

Guilden Sutton Parish Council

Newsletter July 2025 No 184

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Station Lane Survey – Thank you to everyone who replied. Over two thirds of respondents thought that Station lane was not safe for pedestrians. The majority of replies supported improvements to the Green lane (footpath 7). We have spoken to Public Rights of Way (PROW) and they have been down to assess the area. We will continue to work with PROW, Highways and the Landowners to look at potential solutions. If you are using station lane this summer, the advice is to remember the Highway Code and keep to the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic, except when there is a sharp right-hand bend when it may be safer to cross the road and then cross back after the bend.

Parish Council Forum–7-7.30pm before the next Parish meeting on Thurs 17th July and will give residents the opportunity to discuss potential ideas for improvements to public safety and parking in Arrowcroft Road and Hill Top Road.

Chair's Report (presented at Annual Meeting, 2nd April 2025)

This time last year, the previous Chairman, Councillor Hughes, reported that the Council had been successful in achieving some of its long term goals. I am pleased that 12 months later, we can report that this trend has continued. This began early in the municipal year, when Councillor Whelan's efforts resulted in a permanent storage unit, shared by the Community Association, Primary School, Fete Committee and Parish Council was installed. This built on efforts by Councillor Littlewood and we are also grateful for the support of the Community Association and Fete Committee in achieving this goal.

The newly revamped GreenSpace and Sustainability Group has organised some successful events including bulb planting at the Parish Car Park on Church Lane and a bird and boxes event which was very well attended. More recently, the group has also taken on responsibility for the grassed area close to the Village Hall which has been overgrown for a number of years. We were delighted to

receive financial support from our ward members, Graham Heatley and Margaret Parker to improve this area.

Having started providing book tokens for Primary School leavers during the pandemic, at the end of last academic year the Council built on this idea by providing a book for each pupil in Year 6, to act as a lasting reminder of their time at the school, with the added benefit of promoting literacy. This is not only more cost-effective to the Council, but also more fitting as a lasting gift.

The Council adopted new Financial Regulations in 2024 with the aim of safeguarding public funds and balancing this with the need for flexibility and business continuity. The Council's expenditure for this year was £30,737, with an income of £53,300. The Council has been very effective in achieving grant funding of more than £13,000 which will mean the Council leaves the 2024-25 financial year in an extremely strong financial position despite the ever increasing financial pressures and a significant increase in output. The Council has also reviewed its banking arrangements to ensure that our responsibility of providing value for money is achieved. This means the Council is likely to benefit from at least an extra £700 in the next financial year, which is equivalent to around 3% of the total precept. The Council's bank interest for the last financial year was over £1750. This means the Council is able to put more back into the community than it receives from taxpayers via the precept, ensuring that residents see value for money.

The Council was delighted to co-opt Emma-Clare Hewitt in February, and I think all can agree Councillor Hewitt has made an extremely energetic start to the role, providing a fresh pair of eyes on a number of our outstanding issues and much needed representation for the West of the Parish, beyond the A55 underpass.

Work has now started on the provision of additional seating in Hare Lane. This project has taken a number of years to come to fruition due to the complexities in obtaining a street furniture licence and then finding a contractor suitable to carry out the work, which was then delayed further by a series of road closures in the area. We were again grateful to receive financial assistance from

Councillors Heatley and Parker, as well as a donation of a bench from the former Village Green group.

The Council continues to employ two members of staff and we appreciate residents raising matters through the proper channels, either by email, telephone or through the form on the Council's website so that they can be properly allocated. Matters raised through informal channels, such as in person (other than at meetings and the monthly Surgery) or via a personal call cannot be effectively dealt with, as staff will not have access to the relevant information or have a method of logging information when they are not on Council business.

The Council has employed a professional contractor to examine potential issues with trees in the area. This not only includes the handful of trees owned by the Council, but also those on Highways land. Several recommendations were made and have been passed onto the Highways Authority. All of the trees owned by the Parish Council were confirmed as in good health.

The Council has also worked with external agencies to ensure work was carried out on the route between the Greenway and Guilden Sutton Lane to help prevent flooding, again the Council was grateful to Councillor Whelan for her work in pursuing this with the relevant bodies.

The Council continues to make the arrangements for our Remembrance Sunday service, and we are appreciative of the support we receive from the Church, Sue Davis and our first aid volunteers to ensure this important occasion can be marked every year. We said goodbye to Rev. Heather Carty this year, and we thank her for making sure this service ran smoothly.

The Old School Field required work this year in order to deal with a mole infestation. The area is maintained regularly, along with the Parish Car Park, trim trail and play area by Botanica Landscapes, who also carry out Lengthsman duties around the Parish.

The Council continues to deal with a large number of planning applications. Although not the planning authority, the Council is consulted on most types of planning application and where necessary sends a

recommendation to the planning department, who make the final decision. The Council also monitors inappropriate development and has made a number of referrals to planning enforcement over the past year. In addition, the Council has referred a number of overgrown trees and hedges that encroach the highway from private property. We are thankful that the majority of residents don't allow their hedges to encroach their boundary and appreciate it is frustrating to be asked to do so when the area maintained by the local authority may not be in the best condition.

We continue our efforts to make a safe footway along Station Lane, and report that this is currently under review by the landowners. In addition, I am pleased to report that the Saturday bus service is being well used and it is pleasing to note that it is proving to be popular with younger members of our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Clerk and Assistant Clerk, who work hard behind the scenes to ensure our Council runs as smoothly as possible. I obviously want to thank my friends and colleagues on this Council. They work tirelessly on miscellaneous matters too many to mention. Thank you. Sadly at a recent communications sub-committee it was noted that we are not good at promoting ourselves, we don't go in "for blowing our own trumpet", but just endeavour to get the work done.

Thank you to Margaret and Graham our Borough Council representatives for their help and support over the year. So many people in our community give up their time to improve our village in so many ways and we thank you all for that. I would like to single out one gentleman Gordon Hamilton who tended the memorial garden over the years. He has now left the village and we wish him well in his next adventure. So please accept our thanks for all who have helped over the year, whether on a WhatsApp volunteers group or a committee - we are where we are because of you- please continue to help, challenge and question - that's how we improve. **Sue Ringstead Chair**

Future Parish Council Meetings- Thurs 17th July and Wed 3rd September 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Next Street Surgery **Sun 13th July (moved from 12th due to Village fete)**

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