

Minutes of Brooke Annual Parish Meeting held at Brooke Methodist Church on Monday 10th April 2017 at 7.30pm.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Edward Jinks welcomed the Clerk and 11 members of the public to the meeting.

1. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Mr Jinks gave his report, a copy of which is attached as an addendum to these minutes.

2. POLICE REPORT

There were no Police representatives available to attend the meeting.

3. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Mr Stone was unable to attend the meeting but had forwarded his report which is attached as an addendum to the minutes.

4. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Mr Fuller gave his report, a copy of which is attached as an addendum to the minutes.

5. BROOKE HOMEWATCH REPORT

Mr Powell delivered the Brooke Homewatch report. A copy is attached as an addendum to the minutes.

6. BROOKE PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT

Mrs Reynolds was unable to attend the meeting but had forwarded a short report which the Clerk read on her behalf, as follows:

The Headteacher; Mr Robinson is currently off with illness and a County Head is in place who, along with the senior teachers is keeping things running well. There is no progress to report regarding the new school. Pupils numbers remain constant at 126. The outdoor area is looking good with raised beds and a new greenhouse. The school continues to do very well in sporting competitions with very high achievements in cross country, athletics and cricket in particular.

7. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 18TH APRIL 2016

The minutes of the last APM were circulated during the meeting, agreed to be a true record and signed by the Chairman

8. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

9. OPEN FORUM

Mr Jinks invited members of the public to speak.

Mrs Jones noted that some plants have been marked with tape at the meres. She advised that some of the plants were ones that she and the Brownies had planted to create layering and cover for birds and other wildlife. Mrs Beardsell confirmed that she had marked some saplings and plants for removal but was happy for Mrs Jones to just cut back the plants that she wanted to remain and to remove the tape. Any plants left with tape on will be removed by Clinks Care Farm on their next visit.

Mr Tobin raised concerns regarding alterations being carried out to Saddlers Cottage on Norwich Road. No planning application has been made for alterations and when the Clerk initially reported it to South Norfolk Council, the planning enforcement officer replied to say that permission was not required. However the works are quite extensive and therefore probably now need permission. It was agreed that the planning process should be followed and Mr Tobin will therefore forward the Clerk a full list of the works being carried out in order that she may report it accordingly.

Mrs Jones wished to express what a lovely job the volunteer litter pickers do in Brooke in keeping the village tidy and litter free. All present agreed and Mr Jinks thanked Mr Sanford and Mr Battershall for their efforts.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Brooke Annual Parish Meeting 10 April 2017 Parish Council Report

Meetings during 2016/7

- 9 full Parish Council meetings
- 2 site meetings
- 1 Meres working party

People

Paul Marris stood down in June last year, creating a vacancy on the PC, which we have filled by co-opting Martin Tobin.

Current PC membership:

- o Me - chair
- o Liz Powell - vice-chair
- o Ken Warman - internal audit responsibility
- o Roma Beardsell - tree warden (and recently parish footpaths warden)
- o Dave Sanford
- o Steve Mears
- o David Harrison
- o Paul Musgrave
- o Martin Tobin

Laura Reynolds remains the Brooke School Community governor

Maurice Land carried out the PC audit in 2016 - he was satisfied with the figures and the PC's procedures, and that all necessary safeguards are in place.

The formal audit was carried out by Mazars, who were happy that we have complied with all regulations, but recommended an improvement in the way un-presented cheques are accounted for.

Matter arising from the last APM - None

Planning

Planning applications

- 25 in 2016/7 compared with
 - o 16 in 2015/6
 - o 25 in 2014/5
 - o 19 in 2013/14
- of the 25 in 2016/17 we recommended 4 for refusal
 - 4 Brecon Rd - 1 new dwelling (over-development of plot)
 - St Peters Rd - 13 new dwellings (loss of garages for Churchill Place)
 - 54 The Street - domestic garage (outside village development boundary)

- High Green Farm - new pumping station (outside village development boundary)
- Brooke Industrial Park (potential noise and excessive vehicle movements)

