

Michael.

Bleasby Parish Council - Annual Parish Meeting

Chair's Report

- My very busy but rewarding first year as Chair.
- Impact of two years of Covid still being felt – community spirit now beginning to rise as a result of focus on Royal events.
- Firstly, the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, then secondly her death and now preparations being made for King Charles III's Coronation.
- These events have encouraged village groups out of Covid isolation and to come together in a joint effort for parish celebration and focus.
- Your Council has been working closely with St Mary's Church and has been enjoying cooperative activities at such times as Christmas, the Platinum Jubilee and now the forthcoming Coronation – also assisting with "bee control" and cost associated with churchyard maintenance.
- Similarly, with the appointment of a new Head Teacher, the Council is enjoying cooperation with Bleasby School, sharing activities and events together. The BSFA (the school's parent association) raised £22 thousand pounds to provide a new play area for the school and Bleasby children on the school field.
- Our local community groups have again come into their own with the WI playing a great part in the royal events and completely masterminding such things as the highly successful Jubilee Tea for older residents, as well as the traditional cake competition.
- The Grasshoppers have really proved their worth, with village volunteers doing great work in our parish Green Spaces – the Jubilee Ponds, Ferry End, the Glebe Field and the level crossing/station, as well as offering general support at our parish events and with projects. They are now working to an agreed long-term management plan with the active support of the Parish Council. Purchase of a mower, hand tools and safety equipment has enabled the group to work safely and efficiently.
- The Countryside and Footpath Walking Group are now up and 'nearly running', reminding residents how important these local facilities were during Covid – the Parish Council has eventually got the necessary improvement to the footpath to North Farm.
- As part of the Royal events, the Council has planted a Royal Oak and a permanent Christmas tree on the Glebe Field, an avenue of 7 Hornbeam Trees on the southern approach to Bleasby and a Service Tree on the Jubilee Ponds.
- Continuing the completion of the Parish Plan, the Council has completed the Orchard Close village focus with planters, bus shelter

and seating; addressed the need for noticeboards at Gibsmere and Goverton; purchased new seating for Ferry End; two new 'shelter pods' and projection screen for parish events; and still pursuing another interactive sign for better speeding control – but still struggling to get better verge improvements on Gypsy Lane. The purchase of 6 trough planters has enabled the Bleasby floral displays to be much appreciated. Thanks must go to the 'Band of 3' that plan, purchase and plant these seasonal displays.

- The Council still works closely with Roger Blaney as our District Councillor and Sue Saddington as our County Councillor – both have done a great deal to support, advise and promote the parish. It is with regret that we realise we will be losing the significant input of Roger as he retires after 34 years of service.
- The two of them have done much to try to improve rail services and equipment as well as road surfaces and signage.
- The death of Elaine France has been a serious loss to the community as a long-time member of this Council, in the role of Chair for a number of years, a long serving Chair of the Jubilee Ponds Committee and the coordinator of Bleasby Flood Action Group which she helped to establish with the support of another recent loss, former councillor and member of both organisations, Derek Whitman. Both were major supporters of this parish.
- We now have found an excellent Parish Clerk in the person of Denise Bryant who is most efficiently taking up the reins from Lynda Ogilvie who has ably acted as our temporary Clerk for nearly two years – many thanks to her.
- I would particularly like to offer my very special thanks to the stalwarts of the parish who are always there when needed, making their contributions quietly and modestly – sometimes they are entirely unknown to others – except by the very well informed!