

AUGUST - 1957

1. Foreword.

Nearly a year has passed since the last number of the Chronicle. The lapse is not due to a lack of incidents. The Editor hopes there will not be such a long interval between Nos.7. and 8.

The Parish Council has been asked to obtain subscribers to a magazine called "The Parish Councils Review". It is of interest to all village residents and is well worth reading. Published quarterly on good paper it only costs 5/- a year. Readers of Tostock Chronicle No.5, will remember an extract from the Chronicle was published in The Review, which shows its interest in individual villages.

Those who wish to subscribe should write to:

The Secretary,
National Association of Parish Councils,
26, Bedford Square,
London, W.C.1.

and enclose 5/- for one year's subscription.

2. The Leys.

The Parish Council is well aware that the Leys has been unsightly during the whole summer; first because the small depression on the east side was being filled with house refuse; and second because the grass was not cut. The work on the former is now complete; the dump has been covered with top soil and levelled in an expert manner. The final result is an improvement and Tostock is grateful to Mr. Wyatt for the interest he has taken and the efficient way in which the work was done.

Cutting the grass is a difficult problem for the Parish Council. They are lucky in having the cheerful readiness of Mr. Ben Buckle to operate any machine that can be provided; but not so lucky in the machine that was available. They were lent an old horse mower, but it was very old and it died. It now lies, a sad wreck, in the corner of a stackyard. But the use of a proper mower is at last available and Mr. Buckle is proceeding with the work.

3. The Village Green.

The cutting of the Green has been hampered by the same difficulty as the cutting of the Leys. It too is being dealt with, thanks to Mr. Buckle.

A bigger problem is the defacement of the Green by sundry vehicles in sundry places. The arrangement of the Green is a legacy of the past. There is a short roadway which leads to the Post Office and no further; leaving the houses and the Chapel on the north side with nothing but a derelict footpath as a means of approach. The temptation for vans, lorries, coal carts and private vehicles to take short cuts across the Green, and along the footpath, is more than human nature can withstand. And the drivers have gaily carved convenient tracks across it as if it were the Gobi Desert.

The Parish Council is trying to enlist the help of the County Council in making a roadway north of the Green. Tostock's Councillor Mr. John Kirkwood, has promised to raise the matter at the next meeting of the Highways and Bridges Committee. It is hoped the Committee will agree that they, and they alone, are able to help in the matter.

4. Fire Hydrants.

The Parish Council has received a letter from the Chief Fire Officer of the District asking for the co-operation of householders in keeping their nearest hydrants, both indicators and cover plates, clear of vegetation and rubbish. He points out that it is in the interest of every householder to know where his fire hydrant is, so that in case of fire he can quickly guide the fire brigade to it.

The Parish Council is asking for a plan showing the position of all hydrants in the parish. In the meantime they ask all residents to look for their own and keep it clear of rubbish. Most hydrants are on the verges of the roads, and as Tostock has been without a roadman for six months, at first because he was working on the main road miles away from Tostock, and latterly because he has been ill, the plates peep out from jungle growth. When the County Council pays attention to our needs in this respect the hydrants should be easy to maintain.

5. Litter Bugs.

Many people will have seen in their newspapers that Members of Parliament, of all parties, are conscious that we are a nation of Litter Bugs. A Bill to try and check this unfortunate habit is under discussion in Parliament.

We are all transgressors. When we finish a packet of fags we throw the cardboard on the ground; when we eat sweets we flick away the paper cover; when we sit under the tree near the Gardener's Arms, we litter the place with rubbish; when we buy an ice cream at the shop, or fish and chips from the van, down goes the paper anywhere. It is not only us. The beauty spots of holiday resorts, the sands of the seashore, the commons and parks everywhere, are spoilt by this selfish thoughtless behaviour. Confetti in a churchyard, of course, is part of the jollifications, but some people throw the carton containers on the ground.

The County Council, by its Best Kept Village Competition, is trying to encourage a spirit of tidiness. A few people, public spirited ones, gather up the litter before the judges appear, hoping that "example is the school of mankind". But mankind is a peculiar species. Some people are by nature tidy; and some are untidy. Some people notice things; some do not. Can we teach the young in their homes and in schools to be tidy? Or must we give it up? What do the residents of Tostock think?

6. The Village Hall.

The Village Hall Management Committee deserve congratulations on the healthy state of the Hall's finances. After nearly three years of careful budgetting there is a balance in the bank of £80. The Ministry of Education have helped most generously, both in the purchase of the Hall and in repairs; they have contributed in grants a total of £425. Now the Ministry has promised a further grant of £42, which enables the Committee to carry out the badly needed painting of exterior woodwork.

None of this could have happened without the help and guidance of the Suffolk Rural Community Council. The Secretary, Mr. Reid, and the Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Redmore, have taken a keen interest in the welfare of the Hall; their kindness has been unstinted; nothing has been too much trouble. Tostock is truly grateful to them.

7. Parish Council Election.

Next year, 1958, the Parish Council is due for election. In accordance with the Local Government Elections Act, 1956, this will be held at the same time as the election of a representative on the Thedwastre Rural District Council. If there is an election for the latter, the expenses of the election, aggregating approximately £20, will be equally shared between the Rural District Council and the Parish Council. The Parish would thus be charged, say, £10, which means about twopence on the Parish Rate. But if there is no election for the District Council, i.e. if the nominee is returned unopposed, the whole cost will fall on the Parish; which would mean about fourpence on the Parish Rate.

At the last election only two Rural District Councillors were opposed, out of a total of twenty parishes. Does this mean that the parishes are satisfied with the work of their representatives? Or does it show a lack of interest in Local Government? Generally speaking a contest is a good thing; it keeps a Council on its toes.

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