

Swallow Parish Council
Chairman, Cllr. G L T Baxter's Report for the year ended 31st March 2006

Welcome to you all and thank you for attending the Annual Meeting of the Parishes of Swallow and Cuxwold.

It has been a busy year locally but major issues in the wider community have been developing apace and they all have an impact on our villages: -

1. **The Police reorganisation.** After minimal consultation, the government is minded to create large regional forces. We will be swallowed up into a Midlands based force, clearly remote and not in the interests of our rural communities.
2. **Strategic Health reorganisation.** Again regionalisation, which will not benefit our area.
3. **Local government reorganisation.** The same applies, but the debate is still raging as to whether the District/Council arrangements should be swept aside for unitary authorities with the promise of more power to town and parish councils, however this does not appear to be backed up with the necessary finance to support change.

Your Council has been active in making submissions to the appropriate bodies on all these issues as they continue to develop day by day, we can however be certain that the cost of all this change will filter through to all of us.

Turning to Parish affairs: -

1. **Precept.** The precept for 2005/2006 was raised to £4,500, but as you will see from the accounts to be presented, the margin of reserves continues to be tight, despite careful management. Accordingly your Council felt the necessity to increase the 2006/2007 precept by £500 to £5,000. All unit costs are rising and will be absorbed by the increase.
2. **Planning.**
 - a) The long planned and much discussed development of the meadow opposite the church is now under way.
 - b) The Preservation Orders are in place on trees bordering paths, roads and tracks on Sutton Estates land.
 - c) Vodaphone applied to erect a mast on the southern edge of Bowlands Covert. Council made strong objections to West Lindsey District Council Planning Services and the application was refused. Vodaphone subsequently applied to erect a mast alongside the A46 adjacent to the western entrance to Irby village and just outside the AONB boundary. This is in North East Lincolnshire but that Council also rejected the application.
 - d) Application for a house adjacent to Mary & Keith Dixon's was rejected by West Lindsey District Council on appeal.
3. **Village maintenance.**
 - a) Various minor road works and drain clearances have been carried out at the request of your Council.
 - b) J W Cousins & Sons (Farmers) Ltd have continued to regularly mow the grassed areas in the village of Swallow.
 - c) The Village Hall had repairs carried out to the gutters, which were later cleaned and painted.
 - d) Mole damage in the Playing Field and on the green adjacent to the Village Hall continues and is dealt with when necessary.

- e) The CSU came to Swallow but not as often as in previous years. They maintained the Churchyard and carried out some general work in the Playing Field. Let's hope to welcome them again this year.
4. **Bus service (Lincolnshire County Council) Lincoln, Grimsby, Cleethorpes 3 and return.** A footpath up Limber Hill leading to the bus bays and bus shelters on the A46 has now been constructed. When white lining is completed the buses will be able to pick up and put down for Swallow passengers. The supplementary service into the Village will continue for a short period and of course the Call Connect Service is available for daily use on a booking system both by telephone and on line.
5. **Pay Phone, Cuxwold.** BT bowed to pressure from your Council, West Lindsey District Council and Edward Leigh MP to retain the kiosk in Cuxwold, for the time being. At the request of the Council, it has now been painted and looks very much better. Council's request for Listed Building Status is still under consideration at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
6. **Undergrounding of electricity power lines.** The Lincolnshire Wolds Conservation Service has accepted Council's submission for the Undergrounding of power lines in the parish and the Service has indicated that we have put forward a very strong case. A consultation process has begun and we hope we will have been successful. This is an important project for the future.
7. **Local Strategic Partnerships.** Your Council has been represented throughout the year at the Wolds Partnership. This body is assuming increasing importance and influence on major issues in all communities in the Lincolnshire Wolds area. Council will continue to be involved in this Organisation.
8. **Training.** Your councillors and Clerk have attended a number of training sessions. Local government is becoming increasingly more complicated and your representatives benefit from and value these sessions which aim to keep them up to date with developments.
9. **Donations.** Royal British Legion wreath £15.00 and West Lindsey CAB £50.00.
10. **Councillors' Allowances.** Your Council members have opted not to apply for members' allowances, as is the case in many of the smaller councils. This does save an even greater burden on the precept. They will however continue to claim expenses for travel etc. in connection with their Council duties.
11. **Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr. Wallace.** Thanks for his continuing hard work and help for the Village, including Green + Bottles in the fridge.
12. **Quality Council Status.** Your Council is delighted to report that, following its submission, it has been successful in being awarded Quality Council status. This is excellent news and places us in a position of strength when local government changes come into being.
13. **The Chairman** presented the Clerk with flowers and wine in appreciation of all the hours of work necessary for us to achieve Quality Council Status.
14. **Web site.** www.swallowpc.co.uk.

Finally I wish to thank all the Councillors and the Clerk for their commitment and hard work during the year.

G L T Baxter
Chairman of Swallow Parish Council
9th May 2006