Review of Local Plan

Greater Norwich Local Plan being reviewed again

New potential development sites put forward by landowners

7 times what is needed

Public consultation Autumn 2017

Existing Local Plan provides for up to 20 new dwellings in Brooke

12 on Norwich Rd (completed)

- 8 market houses
- 4 affordable houses

High Green Farm - P/p granted for 13 new dwellings (plus pumping station)

- 9 market houses
- 4 affordable dwellings
- development has not yet started

Proposed mobile phone mast

We were asked to comment on a proposal to erect a phone mast in the grounds of the Telephone Exchange on Norwich Rd

We support the principle of improving mobile signal in Brooke but are concerned at the proposed siting in a residential area

We asked for a technical meeting so that we can test the need for it to be located here

Planning enquiries

We have asked SNC to investigate three properties where works appear to have been carried out but we have not seen any planning applications:

- Saddlers Cottage, Norwich Rd
- Fox Lodge, Mill Lane
- 101 The Street

Public spaces

Norwich Rd lay-by

We enquired about the catering van that appeared here

SNC advised that it required a trading licence

They would not ask it to move on unless there was a highways issue

SNC agreed to visit the proprietor to ensure there was a licence in place

Grass cutting

- The new contractor, Clinks Care Farm, are doing a good job

- they are a Beccles based rural social enterprise and care farm which enables disadvantaged people to:
 - o feel valued and socially included
 - o gain new work and life skills

Speed limit signs

The two 30 mph speed limit signs (the Meres and Welbeck) have finally been replaced, and the Norwich Rd sign repaired.

We are concerned at the time it took NCC to attend to these, and the amount of chasing we had to do.

Meres area - maintenance

Wooden posts adjoining the highway - we are exploring the possibility of the Men's Shed replacing these.

We are seeking quotes for refurbishing the two finger post signs at the Meres, which will include temporary removal, sandblasting and replacement of the woodwork.

BT phone boxes

BT is reviewing the viability of its phone boxes nationally, which may result in some being removed. We await the outcome of the review of the two in Brooke, and will then consider the PC's response.

Grass verges

We are concerned at the damage to some grass verges (Norwich Rd and the triangle to the east of the Meres) and have put an article in the Parish Mag asking people not to park on grass verges.

We continue to chase up the developer to reinstate the grass verges in front of the new houses on Norwich Rd.

Other

Disabled toilet at the scout den

This is now operational, with PC covering the costs of cleaning materials (net of 20p charges received), the village hall cleaners maintaining it, and the Scouts insuring it.

Brooke NextDoor website

We were asked if the PC would agree to its meeting minutes being included on this new social media website. We consider this is unnecessary as the minutes are available on the PC's own website - the address is in the Parish Magazine contacts list.

It was suggested the the Brooke NextDoor website could include a link to the PC website.

Graveyard extension

The vicar has advised me that the existing churchyard is running out of space.

She thinks plans need to be made to provide extra land for future burials.

I will be meeting her to consider options.

Finances

2016/7 (copies of the accounts are on your seats)

- Precept was £10,921 (including £464 Gov't grant)
- The reserves of £8,650 are for expected expenditure on:
 - o village furniture
 - o Meres works e.g. dredging
 - o tree surgery
 - o small grants
 - o clerk's laptop
- Expenditure included grants and donations
 - o village hall £3,500
 - o playpark £1,250
 - o South Norfolk Players £500
- Start of year balance £18,264
- End of year balance £14,825

2017/8

- Agreed PC budget £10,712 to be funded by :
 - PC precept £10,457
 - reduced Government grant of £255
- Council Tax bill for a Band D property is slightly reduced at £19.92

Thanks

- Liz Powell for her role as vice-chairman
- Ken Warman for his role as internal auditor
- Roma Beardsell for her role as tree warden
- All other members of PC
- The helpers at the Meres Working party
- John Fuller (SNC)
- Barry Stone (NCC)
- Roy Ford - water bailiff
- Maurice Land - external auditor
- Jo Andrews for her diligence in carrying out the role of Parish Clerk

Brooke Annual Parish Meeting 2017

Cllr John Fuller

##South Norfolk finalist in Council of the Year Competition

I am proud that our small district Council in South Norfolk reached the last six of over 380 UK Councils in the LGC Council of the year awards. Sadly we were not successful in winning outright but we were pleased that the judges, distinguished figures from local government, recognised our outstanding achievements, leadership and value for money in making South Norfolk one of the best places to live and start a business in the country.

