

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - PARISH MEETING MAY 2018

As you know I have only just become chairman of the parish council following the unexpected and untimely death of our former chairman John Hill. John's funeral was very well attended and I know most of you were there. His sudden death came as a great shock to all of us and we pass on our condolences to Daphne and the family.

John was involved in a great many different activities around the village and worked tirelessly for the benefit of the community. Not only was he an active member of the Parish Council but was also a member of the Parochial Church Council raising funds for St James's Church. John took over the chairmanship of the Parish Council from Steve Morris in May 2017. It was John's idea to change the format of the Parish meeting and twelve months ago it was held in the cricket club for the first time where we heard presentations from many of the village groups and organisations. This is a format that we will consider for the future, even though there was no time to arrange it again this year. John, with his accounting background, also helped to bring the parish council's finances onto a more stable footing with improved budgeting and allocation of provisions to cover the cost of work to the plane tree and future parish elections. These funds are now held in a separate savings account. He also set up a Community Fund to provide financial assistance to village organisations. He will be greatly missed.

So this report is a summary of the many activities that have taken place over the last 12 months. As always, I would like to begin by thanking June Hiden for the long hours she puts in as Clerk. The Parish Council could not function effectively without her hard work and I have found her knowledge and experience invaluable. I would also like to thank Steve Morris who was, of course, chairman for many years and who continues to be of great support behind the scenes, working from his canal boat developing and maintaining the village website and providing advice and guidance based on his extensive experience.

Steve Morris's resignation in May 2017 resulted in a vacancy and Steven Byrne was co-opted. Steven had already led one of the working groups during the development of the Village Design Statement and we have welcomed his participation and fresh ideas.

My thanks also go to Ken Fitch who has headed up the planning group and has had to deal with some difficult applications such as Comberton Golf Course and Woodfield Farm caravans. Thanks, are due to Stuart Allen, Paula Aston, Marion New and Steven Byrne for their input to this subgroup. Applications are now distributed online, which allows them to be considered by the whole council. Ken has done a great job of pulling all the comments and ideas together in a timely fashion.

Thanks also to Paula Aston who has co-ordinated the monitoring of vehicle speeds through community speed awareness in Upper End and Marion New for her work on the provision of additional litter bins.

I headed up the group that developed the Village Design Statement. The process of creating the VDS has taken almost three years and has involved more than 30 people in the village. It started with the village survey in 2015 and was followed by an extensive consultation process and Open Day. I'd like to thank all of those that were involved in its development including members of the parish council and in particular the small group of volunteers who helped me with the task of managing and running the overall process. They were; Steven Byrne, Mary-Ann Dyer, John Hill, Bryan and Christina Horrocks, Steve Morris and Dan Stratford.

I am delighted to report that the VDS was adopted as a Local Information Source at the meeting of Wychavon Council's Executive Board on 7 February 2018. This now means it has material weight, within certain limits, in helping to determine planning applications. It has been a significant undertaking and I hope that it will not only be a useful planning tool but will also provide an interesting snapshot for future generations of life in the parish between 2015-18.

Thanks, are also due to County Councillor Adrian Hardman and District Councillor Ron Davis, who continue to support us in many ways. For example, we are delighted that the resurfacing of Church Street, Berwick Lane and Grange Road has been completed. It is much appreciated that you find time to attend our meetings whenever possible.

Bruce Hayward has continued to work hard on maintaining our footpaths, assisted by Mark Smith. The many hours they put in throughout the year is much appreciated. The footpaths are better than any parishes around.

Our Tree Warden, Karl Grimston, continues to maintain the village trees and has also planted replacement trees. They are all looking very healthy.

The village Lengthsman, Carl Brassington, has worked hard to keep our gullies, drains and footways up to a very high standard, which significantly reduces the impact of flooding. Carl also maintains the village green for us and has put up the No Parking signs to ensure the improved bus service has access.

The PACT meetings have now stopped in favour of online communication but I'd like to thank Chris Reynard for continuing to monitor their activities as well as co-ordinating poppy wreaths and Remembrance Day services.

Last year we contributed part of our New Homes Bonus to two village organisations; the Cricket Club to allow them to upgrade their toilets and the Flower and Produce Show to allow them to purchase a new marquee.

Also in the last year we have had the plane tree on the village green professionally inspected to ensure it is safe and healthy. The bench at the base of the tree has been secured and the drainage cover levelled.

The annual litter pick on March 24<sup>th</sup> was well supported again this year and my thanks to June Hiden for arranging this activity and thanking participants via the Bystander.

We have entered the Wychavon Parish Games in previous years but were not able to put together teams for 2017. However as 2018 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary we hope that we can encourage groups to participate later this year.

Looking ahead, there are several initiatives that we will be working on; Stuart Allen has agreed to put in place the processes and procedures necessary for the parish council to be compliant with the new General Data Process Regulations that come into force on the 25<sup>th</sup> May. Marion New continues to look at the provision of additional litter bins which will hopefully be funded through the New Homes Bonus. Steve Morris is making arrangements to separate the parish council website from the village website to allow us to manage its contents independently. The telephone kiosk which has been used

to very good effect by the Flower and Produce Show now requires some refurbishment and several ideas are under consideration.

So in conclusion, my thanks go to the clerk, councillors, wardens, lengthsman and others who have given their time in support of parish activities.

Ian Yates