

SNETTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Review

2014/2015

Office opening hours 10-12 Monday and Thursday

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Chair – Richard Barker; Clerk – Simon Bower

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS – 2014/2015

	2013/14	2014/15
Balance at year start	£89,502	£119,436
Income - precept	£72,140	£74,030
Income - other	£58,792	£28,265
Expenditure - loan	£2,894	£2,773
Expenditure - staff	£47,205	£31,805
Expenditure - other	£50,899	£75,363
Balance at year end	£119,436	£111,790

Expenditure included £5,445 reclaimable VAT; Income included £10,335 VAT reclaimed

The balance at the end of 2014/15 does not include the street lighting (c£30,000) payment which falls into the current financial year.

Significant individual items of expenditure were:

Dog Bin Emptying	£1,100
Insurance	£1,795
VAT – payment of Car Park liability	£17,930
Deposit for new Street Lighting	£3,500
Legal Fees – Footpath issues	£12,975
Street Lighting – Fuel and maintenance	£4,900
Loan Payments – Playground Equipment	£2,773

These accounts were signed off in May by the internal auditor and then by Full Council. They are currently with the external auditors. When the form with their comments is returned to us, it will be posted on the Parish Office Notice Board.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

This has been a very busy year for the Parish Council. We began the year with the prospect of the Public Inquiry into the status of the Beach Footpath. This determined that there was indeed a Public Right of Way, and the route has since continued to be enjoyed by many walkers, safe in the knowledge that their access cannot be challenged.

In July the renovation of the War Memorial to mark the Centenary of the start of World War I was celebrated with a moving re-dedication by the Bishop of Lynn. A fly-past and the attendance of 250 or more people made this a most memorable occasion. The renovation enabled one missing name to be added, and it was fitting that relatives of some of those whose names appeared on the Memorial were present to complete the Village's tribute.

In February the new LED street lighting was installed. This large investment was made for economic and environmental reasons and to bring us in line with the growing movement in the UK towards "Dark Skies". Already the cost saving on electricity and maintenance is over 70%. We are aware that this has highlighted one or two problem areas, on which we are currently working.

You will have seen major work at the Common to make effective use of an important Village asset. The development of the entrance to include a picnic area, improved provision for disabled access and the clearing of the pit are all aimed to make this a pleasant area to visit and spend time. In addition, working with outside agencies, Council has ensured that conservation is at the forefront of all work there, and there are plans to provide more information about the wildlife and geology of this important site. With 50% funding from the County, the footway is being extended from the by-pass, improving access for pedestrians.

Finally, Council's finances are now secure. With the payment of a large sum of outstanding VAT on past Car Park income, there are now no further issues dating back to less happy times. It is hoped that we can now maintain the precept after a period in which increases have been needed to fund such expenditure and begin to develop, rather than simply tread water. To put this in context the cost of the Parish is around 60p per resident per week.

Much of the work around Snettisham has, as ever, been made possible by volunteers with a huge range of skills (from tea-making to DIY, from stone-cutting to gardening and more). Council would like to thank them for their work ensuring the Village is attractive and well-maintained, and also those individuals and local businesses who have generously given materials or discounts.

You will be aware that at the election two long-standing councillors stood down. We thank Adrian Gascoigne and Eric Langford for their contribution to the Village, in particular to Eric as Chairman. We welcome four new councillors – John Bateson, Mel Billington, Stuart Dark and Pat Morton - and wish them well.

CLERK'S NOTES FOR JULY 2015 TORC

As we were putting this review in the Newsletter for the first time in several years, we have been able to put my notes here, freeing up more space for the main magazine. They will return to their usual place next issue!

First, you will see the list of Councillors in the TORC; there are four new names there, bringing the total to twelve, the most for some time. There is one remaining space which we are required to fill by co-option. As you will see from these notes, and the review inside, the role of the Parish Council is both important and varied – if you are interested in becoming a member, please talk to me or to one of the Councillors.

Though not referred to in the review, this has been a busy year for Planning Applications for larger schemes – Common Road, Station Yard, Tapping House, Park Farm, the Solar Farm etc. While one can never please all of the people all of the time, Council considers all of these very carefully before giving its opinion to the Borough, which ultimately decides. We have to balance the limits on what we can legally comment on, and the needs of the Village to develop and grow while protecting its character.

You will be aware of the pressure being put onto the larger Villages such as Snettisham to accept a high proportion of the increase in population and amenities. In order to have greater control over this process, a Neighbourhood Plan is one option. This is locally developed and, if approved by the Village in a referendum, would become the guiding document for another ten years. It does however require a dedicated and well-informed team to be able to give a considerable amount of time and effort to produce it – if interested please contact the Office, as we look to the possibility of starting this process.

Over the course of a typical week I get sent a lot of information. There is limited space on the notice board, so not all of it can be posted. If you would like to receive such information, much more posted on our facebook page: Borough and County press releases, information from the Police, NHS and Social Services etc. If you run a group within the Village I can also post information about events and membership etc.

Currently the following are particularly worthy of drawing to your attention:

- NHS “Choose Me, not A&E” campaign to reduce pressure on Casualty departments;
- A research project into ex-forces mental health provision;
- Provision of help for carers, particularly those involved with dementia
- Electoral registration; ensuring people are properly registered to vote;
- Many events in King’s Lynn for the Festival and the Hansa celebrations;
- Information about bus route changes and the completion of the bus station in Lynn

If you would like more information about any of these please contact the Office.

Have a good summer,
Simon