

Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon Parish Council – Chairman's Report 2020 / 2021

Firstly, I would like to thank you all and the Parish Council for your attendance at the remote meetings, logging in and out and in and out on Zoom meetings throughout the last year.

Thank you to the following for their past and continued support –

Clerk – Anne Szabo, for her continued support and expertise in Council matters.

County Councillor – Keith Rippington, who unfortunately was unable to continue his duties due to ill health.

District Councillor - David Mossman for his continued support, especially during this year, which has been difficult for him personally.

Village Wardens.

Local Police - For their support, and for conducting speed monitoring in the village, which we trust will continue in 2021 / 2022.

Eric Hibbert – For his continued technical support and in preparing the newsletters.

Nigel Bone – For the continued distribution of information to parishioners.

Paul Gaze - For all that he gives back to the village.

Rhodri Rhys – For supplying the replacement bench in St Swithuns churchyard

Martin Coles - For his outstanding work and commitment lobbying SDC, GCC, planners and developers regarding Whaddon Fields. Without his hard work and hours and hours preparing emails on behalf of the Parish Council we would not have been able to cope with the continued onslaught of changing information.

The small number of the Parish who attended meetings and contributed when possible.

I would also like to thank Lynda King who resigned from the council, for her many years of dedicated service to support the community. I wish her all the best for the future.

John Hendry (Chairman).

Rhodri Rhys (Vice Chairman).

Dave Kasper

Paul Gaze

2 x Vacant Positions (Any Volunteers)

The last year has been a challenging year for the Parish Council, with the cancellation of the elections we lost our General Power of Competence as we fell below the 2/3rds of elected members, thus reducing our spending powers etc. However we have dealt with the following:

Essential replacements and repairs, Grants and Charitable Donations.

Village Hall	£ 1,000	St Swithun's	£ 750
Mind	£ 200	Alzheimer's Society	£ 200
NHS Charities Together	£ 200	Bus Shelter repairs	£ 240
BT Phone Box	£ 1,250	Verge Cutting	£ 800

The Precept was reduced by 5% to £17,350 in line with a 5% reduction in budgeted spending.

Planning

Several applications were passed although several objections were made, many were rejected and some referred to DCC. I strongly believe that SDC need to be more supportive and understanding when dealing with planning applications that are affecting residents within Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon Parish and take more notice of the comments from ourselves and this small village community.

We have held meetings regarding the possible major housing development at Whaddon Fields. Planning for this has not yet been submitted but there is great concern locally regarding this. Where JCS plans have this site allocated for possible future use by GCC to build 3000 homes should they require it. The Parish council will continue to advise parishioners on this and push the local authorities for clarification.

Burglaries.

Theft continues to be an issue affecting houses, out buildings, farms, and agriculture businesses. This is together with dog theft, a national phenomenon as thieves move out of the cities where there are increased camera systems in use. We will continue to advise the public of issues raised by local police alerts via the email system, and a close working relationship with the Police.

Covid 19 Lockdown Restrictions.

As we are all aware these are unprecedented times. The local elections were cancelled and as previously stated this resulted in the Parish Council no longer having the required number of elected councillors sitting. With the recent elections on the 8th of May I am happy to report that we now have regained our qualification for General Power of Competence.

We are from 18th of May able to hold meetings again in the village hall but numbers are restricted to a maximum of 15, so entrance will be on a first come, first admitted basis. However we do intend to purchase electronic equipment to stream the meetings in the future so more of the community are aware of the local issues without attending the events in person.

Emails with the councillors contact details were sent out at the start of the lockdown, and a mailshot issued to homes known to be without internet access. I do hope that you are all well and coping in these difficult times and feel free to contact the councillors if you have any concerns or issues which need to be addressed.

In full time employment and with a growing family, my time on council activities is sometimes restricted, but I will continue to do my best to serve the community with the support of my fellow councillors.

Thank you

John Hendry
Chairman Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon Parish Council.