

Chairman's Report 2019

I am proud and honoured to have been the Chairman of Costessey Town Council for the past year; I have worked alongside 16 fantastic volunteer councillors who have very different views on all types of topics we have to discuss in meetings, which makes us a great working team and I would like to thank them for all their hard work over the last year. Sadly, Duncan Lister and David Gunby did not stand for the 2019 elections, but their input in our meetings was invaluable and will be missed.

I would also like to thank all staff members, Hilary the Town Clerk, who keeps us all in order and works tirelessly to help make Costessey a great community. Nigel our Deputy Clerk, along with his other daily duties, keeps all residents updated by producing the Costessey *Contact*, updating our new Facebook page, Twitter feed and website, which does still needs some work on it. Debbie who has recently been given the role Buildings Officer alongside Assistant Clerk, who is working hard to keep our buildings in great condition so all residents can enjoy using them. Emma and Maggie who continue to keep our accounts in order, alongside taking bookings for our halls on our new updated booking system, which is more streamlined and easier for staff members to use and, last but not least, Barry and Steve who keep our grounds in excellent condition all year round.

More thanks go to our District Councillors Vivienne Bell, John Amis and Andrew Pond who have worked very hard over the last year. Sadly Vivienne Bell did not stand for re-election this year and she has served our community not only as a District Councillor but also a Town Councillor for over 12 years, and was the Chairman of Costessey Town Council for 4 years from 2011 to 2015. I wish to thank her personally for all her hard work and the commitment she has given to Costessey.

I know it is getting very hard to keep community groups running due to funding issues, but these are vital services in our community to prevent isolation, social barriers, and to give support and I would like to thank all these groups on behalf of Costessey Town Council - and the volunteers who give up their time to run these groups in our community centres and other places in Costessey. I would like to also thank all residents who also give up their time to volunteer in other organisations around Norfolk - you all make a great difference in people's lives.

In May 2018 we held our annual Fete and Fayre which was a massive success and many people from around our area attended. I would like to personally thank Stewart Blackburn for arranging the attendance of General, the Lord Dannat, and for organising the parade with veterans from Costessey. I felt very proud that day.

Streetlights: - We are still waiting for South Norfolk to hand over the streetlights we agreed to take on. As soon as we have taken on the responsibility we will be replacing those streetlights that have been capped; it is taking longer than we had anticipated, but we do keep chasing this up so we can instruct our contractor to do the necessary work.

I have had the privilege of handing out certificates on two occasions this year to the local art group who run in the Costessey Centre; you would not think the artwork came from amateurs, it was fantastic and the students should be very proud of what they have achieved.

At the annual Costessey Remembrance Day Parade I was very honoured to lead the Parade with my family and Stewart Blackburn who organises this every year, so thanks must go to him. It was lovely to see so many groups and residents walk to St Edmund's Church and remember people who had fought for us over the years.

Farmland Road: Last month, as most of you are aware, the Farmland Road planning application rejected by South Norfolk Council was appealed by the developer. The appeal was dismissed with the great work of Steve Codman, Terry Laidlaw, Hilary Elias and Tim East, and the support of many residents and the two District Councillors Murray Gray and Alison Thomas. The Planning Inspector agreed that this application was not in the best interests of Costessey; hopefully this will prevent further planning applications being built in our lovely Valley. Farmland Road Action Group raised over £9,000 to fight this appeal and Council Town Council agreed to pay for two specialist witnesses at a cost of £4,820

Costessey Town Council continues to comment on planning applications in our area, but we are only consulted and give our views, South Norfolk Council make the final decision.

We now have 19 Town Councillors, so I would like to welcome new and old councillors and hope we can all work together along with residents for the better of Costessey over the next 4 years.

Sharon Blundell

Chairman – Costessey Town Council