Parish Boundary Review

A "Community Governance Review" started on 20th March. Whilst there are about 5 reasons to undertake a Parish Review including changing the name of a parish, the two main opportunities are to square-off any boundaries that no longer make sense, perhaps because of new house building or roads AND/OR whether it makes sense to ask parishes to join up with each other.

Just think about how many changes there have been in our lives over the last 20 years.

Twenty years ago the Internet had just started, mobile phones were as large as a brick and John Major was still the Prime Minister.

Now imagine what changes might come in the next twenty.

I say this because every twenty years South Norfolk Council has to think about the boundaries of the Parish Councils within it and whether it's sensible to alter arrangements.

It's to straighten out simple lines on maps that a "Community Governance Review" provides an opportunity for South Norfolk Council to work with its parishes to make practical sense of its area. At its simplest a Parish Boundary might be tweaked a bit because new homes have been built on the edge of the village. I know of one person who extended his home at Little Melton with the result that his kitchen is now in Bawburgh!

But there is another angle that we cannot ignore.

There are 119 parishes in South Norfolk. In 2015 only 19 held parish council elections. And many of those didn't have elections in 2011. Or 2007 either. Brooke is one of those parishes.

It's not good for local democracy if those that govern us are not subject to election.

It shines a light on the wider fact that we all live such busy lives. The internet allows us to live much more individual lives communicating with people much further away as if they were neighbours. And the result is that fewer people serve in local voluntary capacities in sporting clubs, the cubs & brownies, the WI and, yes, Parish Councils.

And there's another angle. Not only are many of our smallest parishes not elected, the proportion of the tax they raise that they spend on their own administration has got out of control. In the smallest parishes like Bergh Apton about 2/3 of the tax it raises is spent on the Clerk, Insurance and other subscriptions leaving just one third to be spent on the village. If it was a charity it would be closed down. And Bergh Apton is not alone. With well over half the precept going on running costs in the smaller parishes, my informal feeling is that rural villages should seek to club together on a canvass of about 1000-1250 electors – perhaps on the footprint of the village school catchment.

Now is the time to consider whether Brooke should invite the smaller neighbouring parishes to by join together to form joint Parish Councils. There's no question of removing the road signs and the village boundary would still exist. It's just that several parishes would club together to have a single Parish Council serving all of them.

We need arrangements that are going to hold good for the NEXT 20 years that address the realisation that it's difficult to get people to serve and to solve the problem of smaller parishes spending over half of their income on running costs.

South Norfolk is encouraging Parishes to think deeply about their future and want the initiative for any changed arrangement to come from you, a bottom up, not a top down process. Our consultation opens on 20 March and you can have your say by visiting www.south-norfolk.gov.uk. I will be attending the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 19th April to discuss this.

District Council Boundary Review

The Boundary Commission has issued its final guidance regarding the District Council ward boundaries. Subject to Parliamentary Approval, their recommendations will result in 26

wards in South Norfolk with 46 Councillors. There will be more multi-member wards including some in the Waveney Valley, which has traditionally been single member territory.

It means that it's most likely that the 2019 elections will be fought on these new boundaries..... that is if we have elections in 2019 assuming that there isn't a Local Government Reorganisation before then, which some MPs called for on the Sunday Politics show the other weekend.

In our case, Brooke, Seething, Mundham, Bergh Apton & Kirstead will be joined with Alington & Yelverton and Howe will leave us and go to Shotesham. It's a shame about losing Howe but the "independent experts" are blind to comments and primarily focus on getting the wards the same size even it means there are some anomalies.

