

Chairman's Annual Report 2018

Welcome & introductions: A very warm welcome to you all and to our headline speakers Ellie Venton (Dorset Communications Records Team), Mike Haines (Operations Officer, Dorset Waste Partnership) and a warm welcome return visit to PCSO Sarah Pilcher giving us a few wise words about what is happening out there, so to speak!

Before I proceed further, I do want to introduce the members of the Parish Council to you. This year I have the pleasure of introducing one new Councillor to you. Due to personal reasons Mrs Debbie Billen felt she could no longer have the time for Parish Council commitments and has resigned. Debbie has served on the Parish Council for, we think, 28 years; so it is my pleasure to announce that Mr Neil Farmer is our new Parish Councillor, Neil was co-opted last night at our AGM, so welcome, Cllr Neil, to the team! Otherwise, the Parish Councillors remain as to my left is and to my right we have (*Chairman introduces Councillors and Clerk*). So without further to do, let us move to item 2 on the agenda: Ellie, over to you.....

Our year as a Parish Council began yesterday with our AGM. At this meeting, for want of further applicants, I was elected Chairman and Cllr Alex Carstairs was elected Vice Chairman; other elections included: Cllr Colin as our representative on the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, Cllr Judy as our Village Hall Committee representative, Mr Chris Wardle as our Rights of Way Officer, supported by Mr Mick Rawlings. Cllr Jeremy Stavenhagen agreed to continue the responsibility for overseeing our roads, reporting faults and liaising with our Community Highways Officer, Blair Turner; and Cllr Alex Carstairs agreed to continue overseeing planning applications. Mr James Billen is not able to continue as our Flood Warden, at our AGM last night we felt that our Community Emergency Plan would suffice, but if anyone does want to come forward as the village's Flood Warden, please let us know.

It is our custom as a Parish Council to award small donations from our income, and we will be deciding upon donations for 2019-20 at our November budget meeting. Last November we awarded: our church £320 for churchyard maintenance, £800 to the Playing Fields Association to cover the cost of grass cutting and £165 to the Village Association towards the cost of the insurance for our Post Office.

In my report last year, I highlighted the demise of the Library Service bus. Cllr Colin worked with our Sub-postmistress, Evelyn, to set up a scheme whereby books could be ordered every week. One year on, this scheme continues – and I highlight this for the benefit of anyone who may have missed out knowing about it, including new residents – on Wednesdays Robin Masters takes in orders and collects books, delivering them back to the Post Office where they can be collected. Our gratitude expressed to Evelyn, Robin and Colin for this service to the community.

Planning: Cllr Alex has continued to work extremely effectively as our Planning Co-ordinator. Planning issues can be detailed, and sometimes controversial, so as a Parish Council we are grateful to Alex to lead us through the various applications. Planning documents are sent by email to the Clerk, who forwards them onto all councillors. Cllr Alex collates feedback. If there are contentious issues, he requests an extension to the deadline so that issues can be resolved at the next Parish Council meeting. Unusually, this year has been very quiet on the planning front! We have commented on only one application and had referred one planning matter on Stone's Common to the planning department, which is still under investigation. Should you wish to follow up detail of any applications these are easily accessed through the dorsetforyou.com website planning section where you do a localised search by entering your postcode. Alex would like me to reiterate that any member of the public can either write a letter or comment on line, both of which will appear on the website against any applications commented on.

Highways is always a regular agenda item! Cllr Jeremy has worked tirelessly to get the quality of our local roads improved. No doubt, if you drive a car, you have been skilfully avoiding the potholes on Barrowlands Road – a section of road that continually requires repair and following much nagging from Cllr Jeremy to Blair Turner (Head of Highways), you will have seen that once again it has been marked for repair. The patching of our roads, pot hole filling, verging and last year the top dressing of local roads are largely down to his persistent efforts.

A most prominent contribution to our village – indeed, even to Dorset – has been the work that Cllr Jeremy started to upgrade our way signs in the village. Over a year ago Cllr Jeremy

was investigating how best to repair our rusting posts and finger boards. He has liaised with Dorset's AONB as well as the CLT to obtain funding. The AONB agreed part funding as long as the signpost at Barrowlands, now stated Eggardon! He has orchestrated sand blasting, priming and top coating the posts, and then a real fillip to the process occurred when he met Mr Nigel Phillips who resides in Church Mead. Nigel, agreed to take on the renovation of the finger post boards and painting of the finials. While the Parish Council/AONB/CLT has paid for the parts: wood, stainless steel brackets, paint and lettering, Nigel has been working at home to prepare the boards, and possibly you have seen him on the highway installing them, and occasionally, with his wife, Kate, holding the step ladder as was the case at Clift Lane! If you meet Nigel, please make yourself known to him, and on behalf of us all a few words expressing admiration for his work would be warmly welcomed. Last night we resolved to press on with repairing and re-installing the post at Higher Kingcombe, as well as the corner fixed sign opposite The Old Swan.

