

GREAT BEALINGS PARISH COUNCIL

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2025/26

Self-Help Scheme

Our thanks go to Rob Munn for setting up a Self Help group within the village sponsored by SCC under its Highways Community Self Help Scheme. SCC has provided training, signage, equipment and safety clothing to enable local volunteers to carry out approved minor works such as trimming hedges and verges, and cleaning street furniture (notably Lodge Road Bridge) which help to improve the appearance of the Village. The project is overseen by the Parish Council's advisory committee, comprised of 5 parish councillors and Rob.

We are also grateful to Charles Barrington for maintaining the village sign, a task which has now been passed to Peter Prentice.

Phone Box

Thanks to David Munn, for repairing the broken window and to Sally Johnson for clearing it. A suggestion has been made that it could be used for a defibrillator and further consideration will be given to decide whether this might be feasible. Cost and security considerations need to be taken into account.

Planning Matters

12 applications have been received and all were supported by the Parish Council.

6 were permitted by ESC; 1 was withdrawn; 2 were refused by ESC both of which have gone to appeal. One appeal has yet to be determined but the other was refused on the grounds of potential flood risk.

We are still awaiting a decision in relation to the remaining 3 applications

The Parish Council also submitted responses in relation to 2 planning applications outside the village on the grounds that if they go ahead they are likely to impose a significant detriment both to the villages where they will be situated and the wider countryside, without any appreciable benefit to the wider community, as there is no current need for either.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF is being amended to reflect the Government's new target for housebuilding. Great Bealings, as part of the Countryside, is unlikely to see any change of policy re new homes as the focus for housebuilding is on urban and suburban densification, with homes being built as close as possible to suitable infrastructure, notably train stations and bus networks. The policy does not, however, apply to energy, minerals and infrastructure projects. The new

Local Plan for East Suffolk is being prepared with a provisional timescale of 30 months. ESC must approve applications for 100% of new homes to meet the new targets.

Local Government Reorganisation

The decision taken by the Government to create three Unitary Authorities in Suffolk will result in Great Bealings becoming part of South Suffolk, administered from Ipswich, along with Little Bealings but not Culpho of Grundisburgh, which will become part of East Suffolk, administered from Lowestoft. It is not known what the impact will be on Great Bealings and other small villages but it seems likely that larger electoral areas will result in councillors speaking for much wider communities. Any significant policy changes are unlikely to be felt immediately as the new authorities will need time to draw up and implement their own plans. So far as planning is concerned, this will mean continuing to apply the ESC Local Plan pending the creation of a new Plan for the whole of the Unitary Authority.

Flooding (*With thanks to Rob Munn.*)

The majority of work has been completed on behalf of homeowners to increase the flood resilience of their properties. Rob Munn and Paul Ward have been leading the initiative to reduce the flooding risk along the River Lark where it flows through the village, with the aim of taking as many homes as possible out of the flood zone. Designs for nine culverts under Lodge Road, alongside the bridge have been drawn up and approved by SCC Highways and other regulatory authorities. Modelling is nearing completion. Issues regarding finance have yet to be finalised but there is optimism that this project will go ahead.

Emergency Planning

The Parish Council has set up a WhatsApp Broadcast Group to enable urgent messages to be communicated to everyone who has signed up. To date no messages relating to any emergency have been circulated. The intention now is to reconsider whether the emergency planning template approved by ESC, which has not been updated since Storm Babet (when it was not used) has any continuing value. One option being considered is to send occasional communications by WhatsApp, Bealings and Playford News and the FLN updating people on useful contact numbers and providing other relevant information for them to retain for future use, as necessary. I have encountered a slight problem as the google email address linked to the phone is now out of date and I can only access my chairman account via a web page. I am working to resolve the problem.

Roads

Sadly, the rather gloomy report written for the 2025 annual review could, quite simply, be replicated for 2026, as there has been no overall improvement in the condition of local roads. SCC continues to decline the request for white lines to be painted along by the wall of Annesley House even though it has received further damage since the last parish meeting, as a result of being struck by at least one vehicle.

Boot Street Bridge was closed for a time following considerable damage to the upstream wall caused by a car apparently losing control. The bridge is currently open with a 3 tons weight limit. No date has been provided by SCC as to when it is likely to be repaired.

Traffic issues

The suspension of the speedwatch initiative has led to a strong perception that many vehicles are exceeding the 30mph limit in Hall Farm Road. As a result of a suggestion made by Julian Haywood Smith, the Parish Council has put in place a scheme whereby its existing SID will alternate between Lodge Road and Hall Farm Road, where it is currently operating.

Footpaths

The absence of finger posts at either end of two footpaths, each of which crosses a field diagonally have been reported to SCC. Footpath 4 which runs from Hasketon Road at the top of the track to the treatment works diagonally across the field still appears to be used, but number 3, south of Park Farm shows no sign of obvious use. There is an alternative route around the small field, which seems to be well used. The footbridge on footpath 12, to the south of Cherry Tree farm was out of commission for several months awaiting repair.

Water Quality in the River Lark. *(With thanks to Regan Scott and Farran Douse)*

Cllr Regan Scott has been corresponding with Anglian Water (AW) about the occurrence of overspills at GtB sewage works, which may possibly be associated with high river water levels restricting the outflow of the treated water from the plant. Engineers have visited after a survey by AW of resident users sewage and rainwater inputs. We are currently awaiting a response.

The Deben pollution monitoring group now has 10 volunteers covering the Rivers Lark and Fynn. They are now asking all parishes in the area to contribute a modest sum, suggested at £100 per annum to fund the cost of river water pollution testing equipment. (I have asked for more details so that this can be considered by the PC at its next meeting.)

Village Fete

The Village Fete and Dog Show raised nearly £550 for the Village Hall. It was reasonably well attended with more children taking part than in the previous year. Feedback from people with young families immediately after the event was that we should stick with it and try to find some entertainment in addition to the Dog Show. Attempts to encourage charities to host stalls to promote their organisations met with limited success. The RSPCA had a stall and indicated that they would like to return. The event will be held on the 31st August this year. Proceeds are likely to be needed for new safety matting for the children's playground.

Precept

The Parish Council agreed, in January to increase the precept from £8600 to £9,100 which will ensure that we cover the budget and have adequate reserves. This will result in an increase of 8p per week (£4.06 per year) for a Band D property.

Gov.uk Domain

A reminder that our former Gmail addresses are no longer in use and should be deleted. Any emails sent to them will not receive a response.

Parish Meeting 2027

Next year's Parish Meeting will be held in March. This will give more time for the Parish Council AGM, which will continue to be held in May.