

RAYNE PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report by the Clerk

April 2002 - March 2003

The Annual Report by the Clerk represents a record of the work and the achievements of the Parish Council during the past twelve months. The information selected to be included in this report is done so selectively and it is hoped that no important information is omitted. The Clerk wishes to cause no offence to any member.

The current council has now completed the final year of the four-year term. Both Parish and District Elections will take place on 1st May 2003. At the time of writing, the Parish will be un-contested and an election will be held for the District Councillor, with two nominations for one seat.

Obituary

This year saw the loss of two well liked and respected Councillors, and it was with great sadness that the Council reported the deaths of Anthony Moore and Roy Smith. Both had served the Parish for a number of years with their expertise and caring natures.

ATTENDANCE RECORD

Attendance at Parish Council meetings for 2002/2003 is as follows.

<u>Cllr Name</u>	<u>Possible Attendance</u>	<u>Actual Attendance</u>
Joanne Fish	10	8
Harold Giles	14	14
Roger Jiggins	14	12
Kate Kukiewicz	14	13
Graham Lees	14	9
Ian MacNee	14	13
Tony Meadows	14	13
Martyn Phillips	6	5
Pat Roberts	14	12
Diane Shepherd	14	9
John Wootton	14	9

Apart from attendance at the monthly meetings, members of this council attend a great many meetings listening to issues relevant to the community in which we live. Where and when appropriate they voice local feeling. Attendance at site meetings is a regular occurrence, trying to obtain the best possible outcome for the village of Rayne.

A Public Forum is held at the start of each and every Parish Council meeting. This is the time when members of the community are invited to speak to or question members. Many issues are raised during this forum and the council believes that it is an important part of the meeting. Trying to resolve the issues raised is not always easy as Parish Councils have very little statutory power; achievement is usually made through communications with the responsible authority.

INTRODUCTION

The Annual Assembly and Parish Meeting is being held on the same evening as the monthly parish meeting as has become the custom over the past years.

The new model Code of Conduct was adopted in May. All Councillors were obliged to undertake to abide by the Code and to register their relevant interests with the monitoring officer of the District Council. Whilst a number of councillors resigned from office over this Code, I am happy to report all Rayne Councillors signed up to the Code and registered their interests as required by law.

COUNCILLORS MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY 2002-2003

Harold Giles	Footpath Committee, Planning Committee (Chair), Road Inspection Steward.
Roger Jiggins	Vice Chair, BALC, Flitch Way Liaison Committee, Tree Warden, Control of work in the Grounds.
Kate Kukiewicz	Chair, EALC, Village Society, Planning Committee, School Governor, Parish Passenger Representative.
Ian MacNee	Traffic Management, EALC, Road Inspection Steward, Health Authority Representative, Skate Ramp Representative.
Pat Roberts	Road Inspection Steward, Cluster Group Co-ordinator, RFO Auditor, EALC, BALC.
Roy Smith	Village Hall Representative, Planning Committee, Road Inspection Steward.
John Wootton	Footpath Representative.

EALC – Essex Association of Local Councils.

BALC – Braintree Association of Local Councils.

NON COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Mrs Sue Pertwee

Mrs Pertwee continues to undertake the responsibility for the flowerbeds on the Village Green, a task she has done for many years. This council wishes to record their thanks for her continued support.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

County Councillor Walters has become a welcome, regular attendee at the Parish Council meetings. His willingness to get involved and take forward issues from the Parish are very much appreciated.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Councillor Meadows has now completed his final year of his four-year term as District Councillor. He continues to raise and support issues that are important to the parishioners of Rayne. He also produces a written report at each meeting on his work for this community.

CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Mrs Kukiewicz has now completed another year as Chair and, with numerous other commitments, works extremely hard for the parish council to ensure that the voice of Rayne is heard.

VICE - CHAIRMAN

Cllr Jiggins continued to support Cllr Mrs Kukiewicz in his role as Vice-Chairman, offering support and advice where needed.

Cllr Jiggins also continues to organise the work within the village, ensuring the two contracted groundsmen carry out the requirements of this council in an efficient, time-effective manner.

Cllr Jiggins celebrates 30 years as a member of the parish council in June 2003, and his dedication and vast knowledge are greatly appreciated by councillors past and present.

CLUSTER GROUPS

These groups were set up by the District Council to enable small groups of localised parishes to meet together to discuss a variety of issues relating to the area.

Rayne is clustered with Great Notley Parish Council and two meetings took place during the year with the main areas of concern being the bridleway link between the two parishes, flooding and the possible redevelopment of the Foundry site. Representatives from Braintree District Council remain Mr Tattersley and Mr Crofts.

Cllr Mrs Roberts is the Cluster Group Co-ordinator for this council.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Cllr Giles, as Chair of the Planning Committee visits the sites of each planning application received and reports back to the full council. Separate planning meetings take place if there is a major, or controversial, application received - recommendations from these meetings are put before full council for approval.

This year the Parish Council have continued to invite applicants to attend the council meeting to discuss their application. This is proving more popular with a number of applicants welcoming the opportunity to talk to the Parish Council regarding their plans.

The District Council, within the framework of the law determines planning applications. Parish Councils only have power to make recommendations or to comment on any application, the District Council is not obliged to respond to them.

