

Annual Parish Meeting Chairman's Report

We could never have imagined last March that our plans for a bigger and better Annual Parish Meeting last year would be not only cancelled but delayed almost a whole year by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our first thought is for all those in our community who have lost loved ones and our thanks to our workers that have continued to provide the essential services. To everyone that has helped out a friend or neighbour in need and all of you who have abided by the rules thank you, you have helped us reach this point where we hope with the vaccine roll out an end is in sight.

2019/2020

Below are the main items achieved during the 2019/20 year that we hoped to report to you last April.

Stockley Gateways

Following a large representation from Stockley residents about traffic volume and speed issues in the village the Council was able to help provide the Stockley Gateways. This is part funded by the Parish Council and Wiltshire Council area Board through the Calne Community Area Transport group.

Bus Shelter, Stockley

Last year also saw the installation of the bus shelter and proper dropped curbs at the bus stop to allow access for all to somewhere a bit drier to wait for the bus. The school bus has also started to use the shelter for pick up and drop off where possible.

Church Road, Derry Hill: Waiting Restrictions

Councillors consulted with the community about the options for the introduction of waiting restrictions on Church Road to help improve safety for pupils and parents at school pick up and drop off times and address congestion problems. The final scheme was agreed by the Council and approved to go forward to Wiltshire Council to set up the implementation as an experimental scheme so that any unforeseen consequences of the scheme could be addressed.

New Benches at Tile Court, Derry Hill

The Council approved the purchase of replacement benches for the two old benches at Tile Court.

Play equipment at Lansdowne Hall

The Council was able to use Community Infrastructure Levy Funds to help Rub-a-dub with the purchase of new play equipment at the Lansdowne Hall. This will be available to other groups and users when use of the hall returns to normal.

Cherhill View: Dog Waste Bin

Residents of Cherhill View, the new Redrow development off Stockley Lane asked the Council to provide a new dog waste bin to help encourage owners to act responsibly and keep the area clean and safe for all to use. Purchase of the bin was approved, and it has been installed and is serviced by Idverde for the Parish Council.

Heddington and Stockley Amateur Dramatics Storage Container

Sun Edison funds were used to help the Heddington and Stockley amateur dramatics society purchase a large storage container to keep all the costumes and props safe and dry when not in use.

Lower Compton: Speed Limit

Residents of Lower Compton saw a reduction in the number of HGVs travelling past with the opening of the Hill's Relief Road and the Parish Council supported the introduction of a 40mph speed limit and no waiting restrictions along the access road from the A4.

Community Governance Review

The Local Boundaries Commission for England made changes to the Parishes Ward boundaries and the numbers of Councillors per ward as part of its review of the Wiltshire Council electoral divisions. These changes come into effect for the May 2021 elections. The year also saw Wiltshire Council start the Community Governance Review to look at the Parish boundaries in Wiltshire and also considered a petition to create a new Parish for Derry Hill and Studley. In the end Wiltshire Council decided "to not recommend creation of a new parish at Derry Hill and Studley during the 2019/20 Community Governance Review and to undertake a further Community Governance Review when practicable, to include Calne Without, Calne Town, and other surrounding parishes, so that all potential options and impacts could be considered". Wiltshire did agree to make the minor Ward changes that the Parish Council had asked. The further review is due to take place in summer 2021.

Planning

The Council continued to seek the proper completion of the works associated with the Crest Studley Gardens development at Studley. A number of highway issues remained to be addressed and completed and a promised review of the handling of the application by planning and highways at Wiltshire Council is still awaited from Cllr Toby Sturgis of Wiltshire Council. The Parish Council continues to ask for a response for which it has been waiting over 2 years.

Nigel Cole Retires

Cllr Nigel Cole retired at Christmas 2019 having served on the Council and Middle Ward for 36 years. A non-contested election in the Parish Middle Ward saw the Council welcome Cllr David Songhurst in March 2020

2020/2021

The Council had to cancel its April meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting set for late April but continued to operate during the first lockdown by delegating decisions to the Clerk. Meeting resumed in May when we had been introduced to the world of Zoom and Teams and virtual meetings were possible. This is a summary of what the Council has achieved this year.

Benches at Tile Court

The benches at Tile Court which had been ordered in March were finally received and installed in the summer by Green Square as part of the joint project.

Church Road, Derry Hill: Waiting restrictions

The double yellow lines and the school no waiting zone went in in August ready for the return of school and the 6-month period for objections ran until February 2021. Neither Wiltshire Council nor the Parish Council received any objections. The Parish Council is to make a final decision on the scheme at its meeting on 8th March. We will be able to update you on this at the meeting.

Noticeboards at Derry Hill and Studley

New notice boards, made locally, were put in place for Derry Hill and Studley during the summer and are being well used.

