**Kirby Village Preservation Society**

**Chairman’s Report for the year 2019/20**

I am pleased to present my report on the past year’s activities of The Kirby-Le-Soken Village Preservation Society. We would normally expect to be holding an AGM during May at which this report would be presented along with a financial update and the election of committee members to serve for the coming year. This year, however, is not normal. As I write this report, we are locked down, combating the corona virus pandemic and have just been advised by the Government that the current restrictions will last for at least a further 3 weeks, taking us well into May. Even when restrictions begin to be lifted it is inconceivable that public meetings will be allowed for some time yet. So, like many other organisations, KVPS will not be holding an AGM this year with the hope that things will be back to normal in a years’ time. Reports will be posted on the website and the current committee will continue to serve for another year.

I have noted that over recent years, my report has been very similar to that of the previous year and this is because our main role has become one of continually monitoring planning applications and proposals that will affect our Village and the surrounding areas and fighting those which threaten to spoil the Village and increase the relentless advance of urbanisation.

In 2013, Tendring District Council began consultations regarding the new Local Plan and they asked local villages to produce village plans which would encompass the feelings and aspirations of local residents as regards what they valued most about their villages and how they would like to see them in future. A lot of work was put into producing our village plan, anticipating that the views of residents would be taken into consideration by TDC as they considered the framework for future housing and general development in the wider Tendring area. Unfortunately, despite all the work that had gone into producing it, we were subsequently advised that in order to carry any real weight we would have to upgrade to a more detailed version which is known as a neighbourhood plan. This village is unable to do that as explained in greater detail on the village (klsvillage.co.uk) website but we did however, gain a lot of feedback from local residents and we have been able to draw on this information when responding to the continual planning applications which will affect our village directly.

The committee is mindful of the fact that there is a general housing shortage and that houses must be built somewhere. We do not oppose every application, but we do voice concerns where we see proposals that would constitute over development or where there are inadequate resources and infrastructure to support them or the green gaps between communities are threatened. Unfortunately, our concerns are seldom heeded although one notable scheme to build a significant number of houses south east of the village was turned down at appeal, last year, because it was felt that had it been allowed to continue it would have diminished the green gap between the existing communities and I think this was a significant decision.

We do not only concern ourselves with new building applications, the ongoing issues with potholes and overgrown roadside hedges keep coming to the fore. We are grateful to Councillor Mark Platt for his assistance with our frequent lobbying for improvements in this regard.

Last year I reported that we intended supporting the St Michaels Church restoration with a donation of £1000.00. I can confirm that the repairs to the east end of the church were completed last year, however, we have been warned to expect a similar appeal to raise further funds towards carrying out repairs to the bell tower. KVPS also supports Hamford Water Management Committee, which is a local action group focussed on maintaining the integrity of The Backwaters and will continue to do so, funds permitting

Following last year’s AGM it was decided that we would try holding future committee meetings at The Ship unfortunately this venue proved impractical due to the inherent noisy environment and we have reverted to using the facilities at Walton and Frinton Yacht Club. In many ways this is a shame as we had hoped that by moving to a more public venue for meetings it would encourage others to become more involved. The Ship continues to be very supportive and Tony has agreed to sponsor the village website once things get back to normal.

Whilst the lockdown and current restrictions continue, the committee will confer and maintain contact via email, and it is planned that committee meetings will be held in a virtual manner using Zoom or a similar conferencing app. until we are able to resume physical meetings.

One problem with not being able to hold a physical AGM this year is that we will be unable to hold a collection as usual at the conclusion of the meeting. This normally produces circa £100 which goes towards the modest running costs of Kirby Village Preservation Society. In the absence of a collection, any donations towards our costs would be most appreciated.

Finally, as always, I must extend my gratitude to my colleagues on the Committee for all their time and input over the past year. We still need new people to get involved with the society, particularly, someone with the IT skills and enthusiasm to assist Victoria Burgoyne with maintaining the website.

David Wood (Chair KVPS)

April 2020