

Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon Parish Council – Chairman's Report 2025 / 2026

Firstly - A thank you to Rhodri Stokes-Rhys, who left the council at the end of April, for his contribution and time at meetings. A huge thank you to the parish council members, Eric, Kirk and Paul for their regular attendance at the monthly meetings and a warm welcome to Andrew Miller, who was adopted onto the council in February.

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

Our Clerk – Tina Balgobin, Who, is doing a sterling job and who has an excellent knowledge of local Council matters.

County Councillor – John Champion who regularly attends meetings and is in regular contact with the parish council through his monthly reports.

District Councillor - Demelza Turner-Wilkes who's commitment to local matters is unquestionable, her actions on our behalf are greatly appreciated.

Local Police - For their support in dealing with a number of incidents, for conducting speed monitoring in the village, which we trust will continue.

Nigel Bone – For the continued distribution of information to parishioners, and his involvement and reports on the condition of St Swithuns church.

Paul Gaze - For representing the council with regards to the village hall, all his support as Vice Chairman, and all that he unselfishly contributes to the village.

Martin Coles - For his work and commitment lobbying SDC, GCC, planners and developers regarding Whaddon Fields, and preparing emails and letters on behalf of the council to keep us up to date with the current progress of planning and the local government plan.

Community Officer – Jordan Perry - Who I understand may be very busy, but I would like to see him at a meeting at some point this year.

This last year has been less challenging than last, with an increased number of councillors allowing all meetings to take place on their scheduled dates. With Rhodri leaving we now have one vacancy and I ask anyone who has a couple of hours a month to spare and is interested in this wonderful parish to make themselves known to Tina or myself.

Financial Situation.

I am not going into details of the finances here as this will be dealt with by Tina when she gives her report later. But would like to point out that the Precept for 2026/2027 has been set at £17,110, an increase of 3½ % from last year, but still lower than the £18,300 set in 2024/2025.

Planning

We have dealt with a number of planning applications last year. SDC continue to be supportive and appear to be taking our views into consideration when dealing with planning applications.

We do however have major issues when it comes to SDC enforcement actions, some of which are taking longer than a year to be reported back to us and remain unresolved.

The land adjacent to Rose Cottage had an enforcement action agreed 18 months or so ago with the land returned to its original condition. However this is no longer the case and although we reported this to SDC months ago, with photographs indicating the breach, we are still waiting for a site visit to be undertaken, and only get limited 1 line responses from SDC regarding progress. For that reason we have now written a letter of complaint to SDC Enforcement, and await their reply. Last year we had issues with construction traffic coming through Brookthorpe to access the new

housing development at Matson. After additional signage regarding the 7.5 tonne weight limit zone was erected, the number of incidents greatly reduced. However there continue to be a small number of persistent offenders who have been reported to the developer. With other planned developments in the Matson area we must ensure that any new sites have similar signage and comply to the restrictions.

While on the subject of Upton Lane, after many years of complaints, it was re surfaced in 2025. Haresfield Lane work has been completed in the village, and the remainder through Haresfield should be completed by the end of this year.

We through the efforts of Martin Coles, have been in regular communication with both SDC and GCC, and the planning authorities regarding the possible 3000 houses at Whaddon Fields. It continues to be the biggest threat to our way of life in the village. The Stroud local plan was rejected by examiners yet again when re submitted a new basic plan is under development but will take a minimum of 30 months to complete. It appears to be the case that sites at Whaddon, Hardwicke and the extension of Hunts Grove will be postponed till there are upgrades to J12. There is no estimate when this can be done, but County is currently concentrating on J10 which will take till 2029. There apparently are then updates planned for J9 at Tewksbury to deal with increased traffic due to enlargement of the shopping centre. So realistically the local housing developments will not start till after 2030. This is further complicated by the fact that the local council districts are being changed, so any basic plan issued by the SDC will need to be approved, and developed by whatever authority then exists.

Burglaries.

Theft continues to be an issue affecting houses, out buildings, farms, and businesses, although police continue to report that our area has a low volume of incidents when looking at national statistics. We will continue to advise the public of issues raised by local police alerts via email, and maintain a close working relationship with the Police.

Now in retirement with a great deal of global travelling planned 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.