Business Rates Review

There has been a lot of angst in local businesses about the publicity over the business rates review. I asked our expert to give me an idea of businesses in South Norfolk and the effect on business rates. In aggregate, bills in South Norfolk have reduced by 5% although some have gone up a bit. To take Harleston as an example, a typical shop with a rateable value of, say £5000, has seen a reduction of about £200. But that's misleading in that, singleshops [not part of a chain] with an RV of less than £12000 pay nothing at all.

It's only places like Southwold where the Brexit-Boost to tourism has seen Ratable Values exceed £12000 for the first time that has taken shops from paying almost nothing into the territory where no discounts are allowed.

And in the meantime, your council still foregives the rates bill on a discretionary basis to the last pub, club, garage or shop in the village and most of Brooke's facilities are rates-exempt.

The Next Local Plan

Councils have canvassed landowners to suggest land they'd like to be considered for building. It's work that precedes the decisions Councils will take about where new homes are built in future. In the recent past development has been focused in a small number of places and villages which used to see a lot of growth like Brooke [100 homes per year from the 1940's to 1980's] were bypassed.

But now the school roll has fallen and the pre-school closed down there's a realisation that we need a proportionate number of homes in EVERY village, regardless of size. Obviously that means more in villages with services. And more in villages along transport corridors - especially closer to Norwich.

But a more evenly-distributed pattern of growth if Villages are to grow and to help small builders, who take more care over design and build more quickly. Larger allocations >20 allow room for a better mix of homes - not just 5-bed Executive Homes because wide choice to the market is important. And more smaller sites will reduce the price for land enabling people to build their own homes.

We'll start to put flesh on these bones later in the year with our detailed ideas, which will need to take into account the Government's latest 'White Paper' policies in the new year.

JCF

10th April 2017

Barry Stone - County Councillor for the Loddon Division

Annual Parish Report - 2017

A Year of Achievement – 2016/17



The last year has been a year of achievement for Norfolk County Council.

While a great number of changes have taken place, the culture of the council has been driven in a much more responsive, flexible direction. While there is much still to do, our reputation has improved significantly. We have received recognition as a listening council, a caring council, a courageous council and one that is looking forward to a more positive future.

We have not ducked the extremely difficult decisions that have been needed, including in Children's Services, where we are determined to deliver that step-change needed to bring about the required improvements to see the service out of special measures and restored to full council control.

All achievements over the last year must be seen against a backdrop of ever-shrinking budgets and growing demand for a number of our services.

At a service level, achievements have been seen across our service areas.

Children's Services

More children than ever are being educated in good or outstanding schools - big improvements in Norfolk schools were highlighted in the Ofsted Annual Report in December 2016, with Norfolk the fifth most improved county nationally for the proportion of pupils at good or outstanding secondary schools over the past four years, and the 18th most improved for primary schools. Norfolk is also one of the most improved in the region for children at the end of the early years' stage achieving a 'good level of development'. And Norfolk's colleges and sixth form colleges are all rated 'good' by Ofsted.

Norfolk moves into top-half of the GCSE league table - Provisional GCSE results for 2016 have put Norfolk above the national average for the first time in a decade. The government has introduced a new method for measuring performance, called Progress 8, which ranks schools according to the progress made by students during their time in secondary education. Under this system, Norfolk had a score of 0.02, compared with a national average of -0.03, where the higher the number, the greater the progress.

A unique partnership - Norfolk County Council and children's charity, Barnardo's, are developing an imaginative new approach to working together to better support children and their families. The new service, which we anticipate having in place by summer 2017, will

focus on edge of care provision; supporting more children to remain at home with their families (where it is safe to do so), as opposed to coming into the care system.

Children's University - raising children's aspirations by supporting them to carry on learning outside the normal school day and encourage a passion for learning is what our Children's University is all about. Norfolk Children's University is run by Educator Solutions - a traded Norfolk County Council service – and is working with over 12,000 children in Norfolk. In February 2017, another 80 five- to 12-year-olds graduated from the university, marking the completion of more than 30 hours each of extra learning outside school.

