



COMMUNICATION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Current Situation

Communication

Salhouse is well served for communication in that it has a well established and very popular village magazine, **The Salhouse Saga**, which is published 3 times a year and delivered free of charge to all households. This award winning magazine contains village news and information; both Parish Council and District Councillors contribute as do the main community groups in the village and local advertisers. Saga is augmented by a comprehensive **village website** and a number of **notice boards**, as well as the ubiquitous fly posting.

Local Government

The Parish is in the Mid-Norfolk Parliamentary Constituency which, at present, is held by a Conservative Member as is the County Council seat, Wroxham Division. Two District Councillors, one an Independent, the other a Conservative, represent the Parish for the Wroxham Ward of Broadland. This status quo is currently under review by the Boundary Commission as a result of a bid for unitary status by Norwich City Council.

The Parish Council comprises 11 Councillors who, in the new session, will meet on 10 occasions per year in the Jubilee Hall; the Parish Clerk also serves 2 other local parishes. Vacancies on the Council frequently occur and historically recruitment has been difficult.

The Council has a number of Committees and Working Groups, namely the Planning and the Playing Field Committees, and the Finance, Communications and Emergency Response Working Groups.

Elections. The turnout in General Elections for Mid-Norfolk has been 67% and in District Council Elections the Ward turnout is a consistent 44%. The last time the Parish Council had a contested election was in 1998; the turnout figure was approximately 20%. The timing of the next elections will be determined by the outcome of the Boundary Commission Review.

Consultation Process

At the Awareness Day villagers were asked about parish communication and about the village website.

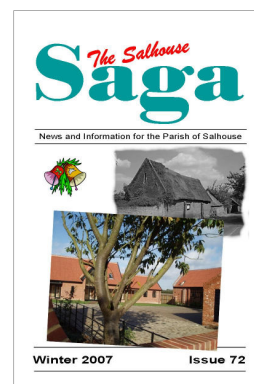
In the **Questionnaire** households, in addition to communications questions, were also asked whether they:

- ◆ Voted.
- ◆ Considered their elected representatives were sufficiently aware of their concerns.
- ◆ Were kept sufficiently informed of Parish Council processes.

COMMUNICATION

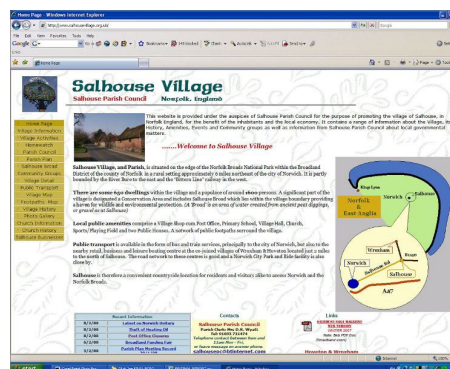
Results of the Consultation Process

The Salhouse Saga proved to be the most popular form of communication. An overwhelming number of villagers quoted the magazine as the means by which they learnt what was going on in the village and stated it was read thoroughly and retained for future reference. This contrasted with 12% who, in the Questionnaire, stated they did not know what was going on in the village.



"Saga is useful to people who do not have a computer".

The website www.salhousevillage.org.uk was less used. Many did not know that there was a village website, despite the fact it had been online for 3 years, and had been advertised prodigiously in the magazine. As a result of the consultation process it is now increasing in popularity.



www.salhousevillage.org.uk

"The Saga is a useful quick reference, the Website is more in depth".



Word of mouth and the notice boards were also a popular means of communication within the village. Currently there are 4 notice boards in the village of which 2 require replacement, scheduled to commence in 2008.



and then on the manner in which it interacts with the village.

"The Parish Council needs to be more proactive and Councillors should make contact with people in informal situations".

"Apart from the Parish Councillors when do we see the others in the village?".

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Results of the Consultation Process

The lack of knowledge of the existence of Parish Council elections was significant but understandable given the lapse of time (10yrs) since the previous election.

"Can't remember Parish Council elections".

Although about half of the Questionnaire respondents felt that the Parish Councillors and the District Councillors were aware of local concerns, the majority of respondents either did not know, or stated that they were not kept sufficiently informed of, Parish Council processes, specifically;

- ◆ Decision making.
- ◆ Use of Parish monies.
- ◆ Planning.

