

Chairman's Report for the Annual Meeting of
Waterperry with Thomley Parish Council,

23rd May 2018

This has been a fairly quiet year for the Parish Council, in terms of projects commenced and completed. When we met for our Annual Meetings last year, Kirsten Johnson was quite new to her role as our County Councillor. May I thank her for her regular attendance at our meetings and her interest in issues that concern us. She has helped us to get a new extra Playground warning traffic sign installed and also to raise the profile of the problems with the condition of our village road and I know she is going to continue to be helpful in progressing that and other village projects.

Our District Councillor, John Walsh has already attended the Annual Meetings in Beckley this evening – it's a busy time of year! – but again, thank you John, for coming along to our meetings and to both you and Kirsten for keeping us updated on developments at County and District level.

This time last year we were awaiting the official confirmation of our grant to install a defibrillator in the village telephone kiosk. This was confirmed a short time later and the defibrillator was installed last summer, thanks to grants from the Lottery Fund and help from the Community Heartbeat Trust. Part of the grants also covered the cost of new paint and signage for the phone box – however, not the actual painting not the installation of the defibrillator! So, I'd like to say a big thank you to Adrian, my husband Rob, Kit – and me! - who all did a magnificent job of cleaning and sprucing up the phone box, spending two weekends rubbing down, repairing, installing the equipment and new signs and finally giving it a bright and shiny new paint job. It is once again a village landmark to be proud of.

Following the installation of the defibrillator, it was heartening to see such a good turnout for the training session we arranged, intended to give everyone the confidence to use the equipment in an emergency.

This is maybe a good time to reflect on the sad loss to the village of Kit Arnold. Ironically, although the defibrillator is located right outside his house, there was no opportunity to use it to try to resuscitate him - sadly this will sometimes be the way of these things. I have written elsewhere of the loss we all feel, but I'd like to reiterate what an enthusiastic advocate he was of all kinds of village initiatives, social as well as more mundane, even if sometimes he didn't personally endorse them and to thank him for his huge support over the last few years to me personally in my role as PC Chairman. As I have already written, I really hope that without him to drum up support, we can still as a village community get together for important social events and meetings. It was lovely last Friday to have a great – and noisy – crowd for the Village Quiz, but also sad that we only mustered a dozen or so Waterperry villagers, and thankfully great support from friends in Holton, Wheatley and Ickford. In the Village Plan a few years ago, one thing that many people said they wanted was more social events – for example a Quiz night. What happened?!

The PC agreed to a small increase in the precept for this financial year, to a new level of £3200. This figure was calculated on the budgeted expenditure calculated by Adrian and reflects the extra expenditure by the PC towards verge repair and mowing, tidying and mowing of the Recreation Ground and the provision of verge posts throughout the village. We do have a small quantity more now of posts and will be happy to let villagers have these if you apply to Adrian or me.

The on-going concerns in the village are on tonight's agenda for public discussion. These are the desire to implement a 20mph speed limit through the village; whether we should install some new low-maintenance seating in the Rec, and the matter of the proposed new Oxford-Cambridge Expressway road that could come close to the village. These are all important issues – and you may have more you would like to raise – so thank those that have come along this evening and we look forward to hearing from you.

Finally, as ever, thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors for their teamwork over the last year. Being a parish councillor can be quite a thankless task – always blamed, rarely applauded – but I believe we try our best to make a worthwhile contribution to village life and I thank them for their support.