

2015 – 2016 Chairman's report.

I will begin by going back to the Parish Council elections last May, when there were less than the required 13 candidates. We successfully co-opted the 3 required to make up our numbers but since then a couple have retired meaning we still have 2 vacancies that need to be filled.

North Curry has certainly had another very busy year keeping us all on our toes especially on the planning side. The Site Allocation and Development Management Plan...SADMP has taken a great deal of time and effort not only by the Council but by some Parishioners who have given their time and expertise so generously. It has not been easy. In view of development already undertaken or granted permission, your Council do not believe there is need for any more housing in North Curry to fulfil the Deane's allocation. 3 councillors and 3 parishioners attended the Deane when the Government Inspector visited The Deane's Plan. We await his final decision although meanwhile the application for houses in Knapp lane is currently under consideration by the Deane. In addition The Manor Farm development application was refused by The Deane although there is a resubmission for 3 houses by Mr Ward No 24/16/0022. An appeal against the refused retrospective application at Jarvis Cottage for the wall replacement and removal of shrubs is currently under consideration.

In relation to the new houses in White Street, developed by James Higdon, The Parish Council are in the process of being given ownership of the Stoke Road end copse, our thanks to the volunteers in managing this land especially Phil Stone who not only puts in numerous hours himself arranges and manages the works needed.

Your Council have re paid the Stable Barn loan in full, and having been run by North Curry Community Ltd. For some 9 years we have now taken over the full responsibility with no change in day to day running. Our thanks go to the retiring North Curry Community Ltd. members especially to Richard Lander who continues to be our volunteer coordinator, and Brian Dix who continues to run The Stable accounts. After a successful first 10 years, renewal leases are being signed by both The Community Coffee Shop and Angela Hair dressers. Congratulations to them on a successful decade of business – no mean feat and I am sure they will continue being great assets to us all.

The loss of Andy Moll was a sad time for the Village, Andy was a fantastic volunteer for not only the Playing Fields but many village events, his friendly enthusiasm and hard work was second to none, he is very sorely missed. Our thanks go to The Playing Fields Committee who stepped up to the plate to keep the Playing Fields running.

An extended Sports Field Storage shed using the 106 monies planning gain from the new house building being undertaken at Overlands has been completed. The Parish Council was offered the opportunity to comment in the naming of The New Development and Loscombe Meadow, reflecting the owners back in the seventeen hundreds, has been agreed, our thanks to Angel Dix for her knowledge of our village history

The opening hours of our Parish Office have changed slightly, now being Tuesday and Wednesday 1-4pm and Thursday 10-1pm, but please remember an appointment can be made for any reasonable time to suit individuals if these are inconvenient.

The Parish Council supported and agreed solar panels should be fitted to the roofs of The Village Hall and Sports Pavilion. Amendments to their contracts enabled works to go ahead and The Sports pavilion panels were completed last August, and the Village Hall in October. The School followed at the end of March this year. Many thanks to those involved in this Project and to Tim Walker for his assistance with the contract amendments.

Following a request from the Village Hall Committee regarding the re surfacing of the car park and spring retention works The Parish Council awarded them a grant of £3,000.00 on the understanding it is a car park for the village, e.g. for use by the allotment users, playing fields, the school etc as well as village hall users, although this facility should obviously not be abused.

August saw a new computer in the office. Labour kindly being donated by James Willis.

The heavy traffic and tractors through the village. Due to concerns and no progress with direct contact with contractors and farmers or via the local authorities the Parish Council's Road Safety Group carried out with a survey in October relating to issues surrounding the increase in large agricultural machinery movements. The results were used to support the case to Somerset and Avon Police and County Highways seeking action following The Parish Council letters to farmers having had no significant effect. As a result, PC Cox on behalf of The Specialist Police for agricultural machinery Unit, UK, visited us, explaining that with his lead, new tractor legalisation is being discussed with The Department of Transport and will be acted on. He has also visited all local farms and contractors most involved with the increase in agricultural movements to explain, in no uncertain terms, their responsibilities re road safety. The Road Safety Committees work is on going and PC Cox continues to support them. Speed Watch is to be reintroduced, Mr Akerman will explain later at item 8 on the agenda.

With assistance from our SCC Councillor David Fothergill, funding has been recommended for road improvements which were put forward by us following a survey by our Road Safety Group. A safer Route to school is proposed including extending the Pavement in Greenway, also a change of priority on the greenway junction was recommended by us and studies by SCC are being undertaken.

Towards the end of last year I am sure you will have all noticed SCC erected a diversion sign in the village for times of floods on the moors giving alternate routes, complete with gates to close each end of the moor road to prevent the dangers of marooned cars

In October a new up to date Parish directory was produced and delivered to every one in the Parish and a supply for newcomers, if you know of a new neighbour please let us know so they can be welcomed with a copy. I will say a big thank you for all the people who give their time to deliver The Pink Paper in the parish and so willingly distribute any notices for the Parish Council, this is a fantastic gesture and ensures information can get to everyone. Thank you all.

I am sure you are all aware of the E-newsletter which has been set up for Parishioners to receive up to date information, have you put your e-mail address on the distribution list.

Moving to the allotments Cllr. David Fothergill secured A Health and Well Being Grant from SCC to enable The Parish Council to install dip tanks following Wessex Waters change of attitude to the use of taps for hose pipes even with the installation of non return valves. This work will be carried out in the near future.

After many years of debates and discussions, the Parish Council, after advice from three Tree Surgeons, have taken the decision that the condition of the Lime Trees in Church Road needs to be addressed. Walking from the Square the 3rd and 5th diseased trees are to be removed in the autumn and at the same time replaced with the appropriate species. Other trees are also monitored and further decisions taken in the future.

Unfortunately due to lack of volunteer support for the Queen's Birthday Beacon it was cancelled, arrangements are now well in hand to celebrate her Official Birthday.

Firstly the litter pick on May 14th meeting in the village hall car park at 10am. Then on Sunday June 12th with a grant from us, a jazz band, children's races, teas by the WI in the pavilion, North Curry Brewery and lots more. Our many thanks to the volunteers who are making this possible. We hope you will all support us.

Before finishing I would like to bring to attention that throughout the year Taunton Deane have received numerous retrospective planning applications from North Curry house holders, we would like to remind and ask people to follow the correct path obtaining planning permission before starting any building works etc.

Closing I would like to thank all the Parish, Deane and County Councillors for their input and hard work throughout the year and very special thanks to Barbara our Parish Clerk who does an outstanding job way beyond the basics and time allotted, and who helps me greatly in ensuring the smooth running of the Council.