

Witton and Ridlington Parish Council
Chairman's report April 2023 – March 2024

The past year has been another productive one for the Council.

We began with a litter pick in May last year as part of the Coronation 'Big Help Out day' and followed this up with another successful one in March this year, with large amounts of litter collected. We will aim to hold these every six months or so in future, and will encourage more members of the community to take part.

We arranged a very well attended defibrillator training session in October, provided by Broadland First Responders and we intend to run another one this coming year. The defibrillator in The Street, Ridlington has been maintained by a volunteer and we have arranged for maintenance to the phone box housing it. We have also decided in principle to install another one at Witton Bridge, and are currently seeking funding for this.

The SAM 2 speed sign is now in its second year of operation, and is having a significant effect on traffic speeds in the Happisburgh and North Walsham Roads. We now need to find new volunteers to help operate the sign following the resignation of Cllr Barringer, who has done this job single handedly over the past year. Whilst on the subject of roads, we arranged for new and replacement road signs to be installed in Mill Common Road at the request of a parishioner.

We have considered and commented on three planning applications during the year, two of which have now been decided by the planning authority. We have continued to monitor the progress of the Vattenfall Vanguard and Boreas offshore wind farm projects. There was a hiatus in these when Vattenfall decided that the project wasn't financially viable for the company, and the project has now been acquired by the German power company RWE, who are taking them forward as originally planned, albeit on a somewhat delayed timescale. The current information we have is that work has begun on ducting and other work at the Western end of the route, and this will proceed Eastwards, reaching our area later in 2025. Preliminary work is however proceeding now in this area. This is something that we will continue to keep a close eye on as work progresses.

As Chairman, I have represented the Council at regular Police Safer Neighbourhood priority setting meetings through the year, with the current priorities being anti-social behaviour and traffic speeding. I am pleased to report that Witton and Ridlington continues to be a low crime area. I have also attended meetings organised by Duncan Baker MP on speeding in the North Norfolk area, and on the Digital Switchover of the telephone system.

Turning to the Council itself, we have formally changed our name from Witton Parish Council to Witton and Ridlington Parish Council. I would like to thank District Councillor Pauline Porter, and County Councillor Lucy Shires, for regularly attending our meetings and keeping us informed on the work of those councils.

During the year we welcomed new Councillor William DeFeyter. As previously mentioned, Cllr Barringer has had to resign, following the sad death of her husband, Henry, and I would like to pay tribute to all the public work that Becca has undertaken for the parish, in addition to her family commitments and work as an architect.

My thanks also go to all our Councillors for their work through the year. I would like to say a special word of thanks to our hard working clerk Denise, who goes above and beyond the requirements of the job, which is much appreciated.

Richard Barker
Chairman