

## **STRETTON PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

### **21 MAY 2015 – 9 JUNE 2016**

**Introduction.** The past year has been somewhat turbulent for your Parish Council, with a major planning application and several significant personality changes to contend with. However, much has been achieved and many lessons learnt, but there remain many more to learn as well, some of which you have already heard about at the beginning of the meeting....We are therefore delighted that Nick Begy is our new Ward Member and that Sally Skyrme has become our latest Parish Clerk. We welcome them warmly, and sincerely wish for a long and mutually beneficial relationship with them both.

**Planning.** The major issue as regards planning applications was, of course, the planned 9 turbine wind farm at Woolfox which, after a vigorous dialogue between the for and against lobbies, was rejected by the Development Control Committee at Rutland County Council on 10 December. The firm involved (RES), still have a short time to appeal but nothing has been heard from them thus far..... Other issues requiring our deliberations have been the felling of trees; new agricultural buildings and changes to the infrastructure at HMP Stocken, but none even approaching the impact the wind farm had the potential to create.

**Community & Social.** Your Council has been keen to gain information about services available for the benefit of the village and to this end has invited, in turn, speakers from Rutland Community Agents, The Community Heartbeat Trust and the Campaign to Protect Rural England to address our meetings. Literature covering the role of Age UK has also been received and distributed. As a postscript to the Community Agents' talk, Jean Denyer, our village Agent, whilst visiting an ex-Land Army Girl, now in her nineties, discovered that the lady had a long unfulfilled desire to visit a working farm with her favourite animals, cattle and, specifically, calves. Such a visit was indeed arranged through the good offices of Paddy and Audrey Bothwell at Stocken Hall Farm, and the lady was over the moon at having had the opportunity to breathe it all in again after all this time.... On the social side, the Council has been delighted to support and encourage the World Nurdling Championships (won again in 2015 by Paul and Sam Cassapi); Village litter picking, ably organised by John Leefe, and the Queen's Birthday Bonfire Beacon, through the good offices of Andrew Hayns, Penny Isaacs and Liz Foster.

**Care & Maintenance.** Life is, however, not all about celebrations and your Council has been keen to maintain the village's amenities by engaging a contractor to keep St Nicholas' Churchyard looking neat; repairing unserviceable street lighting and cleaning and refurbishing the bus shelters on Manor Road and Stocken Hall Road. However, our battle against sewage leakage near the junction of Clipsham Road and Manor Road continues, as do our efforts to protect the grass verges in the same location.

**Absent Friends.** During the year, we sadly had to say goodbye to three individuals who had been strong supporters of village life, Sir John Sutton, whose Memorial Service was held the day after our last Annual Parish Meeting, Tony Harris and Roger Begy.....

**Conclusion.** Despite the turbulence of three parish clerks in a year and the loss of Roger's sound advice and guidance, we have soldiered on, helped in no small part by Cliff Bacon, whose experience in administering the Clipsham Parish Meeting has been invaluable in assisting first Penny Briant and, now, Sally Skyrme, into the vagaries of Parish Clerkship. However, you, the good people of Stretton are vitally important and we value your ideas and contributions on how to do things better. Not just in terms of destructive whingeing when things go wrong but in having bright ideas for social activities and/or making constructive suggestions on new ways of working together as a community, to make life even better in the wonderful Rutland village that we are so lucky to have inherited.