Getting more of Norfolk's young people into top universities - the Norfolk Higher Education Scheme has gone from strength to strength this year. It was founded to link up sixth forms and colleges in Norfolk to share opportunities for university applicants - such as mock interviews, workshops, outside speakers and university visits. All 33 schools and colleges in the county have signed up to the scheme, which is run by a partnership of Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Education Leaders. Its pilot year, which was open only to applicants to the 'most-competitive' and 'high-demand' universities, saw 350 students sign up. This year, having opened up to all Norfolk students applying to any university, 1,220 have already registered. In summer 2016, 48 Norfolk state school students were offered places at Oxford or Cambridge University. Increasing numbers of care leavers are moving into higher education; over 50 of our care leavers (11%) are doing university courses, compared to a national average of 6%.

Transforming school buildings - we're also supporting children's learning by investing in school buildings. In February 2017, for example, we completed £1.99m of improvements to Southtown Primary School. This two-phase project, designed and managed by NPS, has transformed the school into a modern all-through primary for four- to 11-year-olds – which is better for their learning – and increased the number of places from 180 to 210. This is part of our £144m programme of improvements.

NEET and unknowns - Norfolk has done exceptionally well in the first year of a new measure for local authorities, which combines numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the number of young people whose activity is unknown. This gives a much more accurate picture of young people's circumstances. In Norfolk, we have a combined NEET and unknown percentage of 4.9%, much better than the national figure of 6.8%.

Growing our own social workers – recruiting and retaining social workers is a challenge for many councils. In Norfolk, we are doing something about it – by growing a bank of talented social workers and developing them through their entire career. In summer 2016, we launched our own social care academy which offers training and mentoring to social workers, not only new to the profession, but at all stages of their career. The academy builds on the work of the highly successful Norfolk Institute for Practice Excellence (NIPE) scheme, an innovative partnership between us and University of East Anglia, set up in

recognition that the first year of a social worker's career is crucial. 110 social workers have been employed through NIPE since it was set up two years ago.

Adult's Services

In Good Company - Loneliness can cause ill health and reduce people's ability to lead fulfilling and independent lives. In November 2016 we launched our IGC campaign – working with partners, including charities and the local media - to combat loneliness and raise awareness of the wide range of support on offer in Norfolk. Since the campaign launched, we've received hundreds of pledges from individuals and organisations – all of them promising to do something, no matter how small, to help tackle loneliness in their community. Now Norfolk businesses and community organisations are being urged to apply for a new quality accreditation mark for their work to combat loneliness in the county.

Our adult social care twitter day - County Council staff and partners took to Twitter in October 2016 to raise awareness of adult social care services countywide. They tweeted experiences of their typical day, giving followers an insight into how diverse the care sector is, and also shared a wealth of information about what's available. More than 14,000 people looked at the tweets on the day and the site is now being followed by the media and social work organisations. This was our fourth successful Twitter day, following Children's Services social care, schools and roads earlier in the year.

Healthy Home Assistance – we've been working with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, East Coast Community Healthcare and NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group on the 'Healthy Homes Assistance' project, set up at the end of 2016. The project is helping facilitate early hospital discharge, reduce admissions and / or readmissions and provide preventative measures to reduce risks around the home. A study of one of the cases already completed by the project where falls prevention works were carried out at a cost of £465, has identified potential savings to the NHS of £12,000.

Giving a warm welcome to Syrian refugee families - Norfolk has a long tradition of extending the hand of friendship to those in need and this has held true in this case of welcoming Syrian refugees to the county. At the beginning of February, the first five Syrian families arrived in Norwich to begin their new life in Norfolk. In preparation, extensive work was done with district councils, health authorities, schools and voluntary groups to get everything in place to welcome the families, all of whom have young children. We were also inundated with offers of help and support from Norfolk residents and local faith and voluntary groups.

