

Landbeach Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 19 April 2023

Chairman's report

Context

We live in strange and interesting times.

The Covid-19 pandemic is now receding; though infections are currently prevalent, they are generally less serious and alarming.

In the past year, we have had 3 Prime Ministers (Boris to 5 Sept 2022, Liz Truss 6 Sept – 25 Oct 2022, Rishi Sunak since 25 October) and 4 Chancellors of the Exchequer (Rishi, Nadhim Zahawi, Kwasi Kwarteng, Jeremy Hunt). We have celebrated a Platinum Jubilee (6 June 2022) and witnessed the death of a monarch, Queen Elizabeth II (8 September 2022) and it will soon be the Coronation of King Charles III (6 May 2023). Russia's war with Ukraine (24 Feb 2022-) continues. Brexit and Ireland seem incompatible. Inflation is running at 10% and these are difficult times for many.

Whatever is going on around us, Landbeach (931 residents, 2021 census) continues to be a thriving place, with a strong sense of heritage, nature and community. We are surrounded by larger villages (Cottenham 6000+ residents, Milton 4500+ residents and Waterbeach village ~5500 residents) and the new town at Waterbeach will eventually have up to 12000 residents. Within this environment, there will be big changes and adjustments required. We need to hold firm to maintain our identity and keep the character of our historic village.

Parish Council news

I'd like to begin by saying how deeply saddened we were to hear of the death of Trevor Dell on 13 September 2022. Trevor was recently our village caretaker and before that he was a Parish Councillor for many years. He was an irreplaceable member of the village community who will be truly missed.

We finish this year with the same Parish Councillors as at the start. I'd like to thank them all for their hard work over the past year. This has included discussing and responding to consultations and planning applications, organizing maintenance and improvement work, running litter picks and work parties and keeping on top of ever-increasing amounts of emailed paperwork.

I would also like to thank our District Councillors (Anna, Paul and Judith) for all their work on our behalf, particularly Anna who is also our County Councillor.

Thanks also to Brian, our new caretaker, who helps keep the village looking neat and tidy. He also monitors the play equipment and the defibrillator; the latter has recently had new pads and battery and a software update.

As you probably know, our wonderful Parish Clerk of 15 years, Maria Sylvester, retired at the end of 2022. We had an anxious month or two recruiting her replacement then were delighted to get an application from Melanie Lombardi, who is also our Mobile Warden. Melanie comes with a wealth of office management and people-focused experience and she has settled in to the role very quickly.

Parishioner contributions

For communicating with the village, we have long been indebted to Barbara Le Gallez for What's On and Jeff Bronks for the village website. We now also use the Landbeach Community Facebook page which is a great resource for immediate messaging.

Since February this year, What's On has not been distributed to every household but has been available online or via email with paper copies being left in the church (and VH?) and delivered to people who request them. If you want to receive a paper copy, please let Barbara know.

Work Parties

We are also grateful to other volunteers. In particular, we appreciate help with **litter picking** – organized (recently 11 Feb and 1 April, thanks to Nick and volunteers) and ad-hoc. For a long time, Elaine (Humphrey) has done regular ad-hoc litter picking from the south end of the village to the A10; she has now retired from this but we would like to express our appreciation for her contribution to enhancing the approach to the village. (others taking this on?).

Play equipment cleaning is another routine task for which volunteers are much appreciated but seem less forthcoming...

Likewise the **wildflower area** which needs occasional weeding or maintenance. Thanks to Joe McWilliams for his ongoing support and help with management. But... more volunteer effort is needed for this area to thrive!!

We intend to produce better signs to advertise such work parties. I think a nice A1 sign at the crossroads (CreateSigns?) with the promise of

meeting for refreshments afterwards should alert more parishioners who would like to help. After all, the village is for all of us to enjoy!

MVAS (Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign)

Thanks again to John Halfpenny and other volunteers for being part of the team that moves the MVAS around and analyses the data.

Wyatt's Field (Recreation Ground) and surrounding area

We continue to look after the Rec, maintaining and enhancing the space and the facilities. We are in the final year of a 3yr contract with Brookfield for grass cutting and hedge cutting.

Milton Colts have held many matches this year and are still busy playing until May.

We are currently undertaking work to tidy up and improve the area around the crossroads and bus shelter. In the past, this used to be a small green and we would like to see it again appear as an attractive heart to the village.

Village Sign

Following an accident which damaged this, the base has been repaired, with a new time capsule (which included some Covid related items) buried in its midst. We then also realised that the sign itself needed some serious attention. This was then restored to a high (and weather-proof) standard by signwriter James Kilby, who is also a signwriting volunteer for the Tithe Barn.

