



We are very fortunate.... we don't just live perched 43m above sea level with views of the sea, bordered by farm fields and long established woodland, criss-crossed by "Quiet Lanes" and well-trodden footpaths, basking in the fresh sea air from the North Norfolk coast, in a designated area of outstanding beauty... we live in a village community which genuinely cares and has an abundance of goodwill. For proof you need look no further than our very own Knapton Angels, which we setup earlier this year in response to the Covid19 pandemic. Every day, the Angels are providing a fantastic service and much needed help and support for those residents in our community who are elderly and vulnerable during the present health crisis. Their efforts have been rightly applauded as an example of how best a community can respond to an emergency situation in the EDP and they have received written recognition from Lady Philippa Dannatt MBE, Her Majesties Lord-lieutenant of Norfolk, which can be viewed on the village website at:

<https://knaptonvillage.org/knaptonangels/>

At the Parish Council's October meeting, Tracy Smith was co-opted onto the council and has made an immediate impact, hitting the ground running by working with MADRA to organise Christmas dinners for all those spending Christmas Day alone this year, supported, as always, by the rest of the council.

In May last year our amazing team of parish councillors embarked on an ambitious programme of dealing with all the issues that have been talked about and debated for years. They are totally focused on getting them done and you only have to look at what they have achieved in the last eighteen months to see that each member of the team is 100% dedicated to making our village a better and safer place to live for every single one of us.

- the children's playground has been expanded and fully refurbished
- two additional benches have been installed in the village
- the Knapton Green village sign has been replaced
- the SAM2 Speed Awareness camera is now live and working
- the extension to the 30mph speed limit on Hall Lane is at the final planning stage
- the re-design of the Hall Lane/Knapton Road junction is at the design consultation stage
- we have agreed a new seven-year lease for the land with MADRA
- we setup the fantastic Knapton Angels, who have responded to around 500 calls for help so far
- we have invested in PPE for the Angels who are giving their time freely to help others less fortunate
- we replaced the old council website with a village website that includes and reflects the whole parish
- we have increased the number of dog bins and related contracts in Knapton and Knapton Green
- we have installed signage and CCTV security on the allotments
- we have overseen the Wilds Way development and supported the School Close residents on issues that arose
- we have negotiated improvements to School Close which should be completed in the next few months
- we have negotiated safe access to the bus stop and ensured it was made safer for people to use
- we secured ownership of the new lockable village car park
- we have acquired land on the Wilds Way site for the village
- we are working with MADRA to re-locate the Millennium Beacon

All of this costs money and the total project spend so far is over £30,000. We have negotiated funds from various sources, including a contribution from Victory Housing, various grants and the Fête Committee which generously contributed several thousand pounds. Whilst this is all manageable, it has highlighted the fact that the council simply doesn't have enough income to continue to deal with the issues that still need to be addressed, like the footpaths to Knapton Green & Mundesley, the issues caused by HGV traffic using The Street as a rat run to the gas terminal and various others.

Which brings me nicely on to the question of the Parish Council's income.

I should point out at this stage that whilst the Parish Clerk receives a small remuneration, as required by law, every member of the council gives their time freely and receives no reward, financial or otherwise.

The Precept

The Parish Council does not receive funds direct from central government as the other tiers of government do. Instead, we have to calculate how much we will need in order to;

- fund our planned capital spend on projects, allowing consideration for unforeseen costs
- fund our service contracts, for example the emptying of bins, hedge and grass cutting, footpath clearance, playground maintenance, Wilds Way maintenance etc
- have funds set aside for unforeseen circumstances
- and elections

Once we have arrived at a figure, we then have to make a mandatory demand - *The Precept* - on the District Council for those funds and they convert it to an amount based on Band D properties. To calculate the amount for the other bands, simply multiply the amount shown for band D as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Band A} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 6 \div 9 & \text{Band B} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 7 \div 9 & \text{Band C} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 8 \div 9 \\ \text{Band E} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 11 \div 9 & \text{Band F} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 13 \div 9 & \text{Band G} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 15 \div 9 \\ \text{Band H} &= \text{Band D Charge} \times 18 \div 9 \end{aligned}$$

The Precept is then raised through the council tax from all the dwellings within the parish area and collected by NNDC on our behalf as part of your Council Tax bill. It is then paid to the Parish Council in two six-monthly instalments.

For comparison purposes and to keep figures in proportion, it's interesting to note the current Precepts of villages around us, although these are expected to increase next year as well.

Knapton £4,250	Bacton £16,500	Gimingham £8,300	Mundesley £53,000
North Walsham £417,036	Northrepps £16,787	Paston £6,464	Southrepps £16,500
Swafeld £5,500	Trimingham £9,526	Trunch £20,157	

At the Parish Council's November meeting, councillors agreed by a majority of 6:1 to increase the annual Precept by £2,000, which I've been advised is the first increase in Knapton's Precept for around thirteen years. The cost of this increase to each Knapton dwelling is an additional £12.48 per year for a Band D property or around 24p per week.

Many villagers have expressed their concern for their safety on our roads both as drivers and pedestrians and whilst any increase in cost is unwelcome in these uncertain times, those that I have spoken to told me that the road safety and pedestrian benefits alone that the council is now achieving outweighs the additional few pennies a week.

I do hope that everyone shares this view but please feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss it.

peter.neatherway@knaptonvillage.org

Currently the team is;

- working closely with MADRA to ensure that everyone who is spending Christmas alone this year enjoys a freshly cooked dinner on Christmas Day together with a small gift
- trying to identify the children within our community so that we can provide them with a Christmas Advent calendar
- arranging for two Christmas Trees to be put up, one by the village sign and one on Knapton Green (*permission from Highways already secured*)
- talking with Anglian Water to clarify the details of the Sewerage project, including work to be done and anticipated timescale and dates
- Negotiating with Victory Housing about the installation of a safety gate on the path at the exit of the estate next to the pond
- establishing the need for further rubbish bins around the parish

And finally,

Identifying those who we can help over Christmas and who to advise about the Sewerage project is proving to be a challenge and it has been suggested that we create a village register of contact details for every household in the parish. I see the sense of this as it would;

- help the Angels to more clearly identify those who may be in need of assistance during these horrible times

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- make it possible for the Village Hall Committee to publicise village clubs and events throughout the year
- benefit the delivery of the Knapton News
- allow the Parish Council to reach out to every household in the parish to provide important and relevant information or to seek opinion on thoughts and plans

I'd like to know whether or not you think this is a good idea and something that you could support. Of course, all contact details would be provided voluntarily and we would ensure that all GDPR privacy and data security requirements are fully met and implemented before launching it.

You can speak to any councillor, contact me on my email above or use our on-line Contact Form on the website to share your thoughts at: <https://knaptonvillage.org/contact-form/> choosing [Parish Register](#) from the drop-down subject list.

As always, the council will respect the opinion of the majority and publish the results (anonymously) in January. It's all part of the council's attempt to bring the village closer together, that way we can all be aware of what's going on and have our say in the matters that directly affect us. You now have a parish council that you can be proud of and the more feedback you share with us the more effective it will be.

I hope that everyone stays safe and enjoys a Happy Christmas.

Peter Neatherway
Knapton Parish Council | Chair