

## Thirston Parish Council

### Chair's Report 2024

It has been another busy but successful year for Thirston Parish Council.

As ever, there have been quite a number of planning applications and variations to consider for a Parish of our size. A number of these have become quite protracted, but we have sought to be involved where there is a clear impact on local residents by the applications made. The most complex has continued to involve Eshott Airfield, which has occupied a significant amount of time for ourselves and our Clerk responding to concerns and queries. We note that there has been a change of ownership at the airfield and we are hopeful that this will allow a reset of relationships and a more constructive working relationship. We have also recently heard that another contentious application, that for an industrial plant at High Park, has been withdrawn in the face of local opposition.

In other matters, the weather has led to a series of new issues (as well as an exacerbation of a number of old issues) relating to footpaths and roads. The Clerk has highlighted these to the Council as they arise and has a good working relationship with the team involved. That said, given the challenges of which we are aware of funding, repairs are taking longer in many cases and repeated notifications have become necessary to get action. Hopefully the increased funding being put into road maintenance will ease this. We appreciate the support of Councillor Sanderson who takes an active interest in our work.

We are grateful for the support of residents and a number of organisations, including Felton CAN and the local WI, in improving the appearance of our community. Of particular note is the work recently done to replant part of the Field of Hope, as well as the flowers planted adjacent to the bus shelter by the A1.

We have a vacancy following the retirement of Simon Allan as Councillor and Chair. I would like to again take this opportunity to thank Simon for his hard work and dedication throughout his time as a Councillor. We look forward to getting back to full strength shortly, and encourage anyone who may be interested in joining the Parish Council to contact either Lisa Hamlin or me to discuss further.

Last, but by no means least, a few words of thanks. I wanted to thank my fellow Councillors for your diligence and support over this past year. I want to thank our Parish Clerk, Lisa Hamlin, for all her hard work and dedication throughout the year. There is a lot of unseen work that goes on to allow the life of the Parish (and the Parish Council meetings) to run smoothly and we are really lucky to have Lisa involved. Can I also thank Councillor Clarehugh for allowing us to use these excellent facilities here in Bockenfield to host our meetings.

We look forward to serving the local community in this coming year. We always welcome any ideas from residents as to ways we can even further improve this wonderful community in which we live.

JM