

The New Dedham Parish Council Takes Shape

Following the recent local elections on the 6th May nine councillors were elected to serve on Dedham Parish Council and at the first public meeting on the 24th May the chair and deputy were chosen by fellow councillors.

The new council now consists of the following members: *Sheila Beeton, Ann Fletcher, Terry Haines, Paul Harrison, Emily James, Steve Mole, Gill Neville - deputy Chairman, Jonathan Smith (Chairman, Sandra Williams, Jayne Cole (clerk)*

Since our first meeting much thought has been put into the structure and activities of working groups which councillors will sit on outside the monthly public meetings, to effectively deal with the multitude of issues facing the village.

Clearly times have changed in many ways over recent years and there has been a need to refocus efforts on matters which are high on everyone's agenda, as well as dealing with the normal everyday activities of a parish council.

The working groups are now as follows :

Group 1 - Finance, Standards & Procedures

Jayne Cole (clerk), Paul Harrison (Group chair), Terry Haines, Steve Mole, Jonathan Smith

This group's role is to manage the finances and ensure appropriate standards and procedures.

Activities to include: Finance and banking, Income generation, Expenditure, Legal matters, Procurement, Contracts, Parish grants, Budgets and accounts, Valuations and payments, Terms and conditions, Standing orders and financial regulations, Sports Club Leases, Insurances, Health and safety, Data

protection, Emergency Plan

Group 2 - Infrastructure & Asset Maintenance

Sheila Beeton, Anne Fletcher, Emily James, Steve Mole (Group chair), Sandra Williams

This group's role is to maintain and improve the hard and soft landscaping which is direct the responsibility of the parish council and to monitor and report on infrastructure maintenance issues managed by other bodies.

Activities to include: Management of general and term maintenance contracts relating to footpaths, playing fields, verges, flower tubs, play area, bus shelters, leaf clearing, drift paving, tree planting, hedge cutting. Maintain Drift paving and lighting, Liaise with EA regarding flooding, Develop and maintain flooding action plan and monitor Black Brook, Liaise with Essex Highways and Water authority regarding pot holes and drains, Liaise with CBC neighbourhood team regarding toilets, litter and rubbish removal, Maintain play equipment, Village signage, Employ local trades as necessary

Group 3 - Planning & Traffic

Terry Haines, Paul Harrison, Steve Mole, Gill Neville (Group chair), Jonathan Smith

The main role of this group is to review planning applications within the village and to comment to the planning authority as necessary, supporting residents concerns in particular when it is appropriate to do so. With the perceived increase in traffic in recent years due to new residential developments in surrounding areas, emphasis will also be placed on lobbying surrounding planning and highway authorities to take a more regional approach to traffic management to reduce the impact on Dedham.

Activities to include: Liaise with planning and highways authorities on local and regional issues, Review and comment on planning applications on a monthly basis, Maintain and

uphold Village plan, Lobby for improved roads in terms of volume and speed of traffic, Liaise with speed watch and traffic police, Lobby regarding a regional approach to traffic management to stop Dedham being used as the most direct route from local villages to the A12

Group 4 - Community Liaison & Support Services

Sheila Beeton (Group chair), Emily James, Gill Neville, Jonathan Smith, Sandra Williams

This group will interact with the local community to support the health and wellbeing of the residents.

Activities to include: Liaise with sports clubs, Support the vulnerable, Support local volunteers and charities, Liaise with church, Liaise with healthcare bodies, Patient participation groups, Liaise with Community agents Essex, Community events and activities, Local bus services

Group 5 - Business, Tourism and Media.

Anne Fletcher, Terry Haines, Paul Harrison, Gill Neville, Jonathan Smith (Group chair), Sandra Williams

The main role of this group is to work with local authorities and organisations to manage the impact of tourism and rising visitor numbers on the village as best we can given our limited powers, whilst supporting local businesses to benefit from increased trade.

Activities to include: Liaise with Colchester BC North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) and Neighbourhood Team regarding management of the main carparks, Business liaison and support, Uphold Street Trading policy and liaise with CBC regarding licences and illegal trading, Liaise with local tourism and media bodies, Liaise with Neighbourhood watch and police, Liaise with other bodies including land owners, local and regional councils, environmental and river agencies and support groups,

AONB etc, Telecommunications, Communication via media, parish magazine etc, Parish website

Group 6 - Special Projects

Sheila Beeton, Anne Fletcher, Emily James, Jonathan Smith (Group chair), Other members may be co-opted as necessary.

This group will continue to manage the Drift Works Contract and reconsider the landscaping proposals for Royal Square instigated by the previous council.

Any future civil and building schemes will be managed by this group.

Activities to include: Design and construction of capital works, Current Drift project, Potential Royal Square improvements to commemorate Platinum Jubilee

7. Personnel Committee

Members to be agreed as necessary, To consider staff employment matters

This new structure will be posted on the parish council website and residents will be encouraged to contact the working group chairs directly on topics which relate to the activities listed so that the group can action the matter as necessary.

Clearly residents will still have an opportunity to have their say on matters of concern at monthly public meetings in the normal way .

With a lot of new councillors there is undoubtedly endless enthusiasm but needless to say it will take a little while to settle in and become effective so please be patient, we recognise the issues facing the village and will endeavour to improve the situation where we have the power to do so!

Jonathan Smith