

Croxton Parish Council Chairman's Report: 2024 – 2025

It has been another interesting and fun-packed year for Croxton. As I reflect on the year-end, I think of the small parishes such as this across the county who are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and the few which have ceased to have a parish council, having their responsibilities consumed by the local authority, with little to no opportunity for parish influence on the decision making processes which affect their community.

Being a Parish Councillor is a huge personal commitment to the village as well as the legal obligations once in office. It is often difficult both personally and professionally, and I am immensely proud to work with such a good, supportive, and dedicated team.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Andy Poore for serving so well as Vice Chair. In addition, I would also like to thank Dave Vick, Carrie Goucher and Emma Grist for their fantastic contributions to the village. A special thanks is also given to Romy Dawson, our Parish Clerk, who keeps us all on-track.

The Parish Council is one of the centre-points for the community and we are delighted to continue to find and coordinate the resources needed to help keep the village functioning, managing most of the street lighting and grass cutting. In addition, we represent the village at national occasions, such as laying the civil wreath at the annual remembrance service at All Saints. The Parish Council also represents the interests of the parish in wider matters, such as liaising with the Local Authority (Breckland Council), participating in the Greater Thetford Partnership (GTP), and reviewing and commenting on local planning applications.

We try, wherever possible, to minimize the financial impact of the parish precept on the Council Tax bill. This year, unfortunately, we felt the unexpected impact of the last of the boundary changes. As a consequence, the basic 5% increase on the previous precept, which the Parish Council applied for to keep pace with rising costs, was divided into fewer households, thereby increasing individual contributions by over 50%.

One of the revenue streams over recent years (and will continue whilst it remains viable), is the money generated by recycling, in particular the glass, from the recycling collection bins just inside the Village Hall carpark. The more these are used, the more revenue is generated. We also pass on the Village Hall rent charge onto the Village Hall Committee who pay for this from revenue generated by hall bookings.

The Parish Council continues to maintain the children's play equipment as identified during the annual inspections, with this year's inspection already booked and scheduled to take place soon. The play equipment is still in relatively good condition; however, we are engaged in finding funding for suitable replacement items, with additional financial support already pledged by other village organizations, particularly the Village Hall Committee. If anybody has any suggestions as to what they would like to see, please let any of the CPC know, or even attend one of the meetings.

We also continue to maintain the village defibrillator, sited on exterior front wall of the Village Hall by the (newly refurbished), Village Hall sign, and funding the membership to the supporting VETs telephone system. The VETS scheme is incredibly important to the village and the defibrillator has been deployed a number of times since we re-started the scheme, though fortunately it has yet to be used. The scheme continues to be managed efficiently and diligently by David Foreman, and we offer our thanks to him and the VETS team for being there for us.

Work continues on renewing our Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP) with Brettenham and Kilverstone. Whilst exploring the option to have Croxton specific neighbourhood plan. This is important as it sets the guidelines for development in the area.

The village speed awareness campaign, including bin stickers and the electronic speed sign have received a significant boost with the reintroduction of the Speed Watch scheme. Whilst the Parish Council support this, including providing resources where needed, it is run independently by a group of volunteers, led by Rob Head. We offer our thanks to Rob and the team for helping to make The Street that bit safer from speeding vehicles. Whilst some people, inside and outside of the village, may not appreciate the work they are doing, I am sure that view would change should they be impacted by the type of tragedy the team are trying to avoid.

As a reminder, the parish council meetings are open for all to attend and the meeting minutes and agenda are available, both on our website and on display in the large noticeboard by the phone box. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the PC to also thank Croxton Village Social Club for continuing to host the meetings, thereby allowing the Village Hall to host more regular community events, particularly the new choir. The meeting dates for 2025 - 2026 are set annually and are typically held at 7PM on the third Thursday of every other month, with the next meeting in July.

Looking forward to the year ahead, I am confident and happy that Parish Council matters are in hand and look forward to working with Andy, Dave, Carrie, Emma, and Romy, as we continue in our term of office.

Thank you.

Paul Dauny
Chair, Croxton Parish Council
15th May 2025