

Snape Annual Parish Meeting 2025

Report from the Chair of Snape Parish Council 2024-25

This has been a challenging year for the Parish Council and for Parish Councillors. The increasing volume of correspondence, the pressure of time involved in dealing with local issues and the growing expectations on the Parish Council to participate in activity in the wider East Suffolk area are making significant additional demands on the voluntary time and energy of Members and the very limited financial resources available to us.

Fortunately we have been able to continue to work with organisations and individuals in the village to deliver some key projects. We will need to be clear about our priorities in future if we are to meet the opportunities and obstacles that are emerging.

I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Parish Council for their support and hard work and I particularly welcome Vicki Newstead who has been coopted to the Council in recent weeks.

We have had active support from our Suffolk County Councillor, Andrew Reid and from our East Suffolk Councillors, particularly Cllr Katie Graham, who attend our meetings regularly and respond to the concerns which we raise with them.

The details of the Parish Council's deliberations and work programme are available through the minutes of our meetings which are published on the 'Villageinfo' website. Many of the Snape organisations which contribute so much to the life of this thriving community either supporting or with the support of the Parish Council have tabled reports for this evening's meeting. All will, I am sure, be happy to respond to your questions and welcome your involvement if you have time to spare!

Road safety, traffic and highways remain a major concern. The work undertaken by the County Council to ameliorate the dangers for children going to Snape school have not been as successful as we had hoped and they have not relieved the parking problems on Church Road in the streets around. The Parish Council will have to revisit this problem in the coming year. Vicki Newstead has agreed to lead on this. The speed and volume of traffic and the increasing number of heavy goods and construction vehicles coming through the Village, particularly when there are problems on the A12, has been high on the Council's agenda for some years. There is clearly going to have to be a renewed discussion with the County Council about this as the pressure of major construction projects grows. Margaret McKenna has been following a number of possible initiatives in this area.

The Parish Council has signed up to the County Council's 'Community Self-Help' scheme and, under the leadership of David Norman, has undertaken the major project of clearing the pavement between the Crown and Snape Bridge. This was a highly successful community event involving GreenSnape members and other local people very actively supported by 'The Rapid Relief Team' who provided additional muscle power and much appreciated sustenance for the volunteers. There are other projects for next year.

The Parish Council will continue to support the Community Speed Watch team.

Tim Beach and Russ Rainger have worked hard to ensure that Snape is fully engaged with all opportunities to keep track on the large scale energy projects (NSIPs) on our doorstep which will affect the quality of life for people in the village. Dealing with major companies with huge resource is a challenge for Town and Parish Council's but we have been determined to work with neighbouring parishes to ensure that our voice is heard. The Parish Council will register as an 'interested party' at the forthcoming 'SEALINK' planning enquiry and we encourage local people to do so.

The Parish Council has made a significant investment in our allotments this year. Maria Norman has been leading on this on behalf of the Council and we have agreed that in future the rentals from allotment holders will be reinvested in the site to maintain drainage ditches and other assets.

The Playing Field Committee has had the financial support of the Parish Council in raising the funds to replace the zip wire in the children's play area. The new equipment will be installed in June.

We also continue, with Graham Farrant's guidance, to scrutinise all planning applications which are referred to us. Using well established criteria and when appropriate we express objections or matters of concern to the Planning Authority. In the end the Parish Council is not the decision maker in planning matters but we can at least represent local views.

It has been a priority for some years to try to secure improved public transport for the village and we have tried to get the Katch Bus service routed to Saxmundham. There is a growing concern about this and a view that a service to Woodbridge and to Saxmundham would be valuable to residents and visitors. The Parish Council has opened a discussion about how this can be achieved with the County Council and it will be a priority for the year ahead.

An idea has emerged to create a safe pedestrian route such as a board walk between the Crown carpark and the foot of Snape Bridge. This would be a major project and Andrew McDonald is collecting views and thoughts about the idea before any detailed feasibility work is undertaken.

That is a snapshot of some of our key activities. This is a very sociable and vibrant community which takes great pride in its environment, uniqueness and neighbourliness. The Parish Council will always do it best to promote and protect those qualities.

I conclude by thanking Marie, our Clerk, who keeps us on task and on the straight and narrow. We would be lost without her!!

I also want to thank Tim and Graham who are standing down from the Parish Council at the end of this meeting. We owe them both a huge debt of gratitude for the enormous amount of hard work they have put in to the Parish Council over many years. They have both represented Snape with energy, expertise and, most importantly, good humour so that the Village punches well above its weight across East Suffolk. It would take far too long to go into the detail of everything they have contributed and fortunately they are both staying in Snape so this isn't really the time for a retirement do! **THANK YOU.**

Paul Richards - Chair Snape Parish Council