



# MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Louise Hyde Vice Chairman: Stephen Mouser



## MERTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 10 MAY 2022

### PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As the law that allowed Parish Councils to hold remote meetings ended on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 we returned to face to face meetings after this time adhering to Covid guidelines in place at the time. We welcomed 12 residents in total over the last year, from the last Annual Parish Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 with the meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 being the last to be held virtually on Zoom.

This time last year Peter Roat was co-opted as a Parish Councillor to bring us back up to full strength. We were delighted to welcome Peter to the team.

A blue plaque has been erected on the village shelter. Where to place the plaque was discussed and agreed at the Parish Council in March 2022. The plaques were commissioned for every parish and town council across Norfolk to recognise the work of communities during the pandemic. These special commemorative plaques were commissioned by the Lord Lieutenant and funded by generous sponsorship from several Norfolk based charities and organisations.

Merton PC were approached by Thompson PC with regards to a project called Reclaim the Rain and given the problems that both Thompson and Merton have had with flooding in recent years we felt it would be beneficial to express a joint interest in the project. Reclaim the Rain is a project run by Norfolk and Suffolk Councils set up to investigate ways to capture and harness water before it becomes a problem.

Norfolk Parish Training & Support (Norfolk PTS) offers training and support to parishes in Norfolk and although Merton PC does not subscribe to the organisation we are able to attend the networking sessions they host. These include networking for Clerks, Councillors and Chairs and whilst they are held online are free to subscribers and non-subscribers. I have attended a number of these sessions during the past year.

Norfolk Association of Local Councils (Norfolk ALC) work closely with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) providing specialist information, advice and training to parish and town councils. They also provide monthly networking sessions for Clerks and Councillors, both online and face to face. Norfolk ALC also offer various webinars, some I attended recently include NCC Highways delivered by Area Manager South and a Highway Engineer South. They are responsible for in excess of 200 parishes and 3,000 km of highway with each Highway Engineer looking after 60 – 70 parishes. Other recent webinars include Norfolk Police & Crime Commissioner – Giles Orpen-Smellie sharing his plan for 2022-2024; Queen's Platinum Jubilee webinar and Greenways to Green Spaces delivered by NCC.

The Waylander, a magazine of local news for the Wayland Group of Parishes, covering Breckles, Caston, Great Hockham, Griston, Merton, Stow Bedon and Thompson. The magazine contains adverts and lots of information delivered to every household in the village giving us another means of communication with parishioners, in addition to the website and noticeboard.

Norfolk County Council – Thompson, Pockthorpe Lane; Merton, Sparrow Hill public inquiry is taking place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 with the intended effect of the application is to register a byway open to all traffic running from Pockthorpe Lane to Sparrow Hill.

On behalf of the Parish Councillors I would like to thank Claire Prentice. Claire joined Merton PC as Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer just over a year ago and is very much an asset to our council. She ensures the Council conducts its business properly, providing independent, objective and professional advice and support.

We would also like to thank Councillor Sarah Suggitt, Councillor Philip Cowen and Councillor Fabian Eagle our local District and County Councillors. We very much appreciate the time, help and support they give the Parish Council and of course for all the work they carry out in their areas.

Thompson and Merton Platinum Jubilee Celebration - Thompson have very kindly invited the residents of Merton to join them in celebrating the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June on the Millennium Green and in the Community Hall. The celebrations include a Children's Street Party in the afternoon (3pm) with games, activities and picnic boxes. Parents are welcome to bring their own picnics to join in the fun. Children are welcome to wear fancy dress. There will be a barbecue and bar in the evening with the jubilee concert being screened. The winner of the official Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pudding competition will be announced on 12<sup>th</sup> May. Thompson held their own pudding competition for Thompson/Merton residents on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May with the winning pudding being an Eton Mess Cheesecake. This will be made, together with the winning pudding from the official competition, for our joint event on the 4<sup>th</sup> June. To help with the final planning the jubilee committee are looking for numbers of children attending the afternoon event and adults attending the evening event. Any help with setting up, clearing up and with the catering would be most welcome.