

MARCH - 1958

1. Foreword.

This is an important year as regards local government, because elections take place for the West Suffolk County Council in April, and for the Rural District and Parish Councils in May. It is an unfortunate fact that there are people who take little interest in local government. Some are too occupied with their own affairs; some do not understand what it is all about; and some feel that there are enough people taking an interest, so why bother! But these elections affect us all; we may even find that the time comes when they affect us individually.

Our system is a true democracy. It is precious; too precious to be treated in an off-hand way. It has evolved after hundreds of years; it has been fought for; and now we have what Abraham Lincoln defined as "government of the people, by the people and for the people."

By our system the Councillors, representing the people and elected by a secret and majority vote, are the bosses. The day to day work is done by professional local government officials, who, like the Civil Servants in the Whitehall Ministries, do not change when Councillors are elected. This country is one of the few that has this excellent rule. But the system needs watching, because these officials, being permanent, generally know far more than their bosses; and there is a tendency to leave decisions to them; and there are some officials, perhaps only a few, who cannot resist the temptation to become little bosses themselves.

It is wise therefore to take an interest in local government. Our votes should be given thoughtfully; we should elect Councillors who are intelligent, and who will keep in close touch with the people.

2. West Suffolk County Council.

Tostock is in the Electoral Division consisting of:-

Beyton	population	303	in 1931
Drinkstone	"	377	"
Elmswell	"	864	"
Hessett	"	311	"
Tostock	"	285	"

One Councillor is returned to represent the whole group. Elmswell being the largest village will naturally exercise the most influence. At present the seat is vacant; the last Councillor, Mr. John Kirkwood, resigned last year and has left the district.

The election of a new Councillor will take place in Tostock Village Hall on Saturday 12th April, 1958.

3. Thedwastre Rural District Council.

There are 20 parishes in this District. Each parish elects one Councillor, except that Elmswell, Woolpit and Walsham le Willows are each allowed two.

The present Councillor for Tostock is Captain R. H. Errington.

The election of a Councillor is due to take place in Tostock Village Hall on Tuesday 6th May, 1958.

The present Council consists of the following Councillors:-

Mr. F. G. Armstrong. Chairman.  
Mr. L. Knock.  
Mr. L. Moore.  
Mr. R. I. Mulley.  
Mr. E. Jewers.  
Mr. A. Cutting.  
Capt. Errington. Clerk to the Council.

The election of a Parish Council is due to take place in Tostock Village Hall on Tuesday 6th May, 1958.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE

The total cost of hiring the Village Hall and holding the combined election for the District Council and the Parish Council is approximately £20, which is shared equally between the District and the Parish. If there is no District Council election the whole cost has to be borne by the Parish, and that means roughly a fourpenny rate on Tostock residents. If there is no Parish Council Election the District bears the whole cost.

The Tostock Parish Council, bearing this in mind and wishing to save the Parish the expense of an election, have asked the County Council to allow Tostock to elect 9 Councillors instead of 7; and they have been told that the request will be granted. It is hoped therefore to avoid a Parish Council election; it can be done if there are not more than 9 nominees. The existing Parish Council have agreed that they would welcome everyone who wishes to serve, and they feel that this can be arranged by friendly agreement.

#### 5. The Village Green.

In October last a Sub-Committee of the County Council's Highways Committee visited the Green and met the Chairman and Clerk of the Parish Council. Tostock had hoped that the County Council would make a complete roadway, running the entire length, on the north side of the Green. The County Council, however, are not prepared to do this. But they have undertaken to repair the existing roadway which runs for a few yards east of the Post Office, and to make good the footpath which runs past the Chapel to Flatt's Lane. Further, for the sum of £10, they will "carry out certain repairs to the remaining portion of the track outside the limits of the footpath." The Parish Council has accepted this agreement, and the work will be put in hand.

#### 6. Best Kept Village Competition.

Every summer a competition, sponsored by the Suffolk Rural Community Council, takes place to encourage residents to take a pride in the appearance of their village. Members of the County Council and others act as judges. Marks are given for the appearance and condition of the Village Centre, the Village Green, the Churchyard, the Village Hall, the condition of hedges, fences and walls, the cleanliness of verges, tidiness of flower gardens etc. The winning village is awarded, as a trophy, a wrought iron sign which is erected in a prominent position and held for one year.

In Tostock, thanks to the Parochial Church Council and to those who so conscientiously do the work, our churchyard is one of the tidiest in Suffolk. We have a Village Hall which, thanks to the Management Committee, is newly painted and well cared for. But how can we enter for the competition, without looking foolish,

- when a. the verges of our village roads are neglected by the County Council? (For a year past we have not had the services of a road lengthman).
- when b. we have nearly an acre of common lands (the Green and the Leys) which is beyond the income and ability of the Parish Council to keep even moderately tidy? (And across which vehicles plough unsightly tracks).
- when c. thoughtless people throw litter about? (Someone has cast empty bottles and paper into the ditch in Church Road which the Parish Council has lately had cleaned out).
- when d. thoughtless people damage the Jubilee seat under the chestnut tree on the Green? (It now looks like a toothless old witch).

Cannot a pride in our village be instilled into our children, the majority of whom have such nice manners? Do people know that to throw litter about is now a punishable offence?

As for the rest, the verges and the grass and the weeds, nothing can be done until the County Council changes its policy. And that can only happen when the majority of Councillors take a pride and interest in the villages. This is a point to remember when electing a Councillor.

#### 7. Natural History.

In November 1956 a letter was received from the Earl of Cranbrook, President of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society, saying that years ago the Rev. Julian Tuck had reported catching the yellow necked fieldmouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*) in the church at Tostock. Apparently this is a rare species and Lord Cranbrook is investigating where it can be located in the British Isles. He wondered if it was still eating the hassocks and flowers in the church.

As a matter of fact the Parochial Church Council had been suffering the depredations of mice, which had even attended Divine Service. They had to be evicted. But it was not known whether these were yellow necked fieldmice or not.

In October 1957 a colony of mice again invaded the church and traps had to be set. One day Mr. Sherwood, who knew something about *Apodemus flavicollis*, caught a mouse and his interest was aroused. The corpse, gutted, was despatched to Lord Cranbrook, who wrote a grateful letter confirming that it was the rare species about which he had enquired.

This yellow necked fieldmouse is larger than the ordinary fieldmouse; it is 8 inches long from nose to tail tip; the belly is usually whiter and it has a yellowish-buff collar stretching right across the chest between the forelegs. "Very little is known about the animal which has only been recorded from about 70 places in England and Wales, it is not known from Scotland or Ireland. Of these 70 records, 22 are from Suffolk (no other county has more than 6) so that in this county alone are we near being able to say something definite about its distribution and habits, but further information is badly needed".

Lord Cranbrook is anxious to know if any mice of other species, ordinary mice or long tailed fieldmice, are caught in the church.

8. During the heavy snowfalls at the end of February some little mounds of soaked bread were spread out along a wall for the birds. Immediately three hungry robins came. Instead of falling to and eating the food they fell to and fought each other, just like human beings.

#### 9. Annual Parish Meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in Tostock Village Hall on Monday 24th March at 7.30.p.m.