

**The Annual Report, presented to the Annual Parish Meeting on 27th April 2011 is given below:**

## **SPROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Annual Report of the Council for the Year Ending 31st March 2011**

**Council Details** : The Clerk to the Council and the Responsible Financial Officer of the Parish Council is Mrs Sue Frankis.

Councillors for the year were; Simon Curl (chairman), Rosalind Lavington (vice chairman), David Cheeseman, Colin Davis, Vic Durrant, Michael Everett, Michael Fenwick (resigned), John Kitson, Simon Lavington, Jean Mardon (co-opted), Brian Askew (co-opted), Roger Finbow (co-opted and resigned), Penton Lewis (deceased) and Richard Searle (deceased).

The Council meets in the Barley Room, and has met on 13 occasions during the year. Attendances have been; 2 Cllrs attended all 13 meetings, 1 Cllr attended 12 meetings, 4 Cllrs attended 11 meetings, 1 Cllr attended 9, 1 Cllr attended 8, 1 Cllr attended 6, 1 Cllr attended 4 and 1 Cllr attended 1 meeting. Meetings are open to the public, and the Council is pleased to have in regular attendance at its meetings Sproughton's 2 District and 1 County Councillor together with PC Austin and the Police Community Support Officer.

The council has one committee, the Planning Committee, which considers planning applications received from Planning Authorities, and to consider other planning issues affecting the parish. The Council also has a number of Panels that deal with specific matters. These are Transport, Tithe Barn, Finance, Housing and the 'Green' Sproughton Panel.

### **Council Finance : details given in separate Statement of Accounts Report**

**Allotments** : The Council administers the arrangements for the letting and management of the allotment gardens adjacent to the Wild man public house. The Council has a lease with the Felix Thornley Cobbold Agricultural Trust for this purpose. The annual rent charged to the Council by the trust is £419.46. The Council currently charges allotment holders £1.80 per rod per year. There are currently no vacant allotment plots and there is a waiting list of 3 people; 1 parishioner and 2 non-parishioners.

**Burial Ground** : The Council authorises burials and the erection of memorials. It is responsible for the management of the burial ground in Church Lane and continues to maintain it to a high standard; grass and hedge cut, paths swept and cleared. The Council has plans to extend the footpaths.

**Churchyard :** The churchyard of the parish church, All Saints, is 'closed'. Babergh District Council is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard. Maintenance of the sensitive wildlife areas continues to be carried out in accordance with an agreed management plan. The plan seeks to conserve and enhance the valuable natural habitat of the churchyard and at the same time keeping it tidy. This work is done in partnership with Babergh District Council and involves local volunteer labour to cut and rake the conservation areas. Simon Lavington remains instrumental in this work. Babergh have taken action to repair footways and walling.

**Village Caretaking :** Mike Herbert is employed by the Council to carry out Burial Ground and village green maintenance and grass cutting, with caretaking and 'odd jobs' in the Tithe Barn. Mike continues to deliver a high standard of work and the Council is most grateful to him.

**Tithe Barn (inc. Barley Room and Kitchen) :** The Barn remains an important village resource, having significant historic and community importance and is an important source of revenue. Use has increased. The Council is responsible for managing its use, maintenance and improvement, with the Tithe Barn Panel advising the Council on matters of maintenance, use and improvement. The Council employs Jane Draper as Tithe Barn warden to oversee day to day use and security of the barn, to assist with hiring arrangements and management and is the Designated Premises Supervisor who administers the requirements of the Premises Licence. The Council has a dedicated website for the barn - [www.sproughtontithebarn.org.uk](http://www.sproughtontithebarn.org.uk). The Council leases the West Store area of the Tithe Barn complex to the Sproughton Community Shop Community Interest Company.

**Planning Applications :** The Council is consulted in the main by Babergh District Council (the Local Planning Authority) on planning applications in the parish. The Council has been consulted on 42 planning applications during the year (up by 27% on previous year). To date, 23 have been approved, 3 refused, 1 withdrawn and 15 are still to be determined by Babergh.

The future use of the Beet Sugar Factory (BSF) site together with impacts of the proposed Energy from Waste facility, SnOasis leisure and residential proposals at Gt Blakenham continued to occupy Council time and many column inches in the Community News, now In Touch magazine.

**Housing Panel :** Convened by Councillor Richard Searle and latterly by Councillor David Cheeseman to consider the need and provision of affordable and local housing. The Panel with the Parish Council continues to press for the affordable housing element of the proposed housing development on land adjacent to the school to be brought forward in order to meet current needs.

**Transport Panel :** Councillor Simon Lavington was chairman of the Panel with chairmanship transferring to Councillor Vic Durrant during the second half of the year. The Panel reports to the Council, and is made up of a mix of councillors and non-councillors. The Panel has been proactive in lobbying against diversion of traffic through the village from the A14 and A12 trunk roads, working with Suffolk County Council (SCC) over the traffic mitigation measures proposed for Sproughton as a result of the SnOasis developments, assessment of parish street lighting stock, continued monitoring and reporting of HGV weight restriction violations in the village and working with SCC on a countywide pilot scheme called Lorry Watch. A milestone was reached following 25 years of lobbying from the

Council and community over noise from the A14; the concrete surface was treated – noise reduction achievement is still to be assessed.

**Green Sproughton Panel :** Jean Mardon chairs this Panel. The Panel promotes environmental awareness and ways of reducing carbon and energy use. There have been a number of green events including plant swap and litter picks and Carbon use surveys.

**Community Shop :** The Parish Council leases the converted west store of the Tithe Barn to the Sproughton Community Shop Company. The company reports that the first year of trading has exceeded planned turnover and that customer feedback and experiences are very positive. The council has been supportive of this valuable community service and resource.

**Community Lunches :** The popular weekly Wednesday lunches continued in the Barley Room. The venture is supported by the Parish Council and is run by the Community Shop Company. Regularly there are 15 diners with numbers increasing to 20 or more. The lunches offer a valuable and enjoyable weekly social occasion for the community.

**Summary :** A year marked by the sudden sad losses of Cllrs. Penton Lewis and Richard Searle. The community shop sprung into life and continued to flourish and grow providing an invaluable community resource. The village won the 2010 Babergh Village of the Year Award and £500 prize money. Transport housing and Tithe Barn issues remained high on the Council's agenda. The Council saw a number of changes in its membership, with 4 leaving and 3 joining by co-option. Change continues. Of the current 10 Councillors, 6 will not stand for re-election in the forthcoming May elections. The 4 remaining Councillors will be joined by 4 new Councillors who will be elected uncontested at the election. Very grateful thanks go to Sue Frankis, Clerk to the Council and to all Councillors for their work and loyalty to the community over the last year. Particular thanks to our 'retiring' Councillors for their energy and enthusiasm on many fronts; Tithe Barn, Transport, Village Plan, Play Area, and particularly to David Cheeseman for an astonishing 32 years of continuous service to the community.