

Dennington Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman's Report May 2025



Dennington looking north

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for you, and the organisations that you represent, to feedback to your Councillors as to how your Parish Council is performing and supporting your interests.

The reports that we have received from the various village organisations demonstrate the wide range of opportunities and activities on offer to the residents of Dennington, and as a Council we are particularly interested to hear how we can best support the objectives of your village organisations in the year to come.

VOLUNTEERS:

The real hard work of running the village is performed by a dedicated band of Trustees of the Consolidated Charities, Village Hall, Sports & Social Club, the Parochial Church Council and individual villagers. Since the last Annual Parish Meeting, we have had a turnover of volunteers, but remain quite healthy with respect to support from our residents. In particular, the Council would like to thank the following people for their support in maintaining our village:-

- Kevin Burgess, David Catchpole, Nic Fell, Jayne Harvey, Ian Mann, Micheal Monahan, Vashti Mouncer, Peter Nobbs, Ed Preston, & Robert Wardley for cutting the grass around the village, the allotments & the Villag Green.
- Nic Fell for looking after the speed indicator sign on the Saxtead & Badingham Roads.
- Dennington Horticultural Society for planting the flowers along the edge of the Village Green.
- Steward & Sons who donate the fuel for the ride-on mower. Fuel is incredibly expensive and having this provided free of charge makes a considerable saving for the council.

- Framlingham Hall Farm for providing the labour and equipment at no cost to the council, cutting the hedges around the village green and allotments, and clearing ditches.
- Dennington Hall Farms for cutting the grass verge at the Frostley Bridge junction. This helps to reduce accidents at this junction.
- All those who came out for the village litter pick.

I would like to thank our representatives from all the organisations within the village who have submitted reports to the Council.

Dennington is very lucky to have so many groups and individuals who serve their village. The Parish Council is represented on most of these groups, by nominating one or more Trustees. The only disadvantage of having so many bodies willing to serve, is co-ordination of activities and being able to access public funds for expensive improvements & enhancements – This is an area where the Parish Council and it's nominated representatives should assist more.

PARISH COUNCILLORS & ELECTIONS:

The last election was in May 2023. As the number of nominations matched the number of councillor vacancies (nine), the election on 4th of May 2023 was uncontested.

Councillors are elected for 4 years, are independent of political parties and give their time voluntarily to serve the community, and to look after village affairs. I wish to thank all councillors, past & present for their trust & support which they have placed in me over the past year; and thank those who have taken on additional appointments on behalf of the Council.

Your Councillors are below:-

- Mr. John Calver
- Mrs. Doris Dearing
- Mr. Nick Hopewell-Smith
- Mr. Matt Lunn
- Ms. Vashti Mouncer
- Mr. Kevin Shelver
- Mr. Sam Steward
- Mr. Robert Wardley

In between elections, Council vacancies may occur; the council may co-opt another councillor, or a further election may be called if 11 or more electors petition for an election. If you might be interested in becoming a Councillor, have a look at the following website: <https://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor>
At the present time, we are able to co-opt another councillor, so if you would like to join the Parish Council please contact the Clerk or myself for further details.

The Council is supported by our Clerk, Lydia Kindred, who is extremely efficient in every aspect of what she does in connection with Council's business. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated Clerk who has taken such a keen interest in our village.

No County Council elections were held in May this year, as Suffolk County Council applied to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office to postpone the election until a new unitary authority for Norfolk & Suffolk is formed in 2026/2027. The Parish Council wrote an objection to the postponement of the election, as did East Suffolk Council, as the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) is still only in the consultation stage.

East Suffolk Council & the other district & borough councils within Suffolk have launched a consultation to gauge local residents opinions' before submitting their response to the government's LGR consultation. You can share your views via: <https://midsuffolk.govocal.com/en-GB/projects/have-your-say-suffolk>

PRECEPT:

In January, the Parish Council requested a £12,250 precept for 2025/2026 which East Suffolk Council confirmed would be a 9.6% increase on last year's precept. As the precept is such a small proportion of your Council Tax bill, this above inflation increase affects your Council Tax bill by a few pence per week.

PLANNING:

Planning Applications are considered in the Parish Council Planning Meetings. Our comments can be viewed on the East Suffolk Council website.

Between 1st April 2024 & 31st May 2025, 13 applications were received. The applications mostly concerned extensions and alterations to domestic dwellings, construction & change of use of agricultural buildings, and construction of smart meter infrastructure. Twelve applications were either supported or no comment made. An objection was raised against one application, and this concurred with the view of the local planning authority, who rejected the application.

This year, East Suffolk Council have introduced a system that better takes into account the views of elected representatives. Applicants are encouraged to seek the views of Parish & District Councillors in the pre-application process. The aim is to resolve any issues early in the design phase and enable to applicant to demonstrate local support for their application.

Dennington receives funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy that is charged to developers ion the East Suffolk district. In 2024 we were able to use just over £3000 from our CIL funds to support refurbishment of the playground by the Sports & Social Club.

ENABLING COMMUNITIES:

In the last year we have received funding from the district council's Enabling Communities Budget to purchase new bike racks for the village hall and lay on cardio-pulmonary resuscitation & defibrillation training for approximately 20 villagers. This training has already been used to save life, when an the village square defibrillator was used in early May.

HIGHWAYS:

Highways maintenance and repair of dilapidated highway signage is an on-going issue with the County Council. We continue to hold our County Councillor to account, and we are aware that he shares our frustrations.

We have held site meetings with Suffolk Highways, to highlight crumbling road surfaces, worn road markings, broken signs and blocked drains. As the A1120, B1116 and B1119 are major routes through the county, we would expect these routes to be maintained to decent standard. In recent weeks, Suffolk Highways have been investigating the drains across the A1120 at Wash Farm and have been replacing signage along in and around the village.

Other signs such as the village gateways are in desperate need of maintenance. Councillors are attending a training course that will enable us to supervise highway maintenance activities performed by council employees, contractors & volunteers. The downside of the Parish Council undertaking highways repairs is that there is no mechanism to recoup costs from Suffolk Highways – So the tax-payer gets charged twice for one service.

WEB SITE:

Our website, has now changed to <http://dennington-pc.gov.uk> in line with advice from the Ministry of Local Government, Communities & Housing.

It contains all of the relevant Parish Council information including minutes, agendas, reports, as well as useful village organisation contacts. There are various links within the site, where you can connect to the School, Village Hall and church web sites, along with an events diary.

Is now being administered by Matt Bonner. If you have any newsworthy items, forthcoming events or matters of local interest which can be placed on our web site please contact Matt.

VILLAGE NEWSLETTER:

The high-quality newsletter is produced by the Jo Denton. Four times a year the newsletter helps organisations in the village to broadcast their news and events to the residents.

SUMMARY:

It has been a great pleasure and a privilege to have served you over the last year and I thank you all for the support that you have offered.

Matt Lunn
19th May 2025