

Harpole Parish Council

Chair's report 2016/7

2016/17 has been another very busy year.

Our agendas have again been dominated by the state of our highways with fly tipping, potholes and churned up verges featuring heavily along with of course the dog poo littering our pathways.

The red lion lay by figured heavily in our agendas last year and it is still giving us grief this year. The only progress we seem to have made is that the people living there in vehicles have now clocked up another year. Perhaps we should be charging them Council tax. After extensive dialogue with all local highways and environmental departments I think we have to now accept that there is nothing we can do to move these people on. After a site meeting we have managed to secure some extra rubbish bins for the area, we just need to train people to use them. Our latest news from the lay by is that highways are not responsible for it as the majority of the land involved is private land, but highways cant say who does own it. SNC seen to think its highways responsibility. We need them both to thrash it out and give us an answer.

The tri parish meetings of last year did not continue but with HARpole action team holding regular meetings and with Sonja at the helm attended by Peter Jeremy Sarah Colin Brian Justice and myself, we as a PC have managed to stay on top of all information coming out from the proposed developments. We have this month met with Bloor Homes representatives to look at their proposals. We have not heard anything from the Barwood development so far this year but I am sure that will change soon.

Sonja has also kept us on target with our NP which will be completed this year. With the assistance of Kirkwells and us agreeing to make some small concessions our final version of the plan will come back to the village in the summer. I think we all breathed a sigh of relief when it came back from the inspector with a very positive outcome.

Colin, with the support of the PC, submitted an excellent planning application for a country park in Harpole mirroring the allocation given to us in the JCS. One of our more inspired ideas I feel. However it was not to be as SNC wanted to tie us up in red tape and a higher price tag than we had been quoted, bringing our masterly plan to an end. Very disappointing.

HPC now has an excellent website up and running and bringing vital information about the village to our parishioners. Thank you to David Lawrence who made setting it up painless for us and who is continuing to do very good work with the website and our official face book page. Fly tipping and street doctor reports are now going in from individuals instead of reporting to us and more and more people are realising how easy it is to use the site.

With Sarah's comprehensive newsletter going out every month I think the PC is doing an excellent job of getting information out there.

Colin spearheaded a campaign for a village mini bus, which appeared to be a very good idea. However the complexities of running and maintaining the vehicle proved too much for village organisations. Colin has assured us though that the idea is only on the back burner and will come out again when the time is right.

Whilst as a PC we are kept very busy with the planning issues both large and small, we also have the other sub committees we sit on. Highways is always a very active meeting as are our planning meetings. Views are exchanged freely and important historical facts about the village and its residents are shared by our more elderly councillors. The youth club has been revitalised by the parish council representatives offering real help and support, as has the scarecrow committee which seems to be doing very well this year. The osh management committee are struggling and will need more members if we are to continue going forward. The PFA seems to also have good leadership and they submitted an excellent piece to the website this month detailing their work and what they need from the village to maintain the playing field.

We also have a new working group set up to look at all of the possible changes coming to us with Harpole parishes massive future expansion and what will be required for the PC to still be relevant going forward. Sonja is leading this group along with Colin Peter and myself.

The allotments are thriving and working with the school to put in new and more secure fencing around the perimeter.

All of the above can only continue because we all volunteer our time. We have all of the hassle of local government but without the salary. The monthly meetings, sub committees e mails, phone calls site visits and people feeling able to stop us in the street to discuss their issues are all major parts of being a parish councillor.

Thank you all for your volunteering. For making yourselves available sometimes at a moments notice and for doing it mostly in good spirits.