

BOURTON VALE WARD

Ward Member Report to Bourton-on-the-Water Parish Council

APRIL 2020 TO APRIL 2021

The year has of course been dominated by the Covid Pandemic, I would like to record and thank all involved for the exceptional way all our villages have pulled together to ensure that everyone was looked after, and help volunteered to all who were in need.

March 2020 saw a change in the refuse and recycling operations with the roll-out of new bins, a weekly food waste collection and a reduction of garden waste collection to every other week. The green bin permit is increasing by 33per cent (£30 to £40). Replacement bins/bags will also be chargeable at £5 per container from now on.

Following on from the previous year's increase in parking charges (+30%), this year brought the news that the option to pay cash at Cotswolds car parks was to be removed (in stages through this coming year) and payment could only be made through an 'app' on a smart phone or by card. It is estimated that some 9,000 adults in the Cotswolds don't have a smart phone and 72% of all payments in 2019 were cash, so the impact of this change will need to be monitored to ensure some of our residents are not disadvantaged.

A benefit of these changes to Bourton Village will be a levy from car parking charges to reflect the heavy burden of tourist use.

During the year there have been major changes in the senior management at the Council, with Nigel Adams (Head of Paid Service with 28 years in post) and Bhavna Patel (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services) both leaving (at a cost of £330,000) to be replaced with a new Chief Executive – Robert Weaver and an interim Monitoring Officer. An additional 8 people have been recruited to fill various positions to deliver manifesto promises.

A number of Strategies and Reports have been proposed at Council, covering:-

- Ecological Emergency declared (July 2020)
- The Climate Emergency (Sept 2020)
- Corporate Strategy and Plan (Sept 2020)

In addition, there have been a number of other changes: -

- Amendments have been made to the Council's Constitution.
- The Community Grant scheme has been replaced by 'Spacehive', a crowd funding platform (costing £30,000 p.a.).
- Removal of the Ward Member's ability to automatically refer planning applications to the Planning Committee where considered appropriate. (This decision is causing some annoyance to effected Parishes and is the subject of ongoing discussion.)
- A new additional crest for the Council, designed for use on social media and new road signage including the crest and the parish name. These being part of a £200,000 'Civic Pride' scheme.
- A new fly-tipping reporting tool has made this a much easier process and there has been a substantive increase in the numbers being reported.

In February, the revised budget for 2021/2 was presented to and approved by Council.

It has been necessary to support financially the CDC Leisure Centres during the pandemic (circa £650k), some of which will be recovered as and when normality resumes.

The Planning and Enforcement Department is currently suffering from large workloads and a lack of Officers – recruitment is currently taking place.