Village Signpost

This had deteriorated to the point of no return so has been replaced and looks very smart.

Village Hall Car parking

We realise that this has become an issue when several different groups are all wishing to meet. For example, Saturday mornings when Milton Colts and Forest School are both running activities and less mobile residents may find it difficult to park when attending the Village Hall Café. We are asking Forest School to park on Waterbeach Road when there is likely to be a clash. Any other suggestions are welcome.

Traffic management.

We realise that the works on the A10 have resulted in more and heavier traffic cutting through the village. Once these works are complete we hope to see this reduce.

However, the new development at Waterbeach will also have an impact and we are keen to see mitigation measures which encourage traffic to go slower and ideally opt to avoid cutting through the village.

We recently met again with Andrew Cameron, an independent consultant engaged by Urban&Civic, and discussed the measures we would like to see. These include making more of a feature of the core heart of the village, prioritizing it as a place for people rather than just a crossing for traffic. We would also like to see features at the church bends, such as setts across the road, which result in traffic slowing up without lots of extra signage/street furniture.

There will be funds available, both from Urban&Civic (125k?) and later RLW, to ensure that we will be able to effect these measures, most probably in a phased way as funds are released. Urban&Civic will be getting costings for the works we would like to see and a detailed proposed design will be drawn up. It is anticipated that these proposals can be shown to the village in June/July.

Roads, ditches, drains.

Potholes – a perennial problem but worse this year than many due to the winter weather conditions and lack of preventive maintenance (see Grips). Once reported, they do get marked up and fixed so do report any of concern (just google Cambridgeshire County Council potholes, then follow the links on the 'Report a Highways Fault' page).

Grips – these little road ditches at the side of the road should enable water to run off into the ditches. However, many of the grips around the village have disappeared! This is made worse by wide heavy vehicles shifting the mud along the road so there is no hope of the water escaping. The result is more potholes and eventually expensive repairs to the road edges. This has been reported to CCC Highways.

Flooding – on the plus side we haven't seen flooding at the crossroads this year so the drainage underneath (which can be heard) must be working better.

Banworth Lane – this, miraculously, now has a proper surface. Thanks to Elizabeth and our District Councillors for pursuing this successfully.

Buses

Two PR5 buses an hour in each direction.

Waterbeach New Town impacts

The Western part of the new town development under Urban&Civic's management continues apace. (cf Update from guest speaker)

On the East side of the site, RLW's progress continues to be less sure (has work started??). It is currently a condition that the railway station is moved before they can start work.

The knock-on impact of the development will mean more people heading towards Cambridge, particularly at the morning peak time. The intention is to get as many people as possible using public transport and active travel.

Mere Way Cycle Route – Urban&Civic

Paul Mumford gave us an update from U&C. The work on the Mere Way route is due to start in May, beginning at the southern end. It is hoped that full closures of parts of the route will be limited to the narrow section south of Butt Lane, and the village walk will still be accessible when the next section is being developed. Works actually in the village should be later in the summer. It is planned to deliver leaflets to all properties in Landbeach and update the village with the detailed designs (some sections are still being tweaked) in June.

Busway and Active Travel Route – GCP (Greater Cambridge Partnership)

Plus new Park&Ride

Consultation – this was difficult and divisive with parishioners having opposing views. The Parish Council submitted a balanced response which we hope highlighted the potential issues with both the proposed routes. We expressed a preference for the most northern P&R site to the east of

the A10 but fear that pressure from Denny Abbey will push decision making away from this.

A10 – CA (Combined Authority) Gone quiet, will keep monitoring

EastWestRail Gone quiet, will keep monitoring

Finances

Parish Council Finances are healthy. We will continue to be able to fund improvements around the village, while still maintaining a reasonable reserve in case of unforeseen expenditure.

Precept 2020/2021 £26,000; Precept 2021/2 and 2022/3 £27,000.

Precept 2023/2024 £28,000 for a Tax Base (adjusted number of Band D equivalent properties) of 396.3. This gives a contribution of £70.65 per band D property, an increase of £1.19 or 1.71%. We are still one of the lowest charging Parish Councils.

Finally,

The Parish Council will continue to do our best to protect and enhance the village environment and push for mitigation measures that reduce and slow the traffic.

Beyond this, what really makes a place is its people. Many thanks to everyone in the village for all their efforts to make Landbeach the friendly and inclusive place that it is.

Melanie Hale, Chairman, Landbeach Parish Council.