

# Ufford Annual Parish Meeting 2021

## Chair's Report

It is good to be holding our first face to face meeting for 16 months! – even with only a few attendees, but reports will be available to read on the UPC website.

What a year it has been! At the start of the Pandemic we had to cancel our March Parish Council Meeting at short notice, and also cancelled the April meeting. In March and April we made any essential decisions, such as payment of bills, and especially paying the Clerk's Salary, by round robin email agreement and these were later ratified at the first formal meeting. By May we were up and running with meetings held via Zoom video conference, which really has worked very well, and allowed us to function pretty normally as a Parish Council. We miss seeing each other, and having some small social chat – often while putting away the chairs and tables!

I shall give a brief resume of our activities and achievements over the 2020/ 2021 year:

- In April a new Laptop computer was purchased – this had been planned for the new financial year.
- We moved to online banking. Again this was being considered but prompted by the Pandemic and obviated the need for the Clerk to bring cheques for Councillors to sign. This has of course been accompanied by new financial regulations to ensure security and probity.
- ESC has established Community Partnerships grouping several town and parish councils into an area. We are with Framlingham, Wickham Market and surrounding villages. We are represented at these meetings.
- The Parish Council is also represented at Area meetings of all parish councils, and at Police Liaison area meetings.

### **Planning:**

- We have made critical comment in the consultation process of the Planning White Paper. We will wait with interest, and much trepidation, for the Government to bring forward the promised Bill regarding changes to Planning Law.
- We contributed comments regarding the draft Local Plan, eventually adopted in September 2020.
- We have continued to respond to each stage of the consultation process concerning the Sizewell C DCO application, and UPC is registered as an Interested Party for the forthcoming Inquiry.
- We contributed to the consultation on proposed A12 Improvements.

### Planning Applications:

The biggest planning applications affecting Ufford have all been outside the village, with three in Melton and one in Pettistree/ Wickham Market.

1. On Woods Lane an application for 27 self build houses (on land just down from the Bloor Homes) – this was refused.
2. A Care Village on Yarmouth Road, including a Care Home with 80 beds, and 72 care assisted bungalows. Several amendments were made and we responded objecting to each one. Eventually the application was heard at Committee and was refused.
3. Off St Andrew's Place an application for 55 dwellings was considered. It was part of an area designated in Melton Neighbourhood Plan but without the commercial units or areas for public amenity as that part of the land is under different ownership. Despite many objections, including UPC, a decision at Committee Hearing was to allow the application.
4. In Pettistree, but closer to Wickham Market, Hopkins Homes applied for 136 dwellings and there was considerable opposition from both W/M and Pettistree, and the PCs. We joined them in objecting, as just one reason is the increased volume of traffic we can expect heading south along the High Street in Ufford! This application was allowed by Committee decision.

### **Bentwaters Park and Traffic problems:**

With increasing numbers of businesses trading at Bentwaters Park many local Parish Councils have suffered the bad effects of increased traffic, and especially HGVs. In Ufford I think we suffer most from private cars and some commercial vans taking a short cut to avoid the queues which tail back from the Melton crossroads, and the level crossing. UPC has joined a group of PCs in meeting with SCC Highways, and ESC Planning Team to discuss the effect of giving permission for more development throughout the area, resulting in increased traffic at this bottleneck. Also there was a request for review of the conditions placed on traffic movements of HGVs at Bentwaters, both volume and timing. The two authorities are aware of our concerns, but I would not advise anyone to hold their breath waiting for a remedy or solution.

Back in Ufford our further activities have included :

- Purchase of a new SID – with grants gratefully received from our County and District Councillors. It has been sited on Yarmouth Road, bought in August, delivered in November, and has caused quite a few problems. Most of us would have lost patience and asked for a refund – but we have a resident who has adopted SID and has great technical skills, and communicates with the manufacturers and I think it is currently on about the last notice.
- We designed a New Residents' Welcome Pack. We have a postcard with the basic information directing people to the New Residents' page on the website and where to find all the contacts and activities that contribute to making Ufford a wonderful place to live. Please let the Clerk, or a Councillor know if you have a new neighbour and we can drop a card in.

- We have an application currently in the final stages of agreement to designate four roads in Ufford as Quiet Lanes – these are a part of Loudham Lane; Spring Lane; Byng Hall Road and Lower Road continuing into Old Church Road at the Melton boundary. We hope this will calm the speeds of many drivers and make these roads safer for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

You will be hearing reports from other Councillors about projects undertaken improving Footpaths, Broadband, and the Parklands Wood all of which the Parish Council has been supporting.

I would like to thank our County Councillor, Alexander Nicoll, and our District Councillor, Carol Poulter, for the time they give in attending our meetings, and giving us information, advice and support throughout this past year. Also my thanks to my fellow Councillors for their work and support throughout the past year.

We have sadly accepted the resignation of Guy Foskett at the end of April, and I wish to record my thanks to Guy for 9 years work on the Council, including 2 years as Chairman; this is quite a feat while also running a business with a lot of travelling. We benefitted from Guy's local knowledge, common sense and loads of practical skills.

Last, but definitely not least, I know I can speak for everyone in thanking our clerk, Judi Hallett, for all her unstinting hard work. If there is a problem, Judi will find a solution, and will deliver it promptly and cheerfully. Ufford is hugely in her debt – Thank you Judi.

Kathryn Jones