



# Thedwastre North Annual Parish Report 2020/2021

## What a year this has been

Traditionally I look back at the previous year and see what has been happening and maybe look forward to the next year.

This time last year the country had been in lockdown for just over a month and we were enjoying some lovely weather. For some there was enforced 'holiday' – while on furlough from their normal employment, or in some cases 'let go'. Others were 'shielding' and not allowed to go out. In this area we were lucky to have lovely countryside for people to walk in.

Suffolk County Council introduced the Tribe app – so that people in the country could sign up to help others in their area. I signed up but was never contacted. By far the most efficient systems were those introduced at a local level. The Parish Council, the church and other volunteer groups in our villages leapt into action to make sure that the vulnerable were located and looked after. Many groups were set up around the area, some on a formal footing, others less so. In this year we have seen many new friendships formed and a greater community involvement for the community good.

A group of people that are often over-looked are those who have kept working throughout – the shop workers, care staff, delivery drivers, emergency crews and admin staff. Many admin workers have worked from home and have tried to maintain a professional manner while dogs are barking and children are playing in the background. There are many funny stories about things going on in the background of online meetings.

With less traffic on the roads that did not stop the work of Suffolk Highways – it did mean that they had to work in a different way. This will have been seen when two or three vehicles turned up to do a repair. Social distancing meant that the vans could not be full of people – often there was only one person per vehicle. This had led to some adverse comments but most people understood why.

The majority of people in the Thedwastre North division are under the care of the Woolpit Health Centre. They have received national recognition for the 'drive through' Covid vaccination clinics and deservedly so. The doctors acknowledge that it could not have been done without the support of local businesses and the army of 40 or so volunteers.

There are so many people and organisations to thank for getting us through this incredible year and I cannot name them all.

## Locality Budget

With the Suffolk County Council Elections taking place on 6<sup>th</sup> May the locality budgets expenditure has been removed from the SCC website.

In 2020/2021, Suffolk's county councillors have been given a locality budget of £600,000, divided between them; each councillor has £8,000 to spend.

Councillors are able to make recommendations about funding from this budget for local projects in their division, which should benefit the community.

This year the grants that have been made in Thedwastre North include

Finningham Parish Council – speed Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) £2,000

Great Ashfield Parish Council – resurface village hall car park £1,000

Westhorpe Parish Council – computer and equipment £750

Westhorpe Parish Council – VAS £2,000

Badwell Ash Parish Council – VAS £2,000

Stowlangtoft Church – electrical and drainage works £1,000

Great Ashfield Parish Council – Quiet Lanes posts £960

SCC Licensing / Highways – dropped kerb in Woolpit £300

There is also a commitment from 2019 for £5,000 towards heating/cooling and sound/lighting improvements for Norton Village Hall.

There will be a new budget allocation after the May 2021 election.

### **Many thanks for the work of Parish Council members and the Parish Clerks**

To be a parish councillor can be a thankless task. So I wish to record my grateful thanks to all those people who have devoted many hours to reading through agenda's, minutes, planning documents, other letters and correspondence in order to make a difference to their communities.

My thanks also go to the parish clerks who have kept me informed of issues arising when I have not been able to be at the meetings in person, or on Zoom.

### **And finally from me....**

It has been my great honour and privilege to serve the people of Elmswell and Woolpit since 2002 as the councillor for Thedwastre South and then all the other villages as the councillor for Thedwastre North since 2005. There have been many challenges and accomplishments but my regret is that I never got the Northern by-pass for Elmswell.

**Jane Storey**

**Thedwastre North, May 2021**