One of the wettest Springs many of us can remember has highlighted the concern by residents of the flooding on Lower Road. The geography of the land being the main problem, of course. Basically the road level needs raising above the water table and the problem would be solved, but we all suspect that isn't going to happen! Mr Turner our local Highways Officer did agree to the jetting of gullies, and also in the High Street and Barrowlands Lane. As regards, Lower Road, this has made a difference – yes, there is a patch where standing water persists, but despite recent heavy rain the puddles on either side of the road rarely meet in the middle. Cllr Jeremy, and Nigel Phillips we thank you both for your persistent work.

Following years of work as our Rights Of Way Officer and having updated the lists of paths, the personnel who had adopted the paths and listing the landowners, Cllr Janet decided last November to step down, and I am delighted to say, that Mr Chris Wardle agreed to take on the role with support from Mr Michael Rawlings. Mr Wardle has been attending Parish Council meetings as a resident. At our March meeting Chris reported that he had discussed a number of issues with Tara Hansford at the County Council. With regards to the right of way determination at Frogmore Farm/Badger Lane, he reported it was expected to take between two and three years to investigate the background. The route alignment at Colesmore Farm was being clarified and once it was finalised, there would be liaison with

the landowners to install gates and enable public access. Finally, with regards to Yates Farm at Toller Fratrum, work had been undertaken with Mr Yeates to enable a culvert to be installed in the new financial year. Chris thank you for your very enthusiastic start to your role, we as a community and Parish Council are most grateful.

By the start of Winter, vegetation on School Lane and the railway bridge was getting to the point of either impeding pedestrians or traffic and while I am used to working outside, I would like to highlight that at nearly 90 years of age Cllr Colin was more than keen and willing to help pair back the growth in these two areas alongside Alan Knowles. Colin is really an example to us all.

The Playing Fields Association is within a period of flux. Debbie Billen has resigned as Chairman. The PFA also has no Secretary or Treasurer. Last night we agreed to take on the responsibility of trying to get the PFA up and running again. We are going to write a piece for Team News and for Toller Facebook page. However, we do have some good news as 6 Parish Councillors have agreed to become trustees of the Playing Field.

The Playing Fields has an annual inspection governed by Fields in Trust, while the equipment remains safe, there are a few repairs still outstanding. The Parish Council looked into buying into the services of a lengthman scheme run by Bridport Town Council, but they were not willing for us to buy in a few hours work – they work on a much broader budget basis. If there is a resident who has handyman or woman credentials, funding is currently available for labour and materials. The Parish Council has examined the possibility of taking over the running of the PFA, but legal costs prohibited this from happening.

Earlier this year our Clerk, Katharine, was approached by a charity called the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust who wanted to erect a memorial plaque to commemorate the nearby Toller Airfield at Grey's farm, which is a slight exaggeration as it was a really a place where we think a barrage balloon was installed. This matter is ongoing, but the Village Hall Committee has agreed to site the sign on or close to the Village Hall, a final decision to be made once we know the size and design of the plaque.

In 2015, two Parish Councillors were behind the initiative to start the Toller Times and this has now become a regular publication 10 times a year, the Parish Council initially funded the print run, but latterly the Kingcombe Centre now fund the printing, for which we are grateful. I just wanted to highlight this community resource as I do every year for our village website hosted by former Councillor Peter Davies. Again, our sincere thanks to Peter for this ongoing and most useful initiative. And you will be pleased to know that you can catch up on all the PC minutes (and even the Chairman's reports!). If any village group is holding a special event it is always worth contacting Peter who will willingly advertise it on the Noticeboard page, which may I add is currently advertising our famous plant sale for May 12th!

Before finishing, I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors who make for lively but friendly debate at meetings. They give freely of their time for the good of our community and to our hard-working Clerk, Katharine Sheehan, who keeps scrupulous records and always seems to have any bite of required information to hand!

Thank you to everyone for coming tonight and should anyone have any concerns or issues through the forthcoming year please don't hesitate to approach one of us or attend one of our meetings which are, of course, open to members of the public and you can share your concerns or ideas during the public forum sections.

David Ennals. May 2018.