

It's been a busy year! We started with our drop in events and our surveys to discover how residents wish the village to develop in order to formulate our official Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks to funding grants received from Broadland District Council and the tireless work of Mike and his team, our plan is close to being finalised and will be put before the community for a consultation period and referendum which we hope will then result in the plan being adopted.

In June we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee by purchasing a commemorative bench which was placed in a lovely spot on the raised area at the back of the village hall to enable those resting their legs to enjoy the wonderful vistas. Many thanks to Ben and the Village Hall team for installing the seat.

The Parish Council has continued to support the delivery of the dualling of the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham on safety reasons, however, a legal challenge was raised which has delayed the commencement of this project. A court hearing to resolve this matter will be heard in May. We continue to lobby for a crossing to the West of the Parish however it was confirmed that a footpath and cycleway would be included at the new White House junction after we arranged for a presentation of the scheme by National Highways so parishioners could view the plans and lobby representatives. In December it was revealed that the County council have selected the area immediately to the east of the White House junction to build a permanent Gypsy and Travellers site. We asked for representatives to come to Lingwood to explain the proposals at a public meeting. Over 400 parishioners packed the hall to strongly object to the proposal and although our request to withdraw the plan completely was rejected, the deadline for the consultation was extended which allowed the Parish Council and residents to submit their comments. The proposals will be heard by the inspectorate in June. The proposed traveller site can't go ahead until the A47 project is completed and Highways have planned to use the area as a drainage area anyway.

Lingwood and Burlingham re-joined the Parish Cluster scheme this year which arranges a quarterly meeting of local parish council Chairs and Clerks. As more local power is devolved, we were keen to be at the forefront of any initiatives that may affect our local area. Currently the group is looking to establish a more efficient and faster way to fix common problems such as highways issues.

Cars speeding through the village continues to be a safety problem and although a local speed watch group could not be formed this year, we have a Speed Awareness monitor which we have placed at different locations in the past few months. This has provided a positive reminder to drivers coming into the village.

In recent months we have been working with Strumpshaw parish council after they were offered the opportunity to acquire another large slice of Buckenham Woods. Although this beautiful woodland is not within our boundary, it does border it and many, many Lingwood residents regularly visit the area. We have committed to make a financial contribution to a Trust which is being set up to purchase and manage the Wood and one of our councillors, Ian White, will be our representative as a Trustee.

I'd like to thank my fantastic group of councillors, I feel we have bonded well as a team and with Sonya's expert guidance, we have delivered many improvements around the village including renewing play equipment, planting trees and recently a wildflower area on the Millennium Green. We have overseen the installation of an antenna for Anglian Water which reads the smart meters of residents ensuring they receive accurate bills and enables leaks to be detected. Our next project is to install electric car charging points, here in the village hall car park. Funded again by grants obtained, all our work has been completed within budget enabling us to agree a zero percent increase in our precept requirement avoiding an increased liability for council tax payers.

Finally, three of our team will be leaving us this year, we very much appreciate the contributions made by Paul Jones and Sophia Walker and I'd like to extend special thanks to Brenda Jones after her 9 years of service including her recent stint as Vice Chair. We hope we can recruit some new councillors to help us continue to maintain and enhance our wonderful parish of Lingwood and Burlingham.