HEALTH MATTERS

Cllr MacNee continues to attend meetings and report back to this council. He is a member of the working party that can make recommendations to the Health Authority. This work is very time consuming in the amount of reading that Cllr MacNee completes and the number of meetings he attends. The thanks of the Parish Council are noted for the valuable commitment Cllr MacNee has made.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Members continue to monitor the condition of the roads in Rayne. This is predominately completed by the road stewards with quarterly reports sent to ECC. Cllr MacNee continues to report street light failures, although members have been given details of reporting faults so that they can be rectified more quickly.

Following the construction of the footpath along New Road, ECC have also resurfaced the road, following investigation into continued flooding in this area. ECC will also be checking the drainage system and have given an assurance to rectify any future flooding.

Flooding has again been on many agendas throughout the year. Following a successful site meetings and action by Balfour Beatty and ECC, the Parish Council are now in a position to continue to monitor the problem areas to ensure that, with the next heavy rain, the parish will remain flood free. The Parish Council would also wish to record their thanks to the residents involved who have undertaken maintenance work on their properties and in supporting the work being done by the Authorities.

LOCAL POLICING IN RAYNE

The village continues to be "policed" via the Rural Police Unit based at Shalford, with PC Nadine Harrington as the Community Police Officer for the year.

The parish council continues to work together with the police to resolve issues of vandalism.

VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall Committee successfully runs the management of the hall. This committee is made up of local people with an interest in the community, who all give their time voluntarily to achieve the smooth running of the hall.

This year has seen the Parish Council look at the future maintenance costs of the hall and how this affects the annual Precept. Consequently this council have committed to holding regular Liaison Meetings, at least two per year and have agreed to fund a professional Maintenance Inspection, which will enable a detailed programme of works to be undertaken on a priority basis.

WORK WITHIN THE GROUNDS

Cllr Jiggins continues to be responsible for the control of the work in the grounds. Both the Groundsman, Mr Ray Peake, and the Assistant Groundsman, Mr Allen Taylor, work very hard in all areas of the village.

The council continue to undertake grass cutting and street cleaning within the village, for which a set grant is received from BDC and ECC.

The council wishes to record their thanks for the hard work and dedication shown by both Ray and Allen, and for the contribution made by Mr David McGregor who continues to cut the village green.

SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Cllr Mrs Kukiewicz continued in her role as Parent School Governor. Her vast experience has been welcomed by the primary school as she has taken an active role in the school's affairs.

YOUTH REVIEW

The established groups of Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Cubs and Beavers are appreciated by the community for the successful groups that they run. Other groups within the village, in particular the efforts of Rayne Cricket Club and Rayne Youth Football for involving the youth, are very much in evidence and the Parish Council's appreciation is noted for their work in our community. The Parish Council awarded a £600 grant to the Cricket Club for the refurbishment of the Pavilion.

The first phase of the Ramp was completed in January with the installation of the first quarter pipe. It was evident this was a success when, within just a few short hours, children on skates and boards could be seen using the equipment. The next phase will see further equipment added to the site.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

With very little notice, the Audit Commission introduced a new "lighter-touch" audit regime for all local councils in April 2002. The Commission's assertion that every council should have an independent internal auditor has caused concern, particularly for smaller councils. Rayne appointed Mr Glyn Hockley as Internal Auditor and the Clerk wishes to record her thanks for the work undertaken by him.

The Clerk is the confirmed Responsible Financial Officer with Cllr Roberts undertaking the new role of RFO Auditor, following the above Audit changes.

TO CONCLUDE

Parish Councils have little or no statutory powers. Achievements can only be made through negotiations and direct requests made to the relevant authorities. The work often takes years to come to fruition and on occasions little success is shown for the commitment made. The members of Rayne Parish Council all work hard to serve their community. They attend a substantial amount of meetings, representing the interests of the residents of Rayne.

The issue of the Communications Folder has been resolved with members now receiving a list of correspondence with their agenda, with the information available to view at the meetings or in the Community Information Point. The onus of keeping up with the correspondence received now rests with Councillors, however since the introduction of this system less than half view the information regularly.

The Community Information Point is now open on a Monday and Thursday morning. In the first 6 months the CIP was very poorly attended. However a very successful A120 Public Exhibition was held in March, with representatives from Balfour Beatty on hand to talk to residents. A Pensions Service Advice Surgery was also held and this proved popular enough to become a regular monthly service to residents.

2003/2004 starts with an Election. Although, as mentioned earlier, the Parish is uncontested, we will see a change of personnel with Cllr Graham Lees not standing for re-election and Mrs Jessica Dawson taking his seat. Best wishes and thanks are offered to Graham and a warm welcome is extended to Jessica.

This year will also see the start of the re-development of the Foundry Site - a process that starts with a Public Exhibition on 12-14th May. Representatives from Fairview New Homes and Barton Willmore will be on hand to speak to residents regarding the Development Brief and outline planning application. This is a very important, and possibly contentious issue for the whole village as it is a development in the heart of the parish.

My personal thanks to all members for continuing to support me in my role as Clerk to the Council.

Mel Whiteside
Clerk
April 2003