

Annual Assembly – 15th May 2023

Chairman's Report

This year has once again brought a number of challenges. We are faced with considerable number of changes within the village as a result of the new Southern Connector Road being constructed and with the construction of the first new housing development at Redlands as part of the New Eastern Villages having now started.

Parish Council attend regular meetings with Swindon Borough Council Planning Officers who oversee the plans for New Eastern Villages, we regularly submit our comments and concerns in relation to some of the planning applications but despite our efforts we have very little power or influence to change anything that is being carried out within the New Eastern Villages, a further update on planning from Dave Hayward later in the meeting. Communication with SBC Highways with regards to Wanborough Road and Southern Connector Road have been extremely difficult and very frustrating. As a result of what has been happening Parish Council formed a new working party to specifically look at the road closures and the impact of these road closures on the local community, as you can imagine this Working Party has been working hard over the last few months.

Parish Council strongly objected to any street lights and the urbanization of Wanborough Road. We would like to thank those who organised the petition against the street lights and attended the Borough Council meeting on behalf of residents to try and persuade Swindon Borough Council to reconsider their decision. John Warr attended and spoke on behalf of the Parish Council. Unfortunately despite everyone's best efforts Swindon Borough Council would not change their mind and street lights are due to be installed on Wanborough Road.

During the year we have had a few changes in Councillors, Richard Bellamy was co-opted onto the Parish Council in August 2022 and Omar Mirza was elected in a By Election in November 2022. These have replaced Richard Angwin and Mike Webster who both resigned due to moving away from the village, we thank them both for their service to the village.

As a result of additional workload, Parish Council agreed to employ a new Assistant Clerk. Georgia Wheeler was appointed and started in September 2022 and has been working alongside the Angela Raymond the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer. Unfortunately Georgia has recently resigned and will be leaving at the end of May, we thank her for her hard work over the last 8 months, she will be missed. We will be advertising the vacancy in due course.

In addition to the Clerk & Asst Clerk we have Graham working as our Village Handyman on a part-time basis. You may have seen him around the village but he does a great job of keeping on top of some of the village maintenance work.

Despite the challenges we have also had a number of highlights in the year including:-

- Queen's Platinum Jubilee & Beacon lighting at Church Meadow. It was lovely to see the community come together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we thank all those who helped organise this event.
- Queen's Green Canopy. A number of trees were planted at Church Meadow and we invited children from Wanborough Primary School year 6 to help with the planting.
- Installation of a new sculpture at the end of Rodway footpath next to The Beanlands. The sculpture is a wood carving based on animals that can be regularly seen in the village with the church tower and spire at the top, all designed and carved by Raymond Wirick (Artist & Chainsaw carver).
- Kings Coronation Street Party held last weekend, again a great event bringing together the whole community to celebrate the Kings Coronation.

Further updates on what we have been doing in the village will be presented in the Village Maintenance report later in the meeting.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors who have supported me throughout the last year. This is now my third year as being Chair to the Council and although it has been challenging it is always good to see that we are all still thriving to make this village a great place to live.

Bob Biggs
Chair