"Aware Yes, effective is another question".

"Would like more information on how money is spent and on what".

Throughout the process many villagers expressed a **lack of confidence** in the work of the Parish Council. This could be attributed to a fundamental interaction problem between the Council and villagers, whereby villagers themselves did not attend Parish Council meetings and the Council had, historically, lacked effective communication. This may explain the difficulty in finding volunteers to fill Parish Council seats.

The Parish Council set up a **Communications Working Party**, in conjunction with the Parish Plan Steering Group, to investigate the subject of communication both within and externally to the Parish Council. It is likely to have far reaching conclusions which will impact initially on the way in which the Parish Council business is conducted,

Some villagers suggested that the **age spread of Parish Councillors** should be more representative of the village to include, for example, a youth member.

Most villagers expressed their appreciation of the Awareness and Open Days and would like a similar event to be held, by the Parish Council, on an annual basis. As a result, the Parish Council has changed the format of the Annual Parish Meeting to make it more inclusive, informal but informative.

"It would appear that Norwich Road is a forgotten area by all of the above".

"We have no idea what's going on!"

"We are all well served".

Annual Parish Meeting

In April 2008 the Parish Council revised the format of the Annual Parish Meeting to include not only the formal element but also displays from clubs and groups. After refreshments, the evening concluded with entertainment provided by members of the Broadland Youth Choir.



This new format was enjoyed by the many villagers who attended the meeting.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Salhouse Parish Plan Steering Group wishes to express its thanks to the following organisations and individuals for their assistance throughout the Parish Plan Consultation Process and in the writing of this Formal Report.

Norfolk County Council - Planning and Transportation, Highways, Countryside Access, Mapping, Libraries and Information Services, Adult Education and other Departmental Officers.

Broadland District Council - Planning, Planning and Conservation, Environmental, Housing, Funding Mapping and other Departmental Officers.

Broads Authority and Norfolk Rural Community Council.

Norfolk Constabulary - David Law, Eastern Sector, Sergeant Andy Hood, Community Speedwatch, Aclé and the Safer Neighbourhood team.

Age Concern Norfolk; Norfolk Children's Services; Norfolk Council for Voluntary Youth Services; Salhouse United Charities; Salhouse Primary School Governors, Head Teacher, Staff and Friends of Salhouse School; Playgroup Leader; Jubilee Hall Management Committee.

Salhouse Women's Institute for their excellent teas at the Awareness and Open Days; Salhouse SAGA Magazine deliverers for their invaluable role in distributing the Parish Plan material throughout the village; Rackheath and Wroxham C of E churches as well as the Roman Catholic Church, Hoveton for use of their display boards.

For providing prizes for the Questionnaire response - Barnes Brinkcraft; Broads Tours; Salhouse Garden Centre; Roys of Wroxham; SHES at Blofield Heath; 1st Impressions Hair Salon in Salhouse; The Lodge Inn; Jo Nash (ex-The Bell Inn); the Fur and Feathers PH.

Roy and Sheila Bullers for providing, in their SAGA articles, historical information relating to the village.

Local land and business owners; County and District Councillors; Hoveton Medical Centre; the Salhouse Broad Ranger; Anna Jordan for her memorable cartoons.

Signed by Me(banners) and CIM(boards) for publicity materials;
Catton Print for the Questionnaire; Colman Stationery Shop for the Open Day printing;
Wensum Print for the Final Reports.

Finally we would like to thank all those who have participated in this Parish Plan process and without whom it would not have been possible.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE FORMAL REPORT

The Salhouse Parish Plan Formal Report consists of the main document and four associated annexes. In the interests of economy, distribution of these printed annexes will only be made to the appropriate bodies.

The full Report and annexes can be viewed on-line www.salhousevillage.org.uk, and at the Wroxham and the Millennium Libraries.

CD copies are also available on request at a nominal charge, details on the village web site.

Disclaimer - Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within this document is accurate as at April 2008.

Views expressed within the comments boxes in this document are not necessarily those of Salhouse Parish Plan Steering Group.

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