

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE BUCKLAND NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

10th MAY 2016

Welcome

As chairman of the Parish Council I would like to welcome parishioners and council members to our Annual General Meeting. Due to the retirement of our previous chairman, Trevor Marpole, and Alison Chant stepping down, we have two new members of the Parish Council, Jane Collins and Sam Sowerby who were co-opted on in September.

We are regularly visited by our County Councillor, Jill Haynes who brings us up to date with county council matters. Sadly our District Councillor, Peter Hiscock, has suffered ill health and been unable to attend many of our meetings.

We are regularly visited at Parish Council meetings by our local Police Community Support Officer, Alison Donnison, who keeps us up to date with any information on local crime and other police matters. She is also the link for us to the police headquarters with any problems in the community that they may need to know about.

Councillor Jane Collins, with the help of Sarah Mitchell our Parish Clerk, has formulated a Community Resilience plan. This can be found on the community website and there is a copy in the Village Hall. As part of the plan we have applied for a grant to provide a generator for the Village Hall to be used in an emergency to provide shelter for anyone displaced from their home.

The council continues to comment on a variety of planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan has continued to be a big undertaking. We had a six week public consultation last June/July and the plan has been through a consultation with West Dorset District Council. It is currently with the independent examiner. The Parish Council is indebted to Councillor John Baker for all his time and hard work ably assisted by fellow councillor Lynn Townsend.

The Parish Field had been well maintained by the Dorset Works grounds team and the play area is as popular as ever with local people and also attracts numerous visitors from the surrounding area. Thank you to Caroline Durston who inspects the play area on a regular basis and reports any problems to us.

Finance - The parish accounts remain in positive territory.

We have increased the Precept this year, the first time in six years to cover further expenses that are being devolved from the District and County councils.

We have undertaken the refurbishment of four fingerpost signs around the village which will be renewed using the original letters and numbers having been sandblasted and powder coated by volunteers using equipment purchased by the Parish Council. This worked out at less than half the cost of having them done professionally.

Sir William Ackroyd's legacy continues to be managed prudently by the Parish Council.

We have decided to give an annual grant of £120 to the community website as it is instrumental in providing an up to date information platform for anyone interested in parish matters.

The Parish Council is pleased that the village shop continues to thrive under Pete and Sue Nickerson's ownership. The Post Office has settled in the Village Hall. The Gaggles of Geese sadly closed last September and its future remains uncertain. We have taken steps to secure it as a pub by having it registered as a Village Asset.

I can personally confirm the superfast broadband which has been installed in the village centre has considerably increased internet speeds around the village.

We continue to pursue the ownership of Hountwell Pump as we feel this could prove an important source of clean water to the village in future.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow parish councillors and in particular our parish clerk, Sarah Mitchell, for their help and support in my first year as Chairman.

Rodney Cuff

9th May 2016