

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### **Shotley Annual Parish Meeting - 2014**

**HMS Ganges:** Following the granting of Planning Permission on 27 November 2013 for this development, some Parish Councils on the Shotley Peninsula requested that the application be called-in for it to be considered by a Public Enquiry. Shotley Parish Council was of the view that the approved planning application had taken account of the various views of the communities of the Shotley Peninsula and that the decision reached by 9 out of 13 planning officers of the Planning Committee in favour of the development was the right outcome for our community. They had followed a rigorous and democratic path in coming to their decision and to delay the Development for even longer would be indefensible. In February 2014 Babergh was notified that there would be no "call in" and the Council would be able to proceed to determine this matter locally. Mr Dave Jones, Planning Casework Manager at the DCLG, said in a letter to the council: "The Secretary of State has carefully considered the impact of the proposal, and the key policy issues of promoting sustainable transport, delivering the wide choice of high quality homes, promoting healthy communities and conserving and enhancing both the natural and historic environment which this cases raises." In his opinion, the proposals did not: involve a conflict with national policies on important matters; have significant long term impact on economic growth and meeting housing needs across a wider area than a single local authority; have significant effects beyond their immediate locality; give rise to substantial cross boundary or national controversy; raise significant architectural and urban design issues; or involve the interests of national security or foreign governments".

However, it is still possible for a further appeal to be lodged against this decision by parishes in the peninsula who continue to feel strongly against this planning application, so watch this space!

**Shotley Cliff and Picnic Area:** Cllr Gary Richens will speak to you shortly regarding the Shotley Cliff and the Picnic Area and plans for further erosion prevention along the foreshore.

**Affordable Housing:** This has progressed considerably since last year and in February Icení submitted a planning application for eight affordable dwellings, including four flats and four houses on land adjacent to no 1 The Street. This application is expected to go to Planning Committee soon and a decision is imminent.

**Parish Council Assets:** Over the years, whether due to public request, divestment from local government or ingenuity of our representatives, the list of Parish Council owned and maintained assets continues to grow. Whether it be an extra litter bin or a section of previously unused land which has now become a Heritage Park, all these assets cost money to buy, maintain, insure, clean, etc...this money comes from the Precept, which is raised through Council Tax. So you, the parishioner, are directly contributing towards everything the Parish Council pays for. These assets belong to the village and are there to be used and enjoyed by all. Unfortunately at times these assets are not respected or looked after and are even vandalised and destroyed. In the past year alone we have spent over £2000 repairing items that had been damaged or broken. This money could and

should have been spent in better things. If you are a witness to any act of vandalism or anti-social behaviour, please report it to the Police.

**Stour Footpath Groups and OSAC:** Following what can only be described as the freak weather that affected most of the UK last Winter, a number of areas in Shotley were hit by tidal surges, landslides and extreme wind and rain. Whilst most of us were in the warmth of our cosy houses, a number of intrepid, determined and no-nonsense members of the Stour Footpath Group, Osac and other volunteers were out there, facing the element and doing an awful lot of clearing, repairing, replacing and making good again. To all those volunteers, the Parish Council would like to say a great big thank you!

This great big thank you is also extended to the Community Payback Scheme, their organisers and their members, who have been there to help Osac whenever needed.

**Council membership:** We have a full complement of councillors at the moment but as our list of responsibilities and projects grow, it is clear that we could do with more members, hence why we are currently investigating the possibility of increasing the number of total Councillors. In the meantime, we would welcome some new faces on our Open Spaces & Amenities Committee and Website Working Party – especially, but not exclusively, from the younger generation as this would help keep us up to date and relevant!

On a final note:

The Parish Council would love to see more parishioners at our meetings. We meet every third Thursday of the month and our agendas, minutes and any other information you may wish to find out are available via the Website, notice boards or the Clerk. The Parish Council is responsible for a variety of things in your village: Allotments, litter and dog waste bins, grit bins, the Bristol Hill public conveniences, the picnic area, the Heritage Park, Kingsland and Lloyd Road play areas, to name but a few. If you have a particular interest on any of these areas, please get in touch. We always need help, whether it be to clear after a landslide, to repair a goal post, or just to report to the Clerk something that you have noticed that needs to be seen to.

I would like to thank all councillors and Committee members for their continued support, Eileen and Debbie for all their sterling work keeping the village clean and tidy, Mr Meacock and Son for keeping our grass and trees in good order, Mr Leach for keeping our website up to date and all those people who volunteered their time for the good of their parish at some point during the year.

After eight years of sterling work, our clerk Linda Rowlands has retired. Not because she was fed up with the job or what the work entailed but the fact that she moved away to Colchester. We would like to thank her sincerely for all her work and support over that time and her ever cheerful face in meetings. Luckily we had a lucky replacement in our Responsible Financial Officer, Dina Bedwell, already a clerk in another village, who was willing to take on the task of looking after our motley crew of councillors and all the necessary paperwork that the council receives and generates.

I hope you all enjoy the meeting. Refreshments will be available at the end of the evening.

Cllr Mr R Wrinch

Chairman, Shotley Parish Council