

Chairmans's report

Firstly I would like to thank my colleagues on the Parish Council for their support and for each of them taking responsibility for the various projects and updates on our local critical services and amenities. Our clerk, Steve, apart from keeping us all on track with his monthly clerk's brief, action plans, council admin and finance, monitors and actions all the outstanding issues with the Community Hall in liaison with the Community Hall committee through our Cllr Heather King who represents us on their committee. Heather also monitors both play areas in Great Bourton. Her expertise in working in the public sector has also served us well over the last year. Cllr Andrew Johnson keeps in touch with the Cropredy Surgery and Horton Hospital developments so that we can act in a supporting role when necessary.

Cllr Gilly Duckworth and Cllr Jo Beales are managing the Little Bourton improvement project and Gilly also monitors the Little Bourton play area. Jo brings her expertise to the council with her knowledge of risk assessment procedures and health care issues.

Gill Brooks has joined us recently and no doubt will bring other talents to our team.

Once again, we've had another year of more than a small parish share of issues which have been challenging to say the least. On top of supporting residents' views about the proposed development of 9 First Homes off Foxden Way, we now have to make another submission to address the proposed housing development sites on the CDC local plan. This has prompted our decision to devise, agree and implement a Parish Community Plan to which we can refer and use as a mandate to assist our decision making on planning applications and use to improve our parish amenities and transport services. Many larger parishes have a Neighbourhood plan but these are very costly to produce and take about 3 years to implement. Although our community Plan won't carry as much weight as a Neighbourhood Plan it will serve to direct our decision making on planning applications and form the basis of any improvement projects over the coming years. When the results of the Questionnaire are in, we shall hold a public meeting to publish and discuss the findings and add any further ideas to its *raison d'être*.

Our ongoing projects include: the development of the Bourtons Community Plan; a watching brief on the proposed development of the Stables and Paddocks site between here and Cropredy: our aim to get a 20mph speed limit in the Bourtons; our support of the Speedwatch Campaign; our Parish emergency plans; development of the Little Bourton improvement project; our monitoring of public footpaths; and our support of the Wildlife projects initiated and managed by Ann Brooks.

Each year every Parish Councils has money which they can use if they wish under Section 137, to support local projects which benefit the whole community. We use our Section 137 allocation to support the Cluster Care group and the Bourtons Broadsheet, most ably produced by its editor Sue Ong. With an ageing population, Cluster care is an important group to support our more elderly residents and the Broadsheet provides an excellent communication channel, especially for those who may not have access to the internet to catch up with local events on Facebook or our website. We also make other awards from time to time such as the Wildlife Projects. However we are cautious about our spend, since over the last 5 years we have seen a decrease in services or increased costs for services provided by the District and County Council, so we need to budget for these. One example of this is the grass cutting throughout the parish which was once entirely borne by the County Council but is no longer.

With public transport available only in Little Bourton, it is important to secure whatever transport provision we can for the residents of Great Bourton so with the S106 public transport funding we received from the Garners Field development, we help fund the Ability Bus service to the Bourtons.

We know that we have another challenging year ahead of us but as always are grateful to the residents who help us in so many way: by responding to planning applications, reporting potholes and difficulties with public footpaths and some who provide the professional expertise which we lack in our number.

If re-elected it will be my pleasure to serve the council and the community for another year but should add it would be a doubly difficult task without the support of our councillors and the excellent services provided by our Parish Clerk. My sincere thanks to you all.

Sue Upton

Chairman

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