

Chairman's Report for the year to 31st March 2013

The start for the period of this report was dominated by the large interest in the residential development to be erected of the old Civil Service sports ground. What everyone thought would be a minimum of a three year construction period has been completed in just over a year. This has caused more traffic in the area, especially Brentwood where most of the deliveries were made, in the shorter term. This caused extra problems with week-end working and early morning starts for the workmen on site trying to complete schedules after a very wet spring season. We were very pleased that a few of the new residents there attended last year's AGM and are getting involved with the village life.

Further aggravation came as the Council delayed decisions on what surrounding trees and shrubs should be kept and which should be removed. With the original plan to keep as much as possible with the guidance of the Arboreal Officer from City Hall, it was quite a shock to some to hear that most of the trees were to be felled. This is to be done in four stages over 18 years to allow establishment of new plants before the next section is removed. I am pleased to say that the contractors, Moore Tree Care, have been appointed and work should start in November this year.

The Scarecrow competition went well again, with more entries and more votes from the general public. The prizes and presentation evening were sponsored by Waitrose, We would like to publicly thank Waitrose for their involvement in the Village activities and very pleased they make an exception for sponsoring us as all their other charity giving is done through the green token scheme. A similar report can be given for the Notcutts sponsored competition held this year. Many thanks to them and to the Judges who kindly gave up their time and picked the winners.

We continue to support the Marston Marshes upkeep and thank Chris Stebbing for co-ordinating the maintenance team with Matt Davies of the Norwich Fringe Project. Chris is giving a separate report on their work but I would like to mention that the footpath we had laid has stood up very well to when the whole site was flooded twice from the heavy rains in the spring. More walks have been held round the Marshes and more people continue to visit the area. On the Dawn Chorus walk 29 different species of bird were seen on the marshes and another 9 identified from their calls.

Parking is becoming a bigger problem as the population grows and more cars hit the road. Parking around the Eaton Primary School does not seem to create as many problems as previously with the great team work between the school head, the parent teacher committee, the police and the councillors with input from this association. This led to the children going and talking to drivers and discussing whether they were parked in a correct position. The new problem, which is growing, is daytime parking in residential areas whilst using the buses as transport into the City. This is at present being monitored, although, at present, the only answers seem to be either more yellow lines or zonal permit parking areas. The vertical kerb yellow lines have now been repainted in Church Lane outside Waitrose. This indicates no waiting for any reason and hopefully will help keep the traffic moving and easier for pedestrians to cross the street.

Earlier this year the piece of private land at the back of Brentwood and bordering Donkey Lane and Greenways, after several requests, had some maintenance done on it with some trees lopped and undergrowth cleared. Unfortunately, the owners get no income from the area and are reluctant to spend money on its maintenance.

A long length of metal fencing was erected nearly the length of Donkey Lane by Natural England as a protective barrier to the chalk pits where bats are nesting. Talks are in hand as to whose responsibility it is to maintain the land between the fence and the footpath.

For the future, we hope the seat by the War Memorial will be in position for Remembrance Day. Other items may become evident as to what you, the residents, would like your committee to focus upon during the discussion in the second half of this meeting.

Gerald Cooke, 17th October 2013