



Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council

Chairman's Report – 2019/20

When I became Chairman last year and the main issue affecting the Parish was the planning permission on the car park of the Nags Head, I don't think anyone would have envisaged the current situation in the UK and around the globe with Coronavirus.

I sincerely would like to thank all the volunteers within the Parish, who are helping the more vulnerable with shopping, prescriptions collections and attending medical appointments as well as all of our wonderful NHS staff and other frontline workers. It has highlighted how important it is to have good community which comes together at a time like this and this should be something which we build upon in the coming year.

Please find below my report for Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

In the autumn of 2019 our Neighbourhood Plan was approved, following a referendum where 92% of those who voted, were in favour of adopting the Plan.

This was the culmination of six years hard work led by Cllr Angela Busch and her team and now forms part of local planning regulations for our Parish.

THE NAGS HEAD, MORETON

The Planning Applications for the Nags Head Application has been prevalent throughout my year as Chairman.

The original planning application was revised and resubmitted last summer and then withdrawn by Greene King in December 2020. To date no further application has been submitted.

The Parish Council with the support of local residents has made an application to Essex County Council for the unofficial footpath through the Nags Head car park to be considered as an official Right of Way. This was due to be determined by the end of the summer but has been deferred until further notice.

The Parish Council also applied for the Nags Head to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. This was originally rejected by EFDC. However, our Clerk pointed out that some of the material facts in the original decision were incorrect. As a result the Parish Council was permitted to resubmit the application. This time the application was successful. Greene King objected to the resubmitted application but withdrew their appeal in December 2020.

STOP STANSTED EXPANSION

In January 2020 Uttlesford District Council voted to oppose the application for the expansion of the airport to 43 million passengers per annum.

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) has written to Manchester Airports Groups asking them not to appeal against the decision.

GRANTS

The Parish Council has continued to support the 5 local churches with a grant totalling £3,000 being awarded for the upkeep and maintenance of their respective cemeteries.

SALT BINS

These have now been put in place and filled with salt. They are located as follows:

Gould Close – by the block of garages

Bovinger Mill – inside the phone box

Magdalen Laver - bottom of the Glebe nr the Church

Moreton Road, Pedlars End, - on the grass verge by the row of houses

BOBBINGWORTH NATURE RESERVE

The Parish Council continues to work closely with EFDC Countrycare on the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve.

Last summer two “Play in the Park” events were held, which are free of charge to all children, took place. Unfortunately EFDC had failed to cut the grass in advance of the event and there was a problem with grass snakes and adders at one session, which had to be abandoned and wet weather dampened the second session.

There have been difficulties with the number of rabbits on the reserve as they have been chewing and digging at the bensonate wall, which could give rise to a methane leakage,(the site was originally landfill) and now required expensive repairs.

EFDC have looked at various options to try to reduce the numbers of rabbits and believed the most effective option was the use of “rabbit boxes”, and these had been installed at the reserve.

However, there has been a consistent problem with vandalism. Initially, the boxes had been removed and thrown into the hedges. They were then concreted in to prevent this, but the vandalism continued and 180m of rabbit run fencing was pulled up and damaged.

An Open Day which was due to be held in March has had to be cancelled due to Coronavirus restrictions but will be rearranged for later in the year.

COMMUNICATION

The Parish Council's Website (www.essexinfo.net/mblpc) remained active and was updated regularly, with copies of Agendas, Minutes and general news of interest to the Parish. It was agreed during 2019 to update and revise our current website and to make it more informative and user friendly. It will include details of local clubs, societies, Doctors, Dentists, who to contact in an emergency, local walks, events and how to report a problem

as well as statutory information which includes Minutes and Agenda. Our new website address is:

www.mblparishcouncil.com

Residents who wish to receive copies of agendas, minutes, and news of general interest to the Parish, should contact the clerk and ask to be added to the email information list.

A welcome pack is now available for new residents. This is available to download via the Parish Council's website or a hard copy can be obtained by contacting the Clerk.

COUNCILLORS

Last year saw the departure of Andy Mangan. Cllr Paul Stevens was co-opted to fill this vacancy and has become a valued member of the Council.

HIGHWAYS

The Parish Council continued to pursue the request for double yellow lines on the corner of Gould Close in Moreton and Cllr Graeme Cooper attended a Highways Surgery to try to get the yellow lines, signage and speeding resolved.

The yellow lines were due to be painted in March 2020 but this has now been deferred.

A traffic, parking and congestion survey was due to be undertaken in Moreton in April but again this has had to be deferred

Equestrians within the Parish attended the Annual meeting to request signage to encourage drivers to slow down because of horses. This was raised at the Highways Surgery but to date no signs have been erected.

There has been a consistent problem with speeding along our narrow roads and lanes. Consideration was given to purchasing portable mobile speed signs by the Council but it was decided not to pursue this due to cost and the fact that permission would have to be sought from highways each time a sign was repositioned.

COMMUNITY POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The Coffee with Cops initiative was scaled back during 2019, and the meetings now take place every three months.

The level of engagement with Essex Police was poor until January 2020. However, following a complaint to senior officers by the Clerk the situation has been improved considerably, with regular updates and closer working between Essex Police and the Council.

Our Community Police Officer has changed and it is now PC Matt Edwards and he can be contacted by dialling 101.

Sadly the Neighbourhood Watch has not been very active within the Parish during the year but it is hoped that this will be improved for the forthcoming year

OPEN PARISH MEETING

The lighting of the Moreton Christmas tree on the green continues to be a great success.

The Open Parish Meeting in November was well attended as always and there was a presentation on Planning by Charlie Biss, who works closely with the Parish Council. A resident also raised her concerns about 5g masts and their effects. The meeting gave members of the parish the opportunity to express any concerns as well as being an opportunity to update local residents on the activity of the Parish Council, this event has always been an opportunity for local people to get together at the start of the Christmas period for some mulled wine, mince pies, and for an opportunity to mingle.

REPRESENTATION

The Parish Council has reviewed and commented on 57 Planning applications within the Parish.

The Parish Council continues to work closely with Epping Forest District Council, the Essex Association of Local Councils and Essex County Council on all matters concerning the Parish.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Parish Council elections should have been taking place in May 2020. However, due to Coronavirus restrictions the elections have been deferred until May 2021.

Accounts

We started the year with £29,730.20 in the bank. The precept for the 2019/20 year was £15,510. No Parish Support Grant was received this year as it has been phased out. The total expenditure for 2019/20 was £24,158 (including £973 VAT). The balance at 31st March 2020 was £22,907. The expenditure for this period was substantially higher than in previous years as a result of the legal costs for the Nags Head planning application.

A Note from the Chairman

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to thank our District and County Councillors, Cllr Maggie McEwan and Cllr Ian Hadley for all their support through 2019/20. I would also like to thank the all the Parish Councillors who continue to represent Parishioners views at various meetings and events and you the residents for taking an interest in your community.

Cllr John Devereux

Chairman 2019/20