

Old Catton Parish Council - Chairman's report of 2008/9

This was another satisfying year for the Council when we were again able to continue to improve the facilities at the Church Street Recreation Ground. Thanks to money from the builder of the Lavare Court development it was possible to provide some more play equipment and to replace the old sand safety surfacing with more modern surfacing. Three pieces of 'adult fitness equipment' have been extremely popular with all age groups.

The school next to the Recreation Ground had been concerned about the safety of its children in the Recreation Ground driveway and a bollarded pedestrian way and separate gate were created, along with new vehicle access gates, a kerbed edge to the driveway and some double yellow lines. The entrance now looks much smarter and is safer for the children. Unfortunately some of the drivers dropping children off at school are still parking inappropriately endangering their own children as well as others!

The Council has continued to provide facilities for football, cricket, tennis, bowls and netball as well as informal recreation. The Multi Use Games Area is always popular with all ages.

Some of the money from builders will help to refurbish the toilets at the Recreation Ground and to create an accessible loo as well.

I am disappointed that the additional land at Lavare Park has not been acquired to date. There have been delays due to the Trustees of the land owners changing, and parts of the legal agreement being re-negotiated. I hope that we shall still complete the deal this year and seed the new land in the autumn.

The debate about the Local Government Review and Unitary status has dragged on and we shall not know until the summer what will happen in Norfolk. The Council has consistently expressed the view that the present system is preferable and should not be changed. As it was necessary to choose one of the options offered for consultation it was agreed that the whole county option would be preferred as it was felt that it would be more cost effective, although there were doubts about its size and the role that parish councils would be able to play in the proposed Community Partnership Boards.

Again the Council's requirement for Council Tax has only increased by 2% as the Council was mindful of the need not to increase the burden on residents in these difficult times. A summary of the income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2009 is set out below:-

Type of expense	Details	Expenditure £	Income £
Running costs	Church Street	55,882	8,848

	Recreation Ground		
	Lavare Park	7,510	Inc above
	Cemetery and Churchyard	12,508	4,639
	Plant and machinery	3,763	1,250
	Street Lighting	11,044	
	Miscellaneous, including Bus shelters, notice boards, Members' expenses	4,613	236
Capital expense	Playground and equipment	62,648	48,853
	Reserved for future maintenance of play equipment		34,655
Administration		43,117	
Bank interest			3,484
Loan repayments		9,644	
Delegated functions	Cutting grass verges Checking road sweeping	2,589	5,235
Grants		2,500	
Precept from Broadland DC			151,000
TOTAL		215,818	258,200

My thanks to the Council members and staff for all their work during the year. I look forward to our remaining two years of office with enthusiasm!

David Thompson, Chairman, Old Catton Parish Council