

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Last year's APM was conducted via Zoom, with one member of the public present, and it wasn't until July that we were able to hold a face to face meeting for the first time in over a year.

This past 12 months has seen the sad loss to the council of James Shaw-Porter and Jonathon Pearce, but we have also been very fortunate to welcome co-opted members Robin Maslin, Andrew Taylor and Nicky Searle. Unfortunately we are still one short of our full complement of seven.

The year saw the Parish Council finalise an extension to the playpark lease with Magna of 25 years with a mid-term break point at a peppercorn rate of £1 per annum. This long term future for the playpark has prompted the council to look at ways to develop the use of the park, which Cllr Robin Maslin will report on to the meeting later, together with the outcome of the consultation on dogs in the park.

The Climate Action Group, led by Cllr Carol Byrom, has continued to be active in the village planting up areas with wild flowers and promoting a green agenda, with reports to the council and in the Village News. A major activity at the end of 2021 saw the group run a successful tree planting initiative as part of the Queens' Green Canopy Jubilee event.

The Jubilee celebrations in the village are being organised by the Village Hall committee under the leadership of Bev Waters and her team of volunteers, more of which you will hear from Bev later as she updates us all on the latest plans. Many thanks to Bev for taking a lead on this event of the year. The Parish Council's contribution to marking the Platinum Jubilee has been to commission 4 new planters to site at the 4 main entrances to the village and a new bench for the Green, all of which will have a commemorative plaque displayed. The Coronation bench on the Green has also been refurbished. All this work has been undertaken by local craftsman John Lilley. The council will also be replacing the wooden posts surrounding the Green.

Other activities during the year have seen the bus shelter book swap reinstated post covid lockdown, under the watchful eye of Cllr Robin Maslin and a small team of helpers who will keep the book swap tidy and the shelter clean. I represented the Parish Council at the annual Remembrance Service held at the cross in the cemetery and laid a wreath on behalf of the community. It was disappointing this year to see there was no support from the public for this event, perhaps with covid still fresh in people's minds. A very successful litter pick was carried out in March by a large group of volunteers. A couple of newcomers to the village were apparently unsure of the extent of our Parish boundaries and enthusiastically scavenged all the way to the junction of Long Lane and the Piddle Valley road, a mammoth effort!

We have been very pleased to see the reopening of the Rivers Arms and to welcome Will, Linnie and family as the new landlords. We wish them every success with their new venture especially after all the hard work that has gone into the new launch.

It has also been good to see the completion of the new houses at Brook Green and to welcome the new residents there to the village. The development has not been without it's difficulties and the Parish Council has had to raise a number of issues with the planning department and the developer as it has progressed. Unfortunately there remains an issue with the footpath that was supposed to be created between the village hall and the existing footpath at the top of the site, which would have given pedestrian access from the centre of the village to the playpark via a permissive path provided by Mrs Turner. I am continuing to maintain pressure on the planners to insist this part of the development is completed in accordance with the approved plans.

And finally, after 4 years I am standing down as Chair of the council and a new Chair will be elected at the AGM following this meeting. I shall be continuing as an ordinary council member with responsibility for planning until the next local council elections. I would like to thank the council members for all the sterling support they have given me and for making the role of Chair a pleasant and straightforward one, which is not always the experience of council Chairs. May I also remind you all that despite the recent recruitments, the Parish Council is still one member short, a rewarding opportunity for someone who feels they would like to make a contribution to the community in which they live.