

Welcome to the 74th Annual Parish Meeting of Abbess Beauchamp & Berners Roding Parish Council.

Your Parish Council have met officially five times during the past twelve months with the final meeting of the current year in two weeks. In addition all of the local planning applications for Abbess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding have been reviewed and comments made to Epping Forest District Council where appropriate.

Our responsibility for Horsecroft was handed back to Epping Forest District Council who I understand are going to revamp the play area and obviously have more manpower and machinery available to maintain the area.

We are constantly pressing Essex County Council with regard to flooding, the state of pot holes and missing road signs and shall continue to do so. Interestingly Daniel Defoe who visited the Rodings in 1772 and wrote as follows: we crossed the country to the great forest, called Epping Forest, reaching almost to London. The country on that side of Essex is called the Roodings, I suppose, because there are no less than ten towns almost together, called by the name of Roding, and is famous for good land, good malt, and dirty roads; the latter indeed in the winter are scarce passable for horse or man. This proves things are slowly improving!

The Parish Council are responsible for the cutting of the grass verges in the Parish which we took over from Essex County Council. Our thanks to John Kenny, who has provided this service for the past year. We believe this results in a better service to the Parish and ensures all the verges are kept tidy. Our thanks also to Keith Daly of Essex Farms who keeps Berners in a very neat and tidy order.

We have recently received a grant from the Highways Devolution Project which enables us to direct funds to an appropriate project. The Parish Council are therefore in the process of renovating wooden finger posts and replacing the plastic signs with wooden signs more appropriate for the rural Parish we live in. As the weather improves you should notice these being gradually refurbished throughout the Parish.

We would like to encourage community events and hope to run our own fun wine quiz, more details later in the year. Any profits from this going towards our village signpost fund. If any member of the Parish has any ideas for community events the Parish Council are happy to discuss any assistance we maybe able to offer.

We registered with the British Heart Foundation in 2018 who supply CPR training kits to Community groups for the training of CPR to volunteers. We are now in possession of 10 inflatable manikins and a training DVDs and will advise later in this meeting how you can access this training facility for the parishioners in CPR. We are very grateful to Ann Worley a local Paramedic who lives in Berners who has kindly offered to provide a demonstration later this evening.

As can be seen from the display boards at the rear of the hall another excellent entry for the Parish Photographic Competition. A big thank you to all who entered, hopefully has inspired others to consider entering next year. The judge commented on the high standard of entries this year.

Hopefully you will all stay behind after the meeting tonight for a chat and to admire the photos and enjoy homemade refreshments made by my daughter Jenny.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their contribution and support over the past twelve months. A very big thank you must also go to our Parish Clerk, Karen Weare, we certainly could not operate without her input. Karen who has been with us for four years now which on our recent record makes her entitled to a long service award and gold watch.

Finally I must thank Maggie McEwen who provides excellent support and advice at our Parish Council Meetings as both our County and District Councillor representing our Parish.

That concludes my Chairman's report for 2020.

Parish Clerk's Report 2020

The Parish Council is funded by the precept which is the charge raised on your Council Tax bill. Epping Forest cannot refuse the request and there is no limit on the increase from year to year. For the current year the precept was £5,500 which is equivalent to £24.19 per annum on a band D property. The Parish Council has not increased the precept for next year.

You may be interested to know that the average band D charge across England was £64.05 with the smallest amount precepted being £18 and the largest over £3 million.

The precept together with a verge cutting grant from Essex County Council and bank reserves fund the income needed. There is a small amount of bank interest and for the current year the Parish Council has been awarded £1,000 under an Essex County Council Highways Pilot Scheme which the Parish Council is using to replace and repair damaged fingerposts.

The outgoings are my salary, office expenses, insurance, verge cutting and grants, and every four years the cost of the Parish Council election whether or not it is contested.

I prepare the annual return after the end of March, and although the Parish Council is exempt from audit, the return is reviewed by an independent auditor. Anyone can then look at the records and ask questions so the residents are the final auditors.

If you have an issue that you think the Parish Council might be able to help with, please contact me.

2020

Abbess Roding Sewage Farm has been renovated for the last year. It was needing some help, but I do not think it was planned for just now, but an emergency arose early in 2019. Someone dumped a lot of diesel down the drain and this destroyed the bacteria in the sewage farm. The filtration medium had to be removed urgently and after each bed had been thoroughly washed some second hand material with the live bacteria replaced. It was decided that with this major overhaul it was time to improve the facilities throughout. This appears to be completed now.

We had a problem last year with a water leak in School Lane, Abbess. This took many months to sort out, partly because the leak was on private land owned by the council. In January another leak started just at Manor Cottage. I phoned and reported it and wondered if this would take most of 2020 to sort out. The same day I reported it someone was there stopping the leak, but the leak started again in February. The water is flowing down the road now, probably because the leak is on private land. It did show that the first drain below the leak was blocked, but the next one is free. The blocked drain is a junction with the water flowing from the ditch across the road. This seems to regularly block. I have been phoning Thames many times lately to report the blocked drain and the sewage leaks into my property. They do not have a solution as I am the last house before the sewage farm and when that is overloaded in heavy rain it backs up through the first manhole, lifting the cover well out of the ground. This happens to be on my property. After a long chat with Thames Water I find that you must not call drains in the roadside drains, because you keep getting referred to Thames Water. They are roadside gullies and the highways department is responsible for these. Maybe the Parish Council could ask Highways to sort it out. Also I now find that when reporting a leak with the water supply you have to differentiate between a leak and a burst pipe. Burst pipes are attended to as an emergency, often on the same day. Leaks are left till a convenient time, which may be months.

