

Ashendon Parish Council

Chairman's report for the Village meeting 15th April 2019

The main achievement over the past year has been the installation of the fibre optic cable from Westcott which has greatly improved internet speeds in the village. You will receive a full report this evening and, in the meantime, thank David Crwys-Williams, Sian Miler and the rest of the team for delivering this project. Still outstanding is the permanent installation in ducting and Les Curtis has kindly agreed that this may go across land owned by East Farm which is far better option than that suggested by Openreach, which was to bring the cable overground on poles.

The Parish Council completed some kerbing at the top of the Causeway and is in the process of making an application for a grant to kerb the whole of the Causeway in order to protect the footpath which we installed some years ago and which is in danger of being eroded by traffic.

We also met with the Local Area Technician from Transport for Bucks. He is responsible for maintenance of the roads within the parish. He was given a full tour of all our roads and has promised some remedial action. Indeed, the hole in Lower End left by Thames Water was repaired almost immediately.

We continue to look after the cutting of the grass verges in the parish, a responsibility devolved to us by Bucks County Council. We also look after Boughton's Peace which is owned by the parish and have paid for the grass cutting of the Playing Field and have also given a contribution towards the costs of maintaining the Playing Field. We also maintain our seven street lights.

We again sponsored Play Around the Parishes, which was very successful, and will do so again. The date is Wednesday 14th August.

We commemorated the centenary of the end of First World War by erecting two Silent Soldiers, one on Boughton's Peace and one at Lower Pollicott. Unfortunately, the latter was stolen. We also attended the remembrance service at the war memorial and joined in the Beacons of Light commemoration on 11th November with a bonfire with thanks to Chris Rand and Len Holder for building it. These events were well attended by people from the parish.

The Government is planning to build a new road between Oxford and Cambridge; the Oxford Cambridge Expressway. A decision on the route is due to be made by 2020, construction starting in 2025 and opening in 2030. As well as building the road, there is a proposal to build anything up to one million houses in the corridor equivalent to 10,000 houses per mile or 6 more cities the size of Oxford over the next 30 years. Paul Irwin will cover this later and the parish Council is watching the situation closely.

Five years ago, we registered the Hundred of Ashendon as a Community asset. The registration has now expired and we applied to register again and were declined. AVDC said we had not provided sufficient evidence that it was a community asset. We will submit another application and have been in touch with CAMRA who have a great deal of experience in this field. They have offered to comment on our application and we hope that, next time, we will be successful.

We organised a very successful litter pick (thanks to all those who took part) and recovered a huge amount of litter. The roads looked very clean afterwards but it is disappointing to see that litter still continues to be a problem.

The Parish Council receives and comments on all planning applications within the parish. This year, of those we received, we made no adverse comment on most of them but did provide comment on two applications for Lower Pollicott one of which was subsequently refused permission. The owner is appealing.

More and more meetings! Councillors have attended Local Area Forum meetings with Bucks County Council, Freight Strategy meetings, Calvert Landfill meetings, Parish Unitary Liaison meetings and more.

I thank all councillors for their continued support and also grateful thanks to our clerk, Venetia, for her work and support.