

Annual Parish Meeting

10th May 2021

Chairman's Report 2020-2021

Since my last report in November 2020 the Parish Council has continued to operate in spite of COVID restrictions. Meetings have been held virtually and we have to thank Cllr Mark Tomkins for the smooth running of this arrangement.

During this time we reached our full complement of Parish Councillors with Kathy Ellison joining us. Unfortunately James Melzack has resigned from the PC as he is leaving the village and we thank him for his contribution. We now have one vacancy on the PC. I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their work and continuing support.

We continued to deal with routine issues such as commenting on planning applications and reacting to issues as they occurred.

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

The recent lockdown has curtailed many of our activities. Speedwatch and Litter Picking have not been possible but will be resumed as soon as allowed. Some individuals have done private litter picking sessions and we are grateful for their interest in keeping our village tidy.

Fly tipping has increased around the village since the start of the year and we have spoken to the agencies involved who are actively trying to deal with the problems that this causes and trying to catch those involved.

The Bloomers have continued to plant the containers around the village and the daffodils planted in the Autumn were a lovely sight in the Spring so thanks to them all.

Trees continue to be a major part of the Parish Council work. We have removed trees at Mill End Close which were causing a nuisance.

We have undertaken a review of the trees in St Mary's Churchyard. Earlier in the year dead wood and dead trees were removed in the Churchyard and in the Autumn several of the larger trees will be cut back. We shall also remove the overgrown Leylandii trees close to the Village Hall. The Church authorities will then replace them with a native hedge.

One significant issue was flooding in The High Street. Fortunately Councillor Mark Tomkins was on hand and was able to offer assistance and to get the necessary agencies involved. We asked for a full report of the reasons for the flooding and the response is available to be seen on the PC website. It is hoped that the remedial action which will be taken will mean that there are no repeats of this incident.

We are also dealing with the issues with the water course at Mill End Close. The very heavy weather during the winter resulted in the bank of the island collapsing allowing a heavy flow of water into the lower drainage channel. We have arranged to have the area fenced and are taking steps to repair the damage to the island in order to correct the water flow.

We are continuing to enhance village facilities. A recreational gym rig has been ordered and will be installed in The Rye Recreation Ground early in June.

Repairs to the area alongside the Skate Park will be done in the next few weeks including two new benches. At the same time we shall install two metal picnic benches in the park.

We have gathered together some plans to upgrade the play equipment in School Lane park. We are reviewing and tweaking our two favourite plans and hope that installation will be possible by late summer.

We have also been looking into how we can communicate better with young people in the village and discussions are underway with a plan to set up a Youth Council. We are also reviewing the facilities available for young people and in addition to the gym rig and playground update we are looking at extending the basket ball pitch to make it multi sport as well as enabling games to be played there. We are also looking at providing youth shelters in the Park.

Financially the PC accounts continue to be in a healthy position which has allowed us to consider the additional expenditure on facilities whilst keeping the precept at the same level for the last two years.

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

Marie Brewer
10th May 2021