Acting against domestic violence – in December 2016, we reached the 500 mark for training domestic abuse 'champions' in frontline professions to help people suffering abuse. Our domestic abuse change coordinators are working across the county with people in professions who come face-to-face with the public, training them to become 'champions' so that they can look out for signs of abuse and take action to improve the safety of anyone affected. Champions are given free training to learn how to ask, respond to, and support

people affected by domestic abuse, and to use their knowledge to also help their colleagues know how best to respond.

Norfolk Community Learning Services celebrates 'Good' Ofsted report in major

turnaround - Education in Norfolk has received another boost with the news that Norfolk Community Learning Services (NCLS) has achieved an Ofsted inspection judgement of 'Good', providing Norfolk County Council with the security and sustainability to achieve its long term objectives for the service. This follows a previous judgement of 'Inadequate' in January 2015. At the recent inspection (April 2016), Ofsted inspectors said that "Leaders and managers have dealt quickly and very effectively with key issues identified at the previous inspection".

Inspectors were impressed by the new vision, strategic objectives and operating model for the service, formerly known as Adult Education. These were approved by Norfolk County Council's Communities Committee and implementation will be complete by September 2016.

Community and Environmental Services

Better broadband - the latest tranche of Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) will see high-speed broadband coverage reaching more than 95% of Norfolk home and businesses by spring 2020. This brings the total investment in the BBfN programme to £68m since it launched at the end of 2012. Currently, 87% of households and businesses in Norfolk can get a superfast broadband service, more than double the number four years ago (42%). We won't be satisfied until everyone in Norfolk has access, so we will continue to push for more investment and make the money we already have go as far as possible.

Integrated transport strategy – along with Suffolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP, we have commissioned Mouchel to research and produce an integrated transport strategy, covering air, road, rail, buses, sustainable transport and ports, which will be used to lever in transport investment from Government. The work was commissioned in October 2016 and is due to be published shortly.

Good progress on the NDR - it was a productive first year for the construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road which will provide Norfolk, Broadland and Norwich with high-quality infrastructure that will serve the county, its people and the economy for years to come. Work is going well, with most of the 1.5 cubic metres of bulk excavation complete, three roundabouts in use at the western end, bridge beams installed or imminent on four of the eight bridges and nearly 9km of carriageway complete to base asphalt layers. A new Tarmac plant at Postwick will this year supply nearly 150,000 tonnes of asphalt for the 20km dual carriageway. Planting of the 300,000 shrubs, trees and hedgerow plants is well under way.

Our transport infrastructure priorities

A47 - Norfolk County Council leads the A47 Alliance, bringing together key stakeholders from Lowestoft to Peterborough to lobby for improvements to this trunk road. Throughout

2016 we have been lobbying Highways England for early delivery of three sections of dualling, as well as junction improvements in Guyhirn, Thickthorn and Great Yarmouth. These schemes are programmed to begin in 2020. The Alliance Steering Group is currently gearing up to influence the trunk road

programme for the next round of improvements due to be delivered between 2020 and 2025. We have already met Highways England to lobby for our two priorities in Norfolk in this period: the dualling of the Acle Straight and Tilney to East Winch.

Towards the Norwich Western Link - now that the NDR is under construction, we have begun to consider the business case for a Norwich Western Link. This would both ease local traffic conditions and provide a strategic link to the west of the city. Initial work has focused on gathering feedback from local communities and developing a stakeholder group. We are also beginning to assess the economic viability of the project, and if the business case proves positive, we will press for funding and scheme delivery.

Long Stratton bypass - a bypass for Long Stratton would benefit residents and road users alike, and is firmly on our list of priorities. Along with improvements to the Hempnall crossroads, it's also required for the village's planned growth of 1,800

new houses and 12 hectares of employment land. We are keen to lead on the design and delivery of the bypass, and work is currently ongoing to set out how we, South Norfolk Council and the developer will collaborate to support the process

of approvals, design, funding and delivery. Once the process is agreed, preparatory work will start towards the planning application – with a view to submitting it by the end of this year and delivery around 2020.

Podium position in highways and transport survey - an independent survey of Norfolk residents resulted in the County Council being ranked third out of 28 similar councils for satisfaction with highways and transport services – the third year in a row that Norfolk was in the top three. One of the biggest increases in satisfaction was for street lighting which saw us move up from 18th to 9th position in the rankings.

