

2016 – 2017 Chairman's Report

The year has been very busy once again especially with Planning Matters and the finalisation of the Site Allocation and Development Management Plan by Taunton Deane. This has now been agreed by the Inspector and adopted by Taunton Deane Borough Council. Unfortunately, after a lot of man hours not only by the Parish Council but Parishioners as well, for which we are so grateful, the Inspector has agreed to the inclusion of the field at Knapp Lane for houses. Following this the 2nd appeal for the Planning permission has been successful and the 20 houses are to be built.

The houses off Overlands are nearing completion and are integrating into the village, the footpath off Overlands re-opened, and I would like to thank the building contractors for their cooperation & endeavours keeping disturbance to a minimum during building works.

The Wall at Jarvies Cottage, 16 Stoke Road - the appeal for the refusal of the moving of the garden wall was allowed on appeal so unfortunately it will not go back to its original position. Again with planning refusal on appeal for houses near Manor Farm we await decisions by the Inspectorate.

The footpath along The White Street Copse donated by Higdon Homes has been completed with steps and gate, our thanks to Cllr Stone and his band of Volunteers.

Thinking back to last summer I am pleased to report a very successful day celebrating the Queens 90th birthday with many villagers making it possible

The Tractor traffic problem in the village is still on going, PC Cox continues supporting us and we are working in liaison with Stoke St Gregory Parish Council We have met with local farmers and following their request secured agreement with The Village Hall for their monthly article in the pink paper. The farmers wishing to work with Parishioners are now able to inform Parishioners of their Farm work and Tractor movements etc. A Tractor Code of Conduct drawn up by The NFU in conjunction with the police and farmers has been distributed to all Farmers and their Contractors.

The allotments. Following a Directive from Wessex Water no longer allowing hose pipes direct from the taps for watering, the Parish Council have installed 2 water dip tanks. These are connected to the water supply and are fully up to legislations.

After many years of concern regarding the Lime Trees in Church Road two of them were found to be diseased and removal was recommended. The Parish Council took the decision to have them felled. This was carried out in December and two new trees of the smaller lime variety were planted to replace them. The Parish Council are monitoring the remaining trees and will keep every one informed.

Our Traffic team continues with their valuable input, Speed Watch is up and running led by Cllr Akerman, thank you to all the volunteers for their patience and input and, with the help of our County Councillor David Fothergill, we have secured funding by SCC for the proposed pavement improvements in Greenway and road improvements to Windmill Hill and The Greenway Junction. This is a later agenda item and plans are available during our coffee break.

The spring litter pick in the village, led by Cllr. Vaughan was very successful with over 20 volunteers and we hope to arrange another one in the autumn

Using modern technology our volunteer e-newsletter is proving popular and is a successful way, along with posters etc, of letting people know what is happening in the Parish and if any action is needed to be taken by our Parishioners

It was with great sadness that we heard in December of the death of Tim Machen, a former Parish Councillor and a real asset to the Parish in so many ways, always there when a volunteer was needed. He will be missed.

I will take the opportunity to advise you all of the Community Infrastructure Levy, This is received by Taunton Deane from developers following new developments, with 15% of receipts being passed to The Parish Council. These monies must be used to support the development of the area by funding: a) The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. b) Any thing else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places in an area. At present we have funds of just under twenty thousand pounds and this must be spent within five years of receipt. To date we have given a grant to the playing fields for new picnic tables and barbeques, and to The Church for the costs of their Welcome packages to welcome new parishioners. For the future, grants have also been approved as follows: £3000.00 towards the car park extension at White Street Sports Field, £1000.00 contribution to SCC's road safety improvements, and the funding of a waste bin near the corner of White Street.

Also section 137 of the Local Government Act enables Parish Councils to spend up to £7.57 per electorate out of their own funds for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory power.

A Sixty Plus talk given by the Police was a success and appreciated by those attending. Our BT phone box...After lobbying TDBC supported the retention of our BT phone box by the Post Office, which we hope will secure it for the foreseeable future. The village Flood action plan has been completed and our thanks to Cllr Vaughan who has developed and oversees its progress.

I am sure many of you have noticed the digging on some of our grass verges. This is our wild flower planting scheme around the village led by Cllr Stone, I am sure we are all looking forward to its maturity in the summer. Regarding the lack of superfast broad band, Nick Sloan of Stoke St Gregory has been in liaison with suppliers other than BT with some success and is happy to be contacted.

In closing it is with pleasure I can inform you we have the full quota of thirteen Councillors and wish to thank them for their work in keeping the Parish running so smoothly. Our Clerk Barbara continues to be a great asset and I give her my thanks and appreciation.

Before being seated I would like to thank Mr Brian Dix a leading figure in the development of our Stable Barn, housing not only the Parish Office and Voluntary Coffee shop but Angela's Hairdressing as well, now bringing a profit to the Parish Council which will help to keep supporting various grants in the Parish and towards our precept. He has now retired from being the Treasurer of the committee running the Stable and we have a small gift in recognition of all his input.