

Acle Parish Council Annual Report 2024

It's been a very busy year for the parish council. The main achievement was finishing the refurbishment of the former Barclays building, now called Folly Tree House. Our four new tenants are now settled in and paying rent! It is great for the village centre to have these businesses open, increasing footfall for the village as a whole.

We also completed the refurbishment of the Chocolate Box, repairing the roof, putting in a damp-proof course and new doors and windows. The newsagents is in the downstairs room. Around the side is a small room, available for hire, but also used to store the foodbank stocks, and upstairs is the archives storage, and a larger room which can be rented for meetings etc.

Our ongoing project is the replacement community building known as the Fletcher Room, which is mainly let to Acle Pre-School. Hopefully you have all received the recent newsletter with the consultation on the loan which will be needed to pay for some of the costs of this new building, if the residents want to do this. We are very hopeful that we will be able to apply for several grants, thereby reducing the amount of the loan that is needed.

We are investigating options for a water supply for the land for the new cemetery at the top of Pyebush Lane. The newly planted hedgerow is doing well, along with a few trees. In the longer-term we plan to improve the access track to the new cemetery.

The parish council also owns three play areas – in Beighton Road, Springfield and Damgate Lane. We have a Vehicle Activated Sign which is moved around the village to deter speeding, and have recently paid for lovely speed signs designed by local children. We have also just installed bollards along New Road to protect the verges from parking. A mapboard and finger post on The Green were installed to help tourists in our village.

The parish council manages the public toilets in The Street, part-funded by Broadland District Council. We have been pestering Broadland for some funding to pay for the refurbishment of the toilets and it looks like we have been successful, finally. The parish council also pays for the YMCA to run the weekly youth club at the Rec Centre.

The council is consulted on local planning applications and has been invited to meetings about the flooding in Beighton Road.

There are 12 parish councillors on Acle Parish Council, all volunteers, most of whom are here tonight. We have a wide range of interests and experience on the council. Jess Royal joined the other councillors at the elections in May 2023, and is particularly interested in environmental issues. Angela Bishop has recently resigned as a councillor and was council Chair. We send her our thanks for her enthusiasm and hard work over many years on the council. We are very pleased that Angela has offered to continue to run the summer markets this year. Of course, this time last year, Angela was busy planning the coronation event for King Charles. It was a lovely day, with singing and lots of cake!

The councillors will look to co-opt a new councillor at the May meeting.

Our paid staff are all part-time and include a parish clerk, deputy clerk and assistant clerk, a cleaner and two maintenance staff. We also pay for sub-contractors such as for the grasscutting, streetlighting repairs and the installation of bins and benches.

Members of the public are always very welcome at the council meetings, and are invited to raise issues or ask questions at the beginning of each meeting. The accounts for the year ended 31st

March 2024 will be available shortly on the council's website as draft, and will be reviewed at the May meeting.

There have been a lot of questions in the village about the poor state of the roads in the village. The maintenance of roads is a Norfolk County Council responsibility. They have told us that they plan to improve the bus stops in the village centre this summer, and will re-surface The Street, and round into Old Road, New Road and Norwich Road, at the same time.

April 2024