the minutes of Council meetings.

Planning

Poringland Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications within Poringland. The Parish Council considers all applications at Full Council meetings, and will either recommend approval (sometimes with comments) or raise objections. Planning comments can be forwarded to the Council prior to the meeting where an application will be considered. Significant recent applications and planning matters have included the Heath Farm development, the new doctors surgery on Stoke Road, and the Council remains in active contact with Norfolk Homes regarding the building works taking place behind The Street towards Shotesham Road, and the Rosebery Park development by South Norfolk Council.

Although outside of the parish, the Council has recently been consulted on the plans for a solar farm in White Horse Lane, Trowse. The proposals include a traffic route which will divert traffic from the A47 and A146 down the B1332 through Poringland and Framingham Earl, turning right at Fiveways Roundabout and

making its way through Stoke Holy Cross, turning right again towards Norwich. The Parish Council feels that this proposed traffic route is entirely unsuitable, and has raised objections to the planning application on this basis.

Six Strategic Group

Poringland Parish Council continues to engage with the Six Strategic Group which includes representatives of the parishes of Poringland, Framingham Earl, Stoke Holy Cross, Bixley & Arminghall, Trowse with Newton and Caistor St Edmund. The group looks at matters affects the member parishes, and shares information as appropriate. A recent piece of work has involved collating a Community Emergency Plan for the cluster of parishes which will enable sharing of knowledge, resources and labour.

Website

In December 2014 the Parish Council launched its new website – www.poringlandparishcouncil.gov.uk – bringing the management of this facility in-house. The website contains agendas and minutes of meetings, policy documents, financial information and is updated with the latest news.

War Memorial

In late 2014 the Council agreed that they would look at the existing war memorial with a view to commissioning a more permanent memorial to replace the existing wooden cross. A Working Group will be formed in the summer with a view to engaging local people in the design process, before making applications for grant funding and commissioning a suitable replacement. Look out on the website and notice board for opportunities to become involved in this special tribute to the fallen of Poringland, during the four years of centenary commemorations to 2018.

Welcome Home and Memorial Playing Field

In 2014 the Parish Council received a request from the Trustees of the Welcome Home and Memorial Playing Field Charity that the Trustee arrangements for the charity be transferred to the Parish

Council. A letter has been sent to the Charity Commission requesting this amendment to the charity's governing document, and subject to acceptance this will take effect from 1st July 2015. The Parish Council has formed a Steering Group who will look at the current operating model for the field and buildings, and will recommend a suitable future operating model which will ensure that the facilities are available for everyone. The Council is aware that work is required to the buildings and the outside space, and will be commissioning surveys and health and safety reports shortly after the transfer takes place.

During the year the Trustees have refurbished and enhanced the children's play area, thanks to the tireless work of Trustees in gaining granting funding. The Parish Council would like to place on record their thanks to those who have acted as Trustees to the Charity over the years.

Upgate Footway

During 2014 the Council was fortunate enough to secure funding through the Parish Partnership Scheme for a small section of footway on the corner of the junction of Upgate and Rectory Lane, leading to the post box. This path appears to be well used and is much safer for people walking in that area.

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2015/16 Action Plan

In May 2015 the Council set its action plan for the coming year, highlighting the following key priorities. The full action plan is available on the Council's website.

- To develop a community engagement strategy;
- To continue dialogue with housing developers;
- To maintain a strategic overview of traffic matters;
- To consider replacement of the war memorial;
- To ensure smooth transition of the Playing Field to the Council;
- To gain the Local Council Award Scheme 'Foundation' Award;
- To promote good governance through training opportunities.

Meetings

Parish Council meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month at 7pm at the Community Centre. **Agendas** are posted on the notice boards and the website at least three days beforehand.

Public are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings; there's an opportunity to speak or ask questions.

Please note if you would like an item to appear on the agenda details must be sent to the Clerk at least eight days before the meeting. The Council is unable to make a decision on anything not included on the agenda but can discuss it and refer it to the next meeting.

Minutes of meetings are posted on the website or are available from the Clerk.

Parish notice boards can be found at the Community Centre foyer; the Leisure Garden bus shelter; the Fiveways Roundabout bus shelter; and the Village Hall.

Future Meeting Dates

The Council will meet on the following dates in 2015/16:

24 th June 2015	27 th January 2016
29 th July 2015	24 th February 2016
30 th September 2015	30 th March 2016
28 th October 2015	27 th April 2016
25 th November 2015	4 th May 2016 (Annual Parish Meeting)
6 th January 2016	25 th May 2016

Summary of Parish Council Accounts 2014/15

Payments	Actual 2013/14 £	Budget 2014/15 £	Actual 2014/15 £	(Over) Under Spent £
Salaries	77,526.11	81,605.92	88,919.49	(7,313.57)
General Admin	9,541.88	13,771.40	12,918.07	853.33
Burial Ground	7,749.06	7,500.00	7,797.20	(297.20)
Community Centre	33,362.75	33,977.71	34,828.58	(850.87)
Amenities	11,947.60	18,203.29	16,268.78	1,934.51
Playing Field	13,128.92	15,856.74	15,679.66	177.08
Youth Activities	3,435.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
Section 137	300.00	500.00	375.00	125.00
Contingency	0.00	0.00	2,543.85	(2,543.85)
Total	156,991.32	173,415.06	181,330.63	(7,915.57)
VAT	8,623.51		12,189.05	
Commuted Sums & Earmarked Reserve Expenditure			4,818.33	
Play Equipment (bought from reserves and excess of income over expenditure):			10,811.00	
Grand Total			209,149.01	

