

GREAT CASTERTON PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019

I am required to present a Chairman's Annual Report at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

We have had a busy year and there is no sign that this coming one will be anything different. The Parish Council has a number of ongoing challenges, which we will have to manage for the benefit of this village and its residents.

The Parish Councillors have just been elected to look after the interests of Great Casterton. With the assistance of the County Council we need to ensure that this village remains a good place to live and that the residents can continue to get the services they need. And from time to time we will need to remind the County Council of our own particular requirements.

Let me first look at the main challenges we face.

The B1081 – Old Great North Road is always busy and the amount of traffic going through the village is going up every year. We are lucky to have the three traffic counters to keep us up to date.

However, there are a number of plans, both ongoing and new that will ensure that this trend of increasing traffic will continue upwards unless we can do something about it. And for this we will need the active assistance of the County Council.

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The first is the “Safe Routes for School” which was put in a number of years ago to ensure the safety of school children within the village.

At school opening time there is now a considerable back up of traffic through the village from the cross roads to the Crown chicane.

There is an equally bad problem at the cross roads, and another one at the top of Water Lane because it is not wide enough and contributes to the back up at the crossroads. The traffic engineers have looked at all this and we await their deliberations.

The other challenges concern developments. The Parish Council decided last year to keep out of the St George’s debate because we were too far away and because there are two other potential major developments closer to us.

The first is North Stamford, and Quarry Farm in particular – it being in Rutland. This is very close to the village and unless we are careful we could be swamped by traffic going to the northbound A1 and vice versa. There will also be huge problems accessing the southbound A1.

The other is Woolfox, which is much larger. We have already had a meeting with their Agents and have made our concerns known

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to them. As I said in the Press a few weeks ago we are the “meat in the sandwich” between these two developments.

We have made our concerns known to the County Council and as these schemes progress we will continue to do so. But to date we have had no contact with South Kesteven District Council who is the driver of the North Stamford scheme. That is a concern.

Back to the village I should say that the Parish Council fully supports the development of the Barkers Yard site. But we believe that the building of these new houses, and in due course presumably more of them will have a further negative effect on the top end of Water lane and thus the crossroads.

Over the past four years, the Council has continued to manage its financial affairs without recourse to any increase in the annual precept, which has remained at £5,000 throughout. Nevertheless, we have, in addition to the annual routine expenditure, been able to fund two new streetlights and installed a defibrillator in the same four year period. At the end of the year we still have adequate funds in reserve to meet any unforeseen contingencies.

Finally I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council for their work and support over the last year. I particularly mention Michael Markey who has served on the PC since the mid 90's. In turn I would like to welcome Steve Barker to the Parish Council.

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I would also like to thank our two County Councillors, David Wilby and Chris Parsons for their support and advice. It has been much appreciated.

Lastly, the person, who does all the work, Derek Patience. Thank you so much. You have a great knowledge of the ins and outs of the Parish Council and how it should work.

Thank you and lets get to work.

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