Notes for AGM North Tuddenham Parish Council

Highways - A47 Dualling Project & Norwich Western Link

The dualling of the A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton is approaching its final stages before it goes forward to government for final approval. The objective of a fast link into Norwich as part of the major upgrade of Cambridge to the East Coast routes will be achieved by removing two heavily congested roundabouts and replacing them with two graded interchange junctions at Wood Lane and Blind Lane (renamed Norwich Interchange).

In choosing the route the objectives of our PC were to campaign for maintaining as much of the old A47 for local traffic as possible. The extension of the old main Road into Hockering outside Poppy Wood is an example of this. The T-junction to Lyng will hopefully dissuade HGVS joining the A47 at North Tuddenham rather than take the planned NWL at Wood Lane. Taking into account the closure of Low Road East at the Hockering end, the other success story was for the new A47 to pass over Mattishall Lane in Hockering thus allowing their residents to access Mattishall here rather than congest the Fox Lane route.

Concerns about potential traffic noise levels have been raised and this will be monitored.

There will undoubtedly experience the frustrations of rat running issues before and during the construction of the dual carriageway but overall, I think we can be pleased with what has been achieved.

The Norwich Western Link project is still in consultation stages and still provokes plenty of discussion at county council and government levels. Decisions made here could affect rat running issues in our villages and other villages across the Wensum Valley. To have a dedicated fast route joining the A1067 and A47 makes sense to me and many others. A decision **not** to build this route while having a fast A47 would only exacerbate potential rat running issues across the Wensum Valley.

Both projects are due to start in 2023.

Restoration of the tower of St Marys Church

Since the 1970s the medieval tower of our beautiful church has given concern about its stability, but earlier attempts to correct problems were unsuccessful. At the turn of century more intense scrutiny of the structure resulted in two unsuccessful applications for grants from the Nation Lottery. In early 2019 the state of tower reached a critical point and there was real concern that both west buttresses could detach themselves from the cracked walls leading to a catastrophic collapse.

After initial investigations in 2019 to determine the possible causes of the structural deterioration it was decided to carry out a full investigation and the production of a specification for contractors to repair the tower. In 2020 with the UK and the world in the midst of a global Coviud-19 pandemic, Historic England were approached, and they decided that our church merited a grant from their Emergency Fund providing we could find other sponsors to cover the full costs now approaching £385k excluding VAT. After several applications, frustrations, and many ‘highs and lows’ full funding was reached, only for government indecision about the future of the VAT reclaim scheme for historic buildings. For us, the £76k was a vital final piece of the financial jigsaw. In February 2021, the scheme was extended, contracts were signed.

In March repair work finally started! I had to pinch myself to believe it was finally going to happen.

External sponsors have provided most of the financial capital through dedicated grants schemes but without the financial input from the people of this village and the Parish Council they would not have given their money. A big thank you.

St Marys has been recognised as a beautiful church of historic importance worth preserving for future generations. I am proud to be leading the team making this possible.

MJS