Receipts	2013/14	Budget 2014/15 £	Actual 2014/15 £	Over (Under) £
Precept & Shortfall Grant	115,740.00	117,348.00	117,348.00	0.00
Interest	3,074.61	3,162.36	3,003.12	(159.24)
Burial Ground	4,005.00	2,926.95	6,905.00	3,978.05
Miscellaneous	485.00	102.70	183.18	80.48
Community Centre	63,539.66	49,875.22	70,288.56	20,413.34
Total	186,844.27	173,415.23	197,727.86	24,312.63
VAT	8,494.33		8,656.43	
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves			5,600.00	
Grand Total			211,984.29	

Reconciliation

Opening Balance @ 31st March 2014	320,056.80
Total Income	211,984.29
Total Expenditure	209,149.01
Closing Balance @ 31st March 2015	322,892.08

Represented by:

Current Account	76,214.32
Barclays Deposit	73,067.61
Bond 1 – Santander	53,652.72
National Savings	72,556.80
Petty Cash / Bar Floats	550.00
Bond 2 – Santander	21,696.55
Bond 3 – Nationwide	50,913.52

Less unrepresented cheques	25,733.44
Plus unrepresented refund	-26.00

Total **322,892.08**

Your Council's Finances Explained

Poringland Parish Council holds a certain amount of money in commuted sums (money which has been transferred from another organization and which can only be used for the specific purpose) and earmarked reserves (funds that have been put aside for a specified purpose chosen by the Council).

Commuted Sums

£38,748.05 – Devlin Drive Fund

Commuted from Norfolk Homes for the 10 year maintenance contract of the Devlin Drive open space and play area, including replacement of equipment as required. Also used for maintenance of a small area of grass in Blackthorn Way. This contract runs from 2012 to 2022.

£17,196.30 – Mulberry Close Fund

Commuted from Norfolk Homes for the renewal of play equipment at the Mulberry Village Green. The 10 year contract (2011 to 2020) for maintenance of this space is managed by South Norfolk Council.

£59,581.01 – Trafalgar Square Fund

Commuted from Norfolk Homes for the 10 year maintenance contract of the Trafalgar Square open space and play area, including replacement of equipment as required. This contract runs from 2013 to 2023.

Total Commuted Sums at 31.03.15: £115,525.36

Earmarked Reserves

£16,800.00 - Mulberry Open Spaces Village Green Fund

This is a fund that the Council is building up ahead of taking over the Mulberry Village Green maintenance contract in 2020. Currently costing around £6,700 per annum which is paid for by South Norfolk Council, the Parish Council's earmarked reserve will ensure that there isn't a sudden increase in Council Tax to cover this.

£30,000.00 – Future Open Spaces

In around 3 to 5 years the Council expects to acquire some further land from Norfolk Homes. This fund will secure the site with fencing prior to development, and will assist with matters such as planning, landscaping and maintenance until the Council is able to implement any future plans for the site.

£1,380.92 – The Six Administrator

As the largest Council in the Strategic Six Group, Poringland Parish Council holds and administrates the fund which pays the Clerk to the Strategic Six Group.

Total Earmarked Reserves at 31.03.15: £48,180.92

Balance @ 31st March 2015	322,892.08
Minus Commuted Sums	115,525.36
Minus Earmarked Reserves	48,180.92
Free Funds Balance @ 31st March 2015	159,185.80

Budget 2015/16

Expenditure	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	Inc / Dec %
Salaries	83,063.56	81,605.92	86,550.00	+6.06%
General Admin	14,479.00	13,771.40	13,400.00	-2.70%
Burial Ground	6,600.00	7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00%
Community Centre	43,609.29	42,690.97	50,533.26	+18.37%
Amenities	7,100.00	9,490.03	7,600.00	-19.92%
Playing Field	14,403.00	15,856.74	11,900.00	-24.95%
Youth Activities	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%
Section 137	300.00	500.00	500.00	0.00%
Contingency	-	-	2,500.00	-
Total	171,554.85	173,415.06	182,483.26	5.23%

Receipts	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £
Precept & Shortfall Grant	115,740.01	117,347.83	123,313.26
Interest	1,357.28	3,162.36	1,600.00
Burial Ground	1,332.50	2,926.95	3,000.00
Miscellaneous	205.00	102.70	100.00
Community Centre	52,920.06	49,875.22	53,000.00
Playing Field	-	-	1,470.00
Total	171,554.85	173,415.06	182,483.26
Tax Base (no. of houses)	1,348	1,381	1,449
Band D Tax (per house)	£78.15	£78.86	£79.24
% inc /dec Council Tax		0.91%	0.48%

Thank you for taking the time
to read this document,
if you have any views or comments
please let us know.

Poringland Parish Council

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Overtons Way
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