

EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting
Item (5)(5.1) Attachment 1

Chairperson, Cllr Marie Brewer Annual Report 2019 - 2020

I took over as chair of the Parish Council in January 2020 following the resignation of Councillor Neil Cartwright who was planning to move away from the village. We thank him for his contribution to the work of the Parish Council.

During the year, the Parish Council have continued to do the multitude of tasks required to keep the village functioning and to contribute to making Eaton Bray a good place to live. Many of the tasks are mundane such as trimming back overgrown trees, clearing footpaths and getting drains cleared.

We have worked closely with our Ward Councillor for Central Bedfordshire, Philip Spicer, who has been of great assistance in bring matters to the attention of CBC and helping to get things done.

In addition to the more regular activities there have been some significant events.

In October there was a village referendum for our Neighbourhood Plan which had been several years in the making. The Plan was approved by the referendum and was finally adopted on October 22nd 2019. It now forms a basis against which any new planning applications are considered.

It proved very useful when I represented the Parish Council at the Appeal in March against CBC for their refusal to grant planning permission for a major development of 120 houses on land adjacent to Bower Lane. Using our Neighbourhood Plan as a basis we were able to make strong representations to the Inspector against the development. The appeal was rejected by the Inspector.

The Parish Council also sent along representatives to the review of CBC's Local Plan. Our representations focused primarily on the potential release of Green Belt Land at Eaton Park. The Local Plan is still being considered by the Inspectors, so the outcome is still unknown.

We have also set up a new Web site. This was necessary to comply with the new website accessibility laws (WCAG 2.1AA) The existing website was not compliant and was contained within the Village Website. We now have the required freestanding website - ebpc.co.uk

Speedwatch has been reinvigorated. A big thank you to the members of the team. The speed of vehicles passing through the village is of continuing concern. We are looking to replace the two Speed indicator signs in the village when COVID restrictions permit.

We have held a couple of Litter Picking days. It is staggering how much litter is gathered from our streets and verges by a small band of people so many thanks to all who have taken part.

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We continue to support and are grateful for the work of the Village Market group who have run several successful markets on Market Square and the Village Bloomers who continue to enhance the village with the flowering containers.

Further village enhancements have been done such as the lighting of trees at Three Corners and Christmas Trees at Three Corners and Market Square.

In March, the Parish Council faced the problems associated with the Covid Lockdown and it was necessary to suspend Parish Council meetings.

We continued to deal with both routine issues such as commenting on planning applications and reacting to issues that required attention.

We were happy to support the Village Good Neighbours Group by paying for the printing of cards to be delivered to every household in the village.

We renegotiated the contract for use of public space with Eaton Bray Lions.

I am grateful for the contributions made during this time by our Parish Clerk, council members and in particular deputy chairman, Mark Tomkins, who has been very supportive.

As this meeting is later than usual because of the Covid situation there are other things which we have done through the summer.

Councillor Glenn Wrigley resigned from the Council having moved out of the village. We thank him for his contribution the work of the PC and especially his work on coordinating and getting our Neighbourhood Plan established.

We were also able to welcome two new Parish Councillors, Gavyn Lugsden and James Melzack.

The new village entrance sign has been installed.

The wooden decking to the bridge between Holman's Field and School Lane recreation ground has been replaced by metal flooring and the sides of the bridge have been repainted.

To enable children and parents to walk safely from the School to the School Lane carpark we have put in a walkway to separate pedestrians and vehicles.

Looking forward there continues to be ongoing issues for the Parish.

A spate of antisocial behaviour in the School Lane Recreation ground has led us to look at Youth issues. We are grateful for the contribution made by the Community Policing Team and the input from the Crime Reduction Officer. We are looking into ways of making more provision for the youth of the village and we would welcome any input from villagers particularly the younger member of our community.

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We are looking at putting some benches and picnic benches around the village.

An inspection of the play facilities in both our parks highlighted issues with the play equipment. We will deal with these by repairing where necessary, but we are also looking at upgrading the play equipment.

We are continuing our campaign to get a pedestrian crossing in the High Street.

The watercourse issues at Mill End have still not been resolved and we are waiting further contact from the Internal Drainage Board.