

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016-17

Welcome to everyone to this year's Annual Parish Meeting, my first as Chairman of the Parish Council.

I would like to start by thanking Martin Johnston for his many years as Chairman of the Parish Council and of this annual meeting.

This year has been yet another very busy year, every year seems to bring more and more projects and issues for our Parish to have to discuss. This past year being very heavily involved in planning matters!

More of those later on in the meeting when we will give an update on the major housing development applications and on how the newly formed Neighbourhood Plan Group is progressing, with information on how you will become involved with and consulted on the Neighbourhood Plan.

FINANCE

Precept – the 2017/18 precept has been set at £60,750, meaning a band D property will pay £63.61 per year towards the budget for the Parish. This is a small increase over last year's precept and is due to funding being provided for the Neighbourhood Plan project and increased administration costs due to the additional work the Parish Council is taking on across all aspects of its remit.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING THE PAST YEAR continued to village groups and projects including: Swavesey Memorial Hall charity, Churchyard and Cemetery maintenance, Community Warden Scheme and the Swavesey Festival.

In the forthcoming year we have budgeted for continued community grants and have also produced a new grant application form and guidelines, which can be found on our website.

HIGHWAYS and COUNTY COUNCIL

Black Horse Lane is currently partially closed off for work to install a new surface water drainage system, which should stop the flooding of parts of the road and some driveways, due to the collapse of the old system underground. A similar project is due to take place in Gibraltar Lane later this year, to replace a pipe system which no longer works.

Parking around the Primary School and Village College entrances continues to cause serious safety concerns and we are working with the Schools, County Council and Police to try to improve the situation. We would all urge as many residents who travel to and from the schools, in particular the Primary School, to please walk rather than drive, if at all possible.

Market St – the consultation on providing parking bays and new double yellow lines was completed at the end of December with no objections raised. We have received a provisional date of the first week in June for when the work to fill the potholes, mark out the parking bays and put in the lines will take place. The area will need to be cleared of all vehicles, which will cause some disruption but it is hoped the work will take place in two halves, so the whole area will not require clearing.

Speeding – the Parish Council has been successful this year in a bid to the County Council for a reduction in the speed limit along part of Ramper Road. A new 40mph limit will be provided between the double bends and the residential area of the Ramper Rd, to help reduce the speed of vehicles into the 30mph zone.

Speedwatch – the Parish Council is calling yet again for residents to join up to a Speedwatch Group, to enable speed monitoring sessions to take place around the village to show drivers that residents are concerned over speeding and to send out warning letters to those drivers who are caught driving over the speed limit. Please let our Clerk know if you would like to help.

The Parish Council works together with our County Cllr Mandy Smith on CCC Business and thanks Mandy for her help.

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Swavesey Cllrs attend **Parish Forum meetings at SCDC** along with other Parish Councillors from surrounding villages.

Cllrs also attend **Planning Forums** and other meetings with Planning Officers, which have been quite numerous this year.

The District Council holds an annual Community Awards Scheme and again this year Swavesey had a strong presence and won recognition in a number of categories: Bethel Community Rooms; Compass Café; Village College Student Enrichment Week; Allotment Association.

District Cllr Sue Ellington supports the Parish Council's work with the District Council and I would like to thank Sue for her time and help.

PLANNING / CONSULTATIONS

Many local planning application consultations were received and commented on.

Proposals outside of the Village Development Boundary - these have continued to be submitted during the year and we currently have 4 proposals going through the planning system for up to 320 new dwellings. This is on top of the 87 new properties which have already been granted permission in the past 2 years.

More on this later in the Agenda

A14 Improvements – This is now well and truly underway. The Mobile Exhibition Centre for the scheme will be at the Primary School on Saturday afternoon 20th May, when the PTA School Fayre is being held. Everyone is welcome to attend and you will be able to talk directly to Highways England staff about the A14 project.

DRAINAGE

For the past two years now, we have reported here that we are still pressing for the improvement works promised for the Mare Fen Drain and River Gt Ouse banks to be completed. Unfortunately we are still in the same situation, with the Environment Agency still not confirming when work will take place. We continue to meet with EA Officers when we can and hope that the work might commence this year.

VILLAGE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Recreation Green – these past few months have seen our football clubs back on the green, not quite for the full season but nearly there. The ground is recovering from the drainage work and we continue to monitor it and work with the football clubs to manage and improve the facilities.

The Parish Council is currently finalising details for providing a basketball hoop/goal wall and table tennis table on the green for public use.

Carters Way/Priory Ave Open Space Area - This project is still ongoing, having been delayed whilst trying to find a solution to the underground drainage of the area. Hopefully this will move forward during this year.

Police – The Parish Council continues to work closely with our Neighbourhood Police Officers and NHW Scheme with regard to reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

NHW – Village Scheme Co-ordinator has had to stand down so we are looking for a new Village Co-ordinator. If anyone is interested please could they let the Parish Council know. Thank Andy Jennings for the time he has given to keep the scheme running but it has been difficult due to his work commitments.

Constable's Rood & Village Ponds

The Parish Council continues to provide maintenance work at the village ponds and in Constable's Rood. Swan Pond was cleared of reeds earlier this year and School Pond will have work taking place later in October. Trees have been managed around Moat Way Pond.

Litter clearing – Many volunteers continue to give their time to help collect litter from areas around the village and we would like to thank all of them for their time.

Community Warden Scheme – We are now in our fourth year of this scheme which is providing much appreciated help and support to elderly residents.

FINALLY – to keep in touch with all of the work and issues which the Parish Council is involved with look at our WEBSITE and FACEBOOK pages, plus the regular updates in the Meridian Magazine

Thank you to all our Parish Councillors for their time in the many activities of the Parish Council. And to the many volunteers who join our working parties to discuss and help formulate ideas and proposals around various projects.