

Email of 2 August from Phil Wood

Dear Richard

I always read your piece in the village parish magazine and find it most interesting and informative. I write to express my opinion on a matter in this month's magazine on the proposal by Shani Keoghan that the grass in the village is left uncut.

I personally think it is a ridiculous idea for several reasons, which I have listed below.

1) The village is more attractive because it has several, well kept village greens. If these are left uncut the village will look untidy and derelict. I don't think Barrowden will win any 'best village' awards if none of the grass is cut. We will go from being "one of the most beautiful villages in Rutland" to being the village that looks abandoned! I don't think anyone contemplating selling their house will be pleased if the council has chosen to make the village look less attractive, it will certainly lower house prices. The greens are not just areas to drive past and admire but are used by residents and particularly by children in the village as an area to walk and play on. They won't be able to do that, especially after a few years as the nettles and thistles appear in the grass. In addition some of the greens are used for village events, such as the village fete, open gardens, the car rally and carols on the green at Christmas. These events generate several thousands of pounds for St Peter's Church in our village, money that is desperately needed by the PPC. Are we to cancel such events or is Ms Keoghan expecting everyone to wear walking boots and wellingtons to such events?

2) Leaving the verges uncut will result in pedestrians being unable to walk on the verges and they will then have to walk on the road. There are areas of Barrowden where the road is narrow and if cars don't slow down and pull over it will be very dangerous for any one walking, even more so for any parent with a push chair or someone on a mobility scooter! Should someone walk on an uncut verge they may well stumble and hurt themselves, as they won't be able to see where they are putting their feet. The County Council has a duty of care to ensure that anyone walking on their verges is safe and they may be liable if they do not maintain the verges. Equally the Parish Council has a duty of care to ensure that walking on the village greens is safe. Presumably this will mean that the councils will have to put up and maintain signs around each green and on every grass verge warning the general public of the dangers of walking in the uncut grass.

3) At present most dog walkers are reasonably considerate in 'poo picking' within the village, less so outside of the village where the verges are not cut as often. I doubt owners will be so conscientious if they have to scabble through the undergrowth of long grass, weeds etc to reach their dog's poo. They may instead allow their dogs to do their 'business' on the road and they will then have to 'poo pick' whilst cars may driving by (and hopefully not running them over)

4) Several people in the village suffer from Hay Fever or Asthma and these symptoms will be exacerbated if the village has lots of uncut grass everywhere. Grass pollen is one of the highest ranked irritants for hay fever sufferers.

Finally may I just say that I really can't understand why the Parish Council needs to have a referendum on this proposal of Ms Keoghan. Surely you are elected to make decisions of

behalf of the residents of Barrowden. Why not just discuss the proposal at the next PC meeting and after due consideration come to the only logical conclusion that it is ill considered and decide it is not something that should go ahead and move on the to next item on the agenda.

Regards

Philip Wood