

TERLING AND FAIRSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 25th MAY 2010

(To be published on the Website, on the Notice boards and in the Parish Magazine)

This report is a summary of the work of the Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2010. The Parish Council met nine times in the last year. All of the Parish Council members have an area of responsibility and serve on one or more of the council's committees or working parties. Ward Councillors are invited to attend all meetings. Margaret Galione has been consistent in her attendance and we thank her for all her work on our behalf.

The success of the public question time continues, with local residents positively welcomed. Comparatively few people feel the need to attend which suggests that the Council must be getting something right! If you do have concerns please come and talk to us. We welcomed a representative from Stop Stansted Campaign which provoked much thought and discussion.

Hayley Wiseman was co-opted as a Councillor in May 2009 and has acted as an effective School Representative. Judy Cockburn resigned as Councillor in December due to increased work commitments. I would like to record my thanks for her work on the Parish Council, especially for her efforts on the Health and Welfare committee.

Our Clerk and members of the Council regularly attend training sessions run by the EALC to keep abreast of legislation which affects the running of local councils.

During the year, the Council has made representations on many issues including successfully petitioning the District Council which had stated it was to withdraw the Parish Support Grant. At the request of many parishioners the Council instigated the change of Polling Station for Fairstead residents from White Notley to Terling.

The Council continued to petition the Environment Agency and Essex County Council about the state of the gabion walls at Terling Ford. This pressure was eventually successful and the necessary repairs were completed in the Autumn. We continue to fight the battle with 4x4 drivers who use the Ford as a recreational space and we thank the emergency services and local people who regularly have come to the rescue of vehicles stuck in the water.

PC Jason Corrigan and PSCO Nikki Doubleday are in regular attendance in the Parish and attend many Council meetings. They follow up on all issues giving cause for concern by residents and I would like to thank them both for all that they do. Our Community Warden, Tony Lynch regularly attends our meetings and is always on call to help resolve issues.

The Parish Council has maintained its street cleaning agreement with Braintree District Council. Our thanks go to the willing volunteers who attend our regular litter picking mornings, and to the children of Terling School who also help out. Fly tipping seems to be on the increase and we are very proactive in reporting all incidents promptly.

The Council's sincere thanks go to the Parish Handyman, Clive Marshall, who not only kept the footpaths well cut and maintained to a very high standard but also attended to many jobs around the Parish ranging from bin clearance to the playground safety checks. The War Memorial was smartened up in time for Remembrance Sunday with new posts.

We continue to be a member of the Parish Paths Partnership (P3). This involves the parish working with the County Council to ensure that the footpaths are well maintained and accessible to all. We improved the safety of the Parish tractor by installing roll bars and a seat belt at the end of last season. Thanks to Trevor Lewis and Darren White who have worked extremely hard to ensure the success of the P3 scheme in the Parish.

Our much loved old BT phone kiosks, now quaint pieces of architectural heritage are regularly checked and maintained. The Ranks Green kiosk was badly damaged in January and plans are underway to restore it to its former glory. The Fuller Street kiosk was successfully transformed into an information point for the Essex Way and even won a prize in a BT competition.

The Parish Council was pleased to sponsor Terling School's Kenyan Partnership and we look forward to supporting the village in what will hopefully be a long-term association.

The Health and Welfare Committee conducted a survey of local residents to determine whether a Trim Trail would be a welcome addition in Terling. Whilst the results of the survey showed that this was not wanted it was a worthwhile exercise to gauge local opinion and many of the suggestions, whilst not always feasible for a variety of reasons, were followed up. My thanks to Sheila Alder and Ann Anderson for their work on this Committee.

Members of the Parish Council also represent the Parish on many outside bodies at local and district level. Pauline Bird continues as our Village Hall Representative and the Parish Council works closely with the Village Hall Committee. Pauline also works with Trevor Lewis on the Estate Liaison Committee which, as the name suggests, liaises with the large local landowners on a whole variety of issues affecting the community. We continue to work closely with Sally Austin, our Village Agent, a scheme which is proving very successful.

The continued effect of the credit crunch and slow down of the housing market resulted in fewer planning applications than in previous years but the Planning Committee comprising Robin Dixon, Colin Cutler and Pauline Bird review all new planning applications and make recommendations to the District Council. I would like to particularly thank our Tree Warden, Angus MacWillson who deals with all applications for tree works and reports his findings to the Planning committee.

The Parish Council's website has been invaluable in ensuring residents are kept up to date with developments and the work of the Council. We know it is successful due to the number of positive comments received and our thanks go to Colin Cutler who keeps it refreshed and alive with information. Grasping this medium and using it for information, communication and consultation is the future. Ignore its power at our peril.

This year, as ever, there have been all the usual issues throughout the Parish – traffic, parking, potholes, salt bins, aircraft noise, footpaths, missing signs, dog mess, burst water mains, blocked drains; the list goes on. These are always with us and we continue to do all we can to resolve them and petition the relevant authorities where we can. Much comment has been made throughout the Parish about the state of the roads. Well, believe me, we have been proactive and have been out there measuring potholes and reporting them to Essex County Council Highways Department. Speeding vehicles have been a great concern and we successfully persuaded the Police to run a series of speed checks, although the results would indicate that the speeding problem in the Parish is not actually as severe as we think it is!

Months of planning in 2009/10 are about to come to fruition with the installation of the Internet Café in Terling Village Stores, provided free to the community by the Parish Council. Likewise projects which take a considerable time to arrange will hopefully be carried out in the early part of the new Council year, most notably the improvements to School Green, for which we thank Lord Rayleigh for giving us his permission. The football field project is still in its infancy but our working party headed by Ian Smith and Robin Dixon will continue working on this to pull all the strands together.

Thanks too to Ian Smith for all his work on the Finance Committee keeping control of the very important financial side of things.

Finally, a huge thank you to our Clerk, Jayne Halfhide. She works tirelessly implementing the decisions of the Council and keeping Parishioners and Councillors well-informed and up to date on important issues.

In this brief summary I have undoubtedly omitted to refer to a wide variety of matters that will have affected some, or all of you, in various ways. All the work of the Parish Council continues to be recorded in our Minutes which are available on line or by application to our Clerk. It only remains for me as Chairman to thank my Council colleagues for their hard work throughout the past year. Their continued dedication has made my life as Chairman much easier.

Sarah McNamara

Chairman, Terling & Fairstead Parish Council

25th May 2010