The sinking road near Berwick House is still sinking and a large pot hole is there. It needs more than just filling in which will never work. Some kerb stones placed at the edge of the road where the sinking is occurring would stop it. 2 large pot holes were in School Lane, Abbess just on the bend before you reach the main road. The largest about 5 inches deep was filled in recently. The other nearer the main road and only 2 to 3 inches deep is still there.

The 20mph signs in School Lane Abbess were reported last year and both are still there after 17 months. Not many people observe the 30 mph sign, I think the 20 mph sign just means that people become immune to useless signs and just ignore them all. Have you noticed the multitude of Road Closed Signs about, which I now ignore and very rarely do I have to return? I pity people who needed to get to properties on Matching Airfield last year, every approach road had Road Closed and diversion given which all led to the next Road Closed sign and you could circumnavigate the whole area without finding any way in! At least 6 lorry drivers I found stuck and asked them where they needed to go and I just said go down this road and you will get there.

Anchor Lane has signs at each end saying not suitable for HGV's. Unfortunately the sign at the Matching end is in the ditch and I have seen HGV's travelling along the road from Matching. Please can the Council report this to have it re-erected.

I have recently heard that we have nesting Turtle Doves in Abbess and two sites in White Roding. These are very rare now and the RSPB have confirmed their presence and recorded it. Another rare bird I saw in Abbess in 2012 and that was a Corncrake. Walking along the boundary between Robert Osborn's fields and Henry Rowe's fields I heard a Corncrake calling. It is not normally recorded in Essex, but there it was walking along beside me the other side of the ditch. Not worried at all and as I watched, it moved away deeper into the field and disappeared. It is rare to hear, but incredibly rare to see one up close.

An application was put in to build 4 houses in School Lane, Abbess. This was on agricultural land and was thus refused. An application to change use from agricultural land to garden land was put in and was opposed, but I never heard the result of this. Does the Parish Council have the latest news?

The Womble last year was well supported and successful, thanks to the volunteers. There were some 200 empty canisters of Nitrous Oxide, (laughing gas) found. All claimed they were for frothing cream. I do not think there were frothing cream parties about, but sniffing parties yes. Wombling every year brings up something different. This year as usual it is time to womble about the last weekend in March, 28th. and 29th. Anyone interested, please contact me and you can be found a road near you. I have no one to do Berwick Lane and would welcome a volunteer please.

Mike Brill 01279 876374

The Parish Churches of Abbess and Beauchamp Roding 04/03/20

In my report last year I reported that we had been unsuccessful in our search for a new Priest in Charge for the Rodings, Easters and Gt Canfield. This year I am happy to report that the Revd Robert Stone was licensed and installed by the Bishop of Colchester as our Priest in Charge on Thursday 23rd January 2020 at St Mary's High Easter. This has brought all the Rodings villages except Berners, both Easters and Gt Canfield together in one group under one vicar for the first time. Robert is fulltime and is living with his family in the Rectory at Leaden Roding. Despite being without a vicar for most of the last year both Churches continued as normal with two Sunday morning services each in an average month taken by visiting clergy from the local area. This support is continuing as with ten Churches Robert cannot take all the services on a typical Sunday morning.

Both Churches held several fundraising events during the year. Beauchamp held a Country Market here in May; in August at the church we had Cream Teas and stalls and finally there was a Christmas Market here in November. At Abbess Roding the Friends of St Edmunds had a busy year raising funds for the Church building. They held a very successful Quiz Night here in April, then Cream Teas at Newhouse in June and then the extremely popular Jazz Picnic at the end of June in the Churchyard. Thanks to all our tremendous volunteers and supporters who work so hard to make these events a success in both churches. Thanks also to the Room in the Rodings for the use of the hall. The first two fundraising events of 2020 are fast approaching the Friends of St Edmunds Quiz Night is here on Friday 3rd April (please see Jilly Osborn for tickets) and the Beauchamp Country Market is here on 2nd May.

Regarding the Church buildings themselves, Abbess is in a good condition with no major repairs being done during the year, we did however have a new noticeboard made as the previous one was starting to show its age and we also considered renewing the heating system before deciding against it due to some of the practicalities. I mentioned last year and probably the year before as well that Beauchamp is in need of repairs to the chancel ceiling and in the tower. I am pleased to say that having received a grant of £5000.00 from the Friends of Essex Churches we have at last been able to start work. Scaffolding was installed inside the Church in the chancel and at the base of the tower in December and work began in January. The repairs to the chancel ceiling are now complete save for repainting but exploration of the tower has revealed that a new roof is required to the tower. We have been advised by our architect of a suitable roofing material and once we have permission from the Diocese to go ahead we will be replacing the old roof. Last year I mentioned that we had installed a new sign at the end of the drive about a week later somebody drove their car into it leaving it looking rather sorry for itself but I'm pleased to say that last month a new replacement sign was installed courtesy of the insurance. Abbess Church is open seven days a week so anyone is welcome to visit during the day as they wish. Beauchamp has been closed outside of service time since the scaffolding went up and will remain so for the time being but once the works are complete we will return to daily opening once more. Both Churches have well maintained Churchyards and we thank the Parish Council for their annual grant to both Churches which helps us with that.

Seasons

3rd Keith Daly Berners reservoir

2nd Peter Cossey Tyre tracks

1st Jenny Stratton Rainbow

Architecture

3rd Bruce Stratton Oak frame

2nd Kay Cossey Seat under arbour

1st Claire Markey Church porch

Flora & fauna

3rd Peter Cossey Leveret

2nd Bruce Stratton Yellow salsify

1st Kay Cossey Snowdrops

Overall winner Kay Cossey Seat under arbour