Emergency Services collaboration - Medical co-responding trial

Since July Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has been participating in a national medical co-responding trial which sees our fire-fighters mobilised to suspected cardiac arrests alongside the East of England Ambulance Service. We have 10 fire stations with 99 firefighters participating in the trial, the greatest number in the region.

By mobilising our firefighters with the ambulance service we are can deliver an early intervention using cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillators giving the casualty the best chance of survival.

Since July we have attended over 230 co-responding incidents and initial analysis would indicate that our crews are delivering effective CPR. The national trial concludes in February 2017.

Awards - The Library and Information Service won the national Libraries Change Lives Award for its pioneering work in partnership with Norfolk Public Health to promote healthier lifestyles. This work is being taken up as an example of good practice by libraries across the UK. Enhancing the reputation of NLIS

Customers - Each year Libraries run the Summer Reading Challenge to encourage children to continue reading during the summer holidays and to make a significant contribution to improving literacy. In Summer 2016, 14,413 children and young people took part in the challenge. 57% were girls and 43% were boys.

Libraries as cultural hubs - In 2016, the potential of libraries as cultural hubs started to be realised. A number of theatrical and music performances were held in libraries across the county. The most recent being Librarian Theatre's 'A Christmas Carol' which played to sell out audiences in three libraries before Christmas. Earlier in the Autumn 5 libraries played host to an interactive dance performance aimed at early years.

HOMEWATCH REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017

Homewatch continues to evolve with constant changes from the Police.

Our district is now represented by an "Engagement Officer" whose name is PC Jim Squires. We still receive regular email updates and I put posters up around the village whenever it is appropriate to do so.

Letting me know when a crime has been committed is helpful when it would be useful for me to alert other householders to the possibility of a crime against their property or person. You should always telephone the Police first if a crime has been committed, suspected or is in progress, when 999 should be used. In other cases, 101 is the number to ring.

The most recent advice we have had is about cold calls.

Norfolk Trading Standards are warning residents about recorded message telephone cold calls and online adverts on social media sites claiming to be offering 'Government backed vouchers' and

'Green schemes' for replacement windows.

The recorded message calls includes the opportunity for the recipient to 'press 5 to speak to an agent', the online adverts include a 'contact me' form.

Trading Standards are concerned that both approaches do not clearly identify the businesses you are giving your details to or which business may receive them.

Trading Standards advises always be very wary of any approach made in a telephone cold call and NEVER give or confirm any personal details or agree to someone visiting your home if approached in this manner.

We also advise consumers to think carefully before putting personal details onto an online 'contact me' form unless you are completely sure who you are providing them too.

Impartial advice on energy saving and accessing genuine grants is available from the Energy Saving Trust.

If you have received one of these calls, or responded to an online advert and have agreed to a salesperson visiting you at home contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline via their online reporting form or telephone 03454 04 05 06.

Brooke Homewatch report

Norfolk Trading Standards are also reminding Norfolk residents to be aware of 'copycat' websites when looking to make a Blue Badge application online.

This follows a successful prosecution taken by the National Trading Standards against a man and his company for misleading consumers into paying £49 for Blue Badge applications. Anyone looking to apply for or to renew a blue badge application online is advised to ensure they are using the correct website:

Norfolk residents can apply online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/bluebadges

Outside of Norfolk visit www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge

In our part of South Norfolk in the last year there have been:

110 cases of anti-social behaviour; 3 bicycle thefts; 38 burglaries; 50 cases of arson; 10 drug offences; 48 thefts, other than burglary; 4 cases of possession of a weapon; 15 public order offences; 2 robberies; 20 shoplifting offences; 32 vehicle crimes and 82 violent or sexual offences.

As usual, it is important to remember that 101 is the number for all non-urgent calls to the Police and 999 only for emergencies or if a crime is in progress at the time of the call.

For advice on home security speak to our Crime Prevention Officer on 101 and asking for a domestic security survey which is free of charge.