Dog bin at Studley Gardens

After a lot of too and froing the Council managed to provide a new Dog waste bin at Studley Gardens up by the kissing gate that gives access onto the public footpath in the field adjacent to the development.

New Website

The Council started work on an update of the website to comply with the new accessibility regulations and took the opportunity to make it a little easier to use and provide more information. The new website has recently gone live and although some areas are still being added to and worked on, we hope that residents will find it useful. We are happy to receive any suggestions for further improvements.

River Marden Survey

The Bristol Avon Rivers Trust made a presentation to the Council in March 2020, just before lockdown, seeking funding to carry out a survey of the river Marden which rises in the

Parishes East Ward at Calstone and flows through Calne and then back along the Parish boundary down to Hazeland. A grant of £5000 was approved in July and the work, which will identify the issues and opportunities that the river provides in environmental terms, although delayed by the restrictions is going ahead. It is hoped it will help the Council secure the rivers vital ecological and greenspace benefits for future generations and inform input into the review of the Clane Area Neighbourhood Plan.

Signs at Broads Green

Residents at Broads Green sought the Council's help with reducing the speed of traffic through the hamlet which posed a danger to walkers and cyclists, although the speed survey showed that the area didn't qualify for police action the Council was able to provide place name signs to make drivers more aware that pedestrians were likely to be on the road.

Defibrillator maintenance

Derry Hill and Studley heartbeat which provides and maintains the defibrillators in the Derry Hill and Studley area requested help from the Council with replacing batteries and pads on the defibrillators as the usual fundraising activities couldn't take place this year. The Council was pleased to support the group and hopes to continue to be able to do so.

Road Safety Feasibility Study

Road safety was the Council's priority for spending in 2019/20 and in response to the number of issues being brought forward by residents for which there were not standard highway solutions available, the Council resolved to commission a road safety feasibility study to look at the problem areas and issues identified by residents. The request for tenders was issued just before lockdown in 2020 and resulted in only one response so the Council decided to reissue the brief in November 2020 and appointed consultants Entran in January 2021. Work has commenced and reports will be made to the Council with the findings in due course.

Playground Survey

The question of providing additional play and fitness equipment in Derry Hill at Petty Acre has been mentioned several times and Councillors took the opportunity of a short break in restrictions to distribute a leaflet with and questionnaire about the possibility of initiating a feasibility study into provision of equipment. Despite a good response, the numbers didn't meet the levels set by the Council for the project to proceed. However, the Council is hoping that the enthusiasm shown by some of the respondents will lead to a wider discussion about the provision of facilities for the community and further projects can be considered.

Vehicle Activated Speed Signs (VASS)/Speed Indicator Devices (SID)

The Council has initiated a project to purchase Vehicle Activate Speed Signs (VASS), also known as Speed Indicator Devices, for use on roads within the Parish where there is evidence or concerns about speeding traffic. A number of locations have been identified and we are awaiting confirmation from the Highways Authority about their suitability ahead of finalising details of the costs of purchase and servicing. The review by the Highways

Authority has been delayed because of Covid restrictions. The aim, dependent on cost, will be to rotate the signs between the various sights in the Parish.

Community Speedwatch Team for Church Road, Derry Hill

The Council is supporting the creation of a Community Speedwatch team for Derry Hill. The project has been on hold as training cannot proceed with current Covid restrictions. This is a scheme run by the Police and once restrictions are lifted, and the police has capacity to restart the scheme we will contact volunteers once again to confirm their continued support and then ask the Police to proceed with training.

Laptop Grants

As recently as February the Council was able to grant over £10,000 to 3 of our local schools, Cherhill Primary, Derry Hill Primary and Kingsbury Green Academy, to provide laptops and iPads for pupils with no access to devices for home learning. The devices will be used in school once the pupils are able to return full time and will be there to lend out to those needing to learn from home at any point due to illness or injury.

Stephen Cox Garden Trust Grant

The Stephen Cox Garden Trust does work with some of the disadvantaged members of your community and also works with students from abroad. The Parish Council has been able to provide a grant to help refurbish an area to provide a library and classroom area to allow the charity to continue its work.

Planning

The Council continues to push for the completion of all the highway and cycle provision for the Studley Gardens development, particularly for the safe cycle route east the bus shelter on the A4 at Studley Crossroads.

The Council objected to the planning application houses at Chilvester Hill on the grounds that the development should be brought forward through the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and that it would affect the Berhill Farmhouse listed building and that the plans had significant highway issues. The application was refused in February 2021.

Wiltshire Local Plan Consultation and the Future Chippenham Consultation

Wiltshire Council has consulted on the Wiltshire Local Plan and the Future Chippenham Road Options the Parish Council's response to both issues will be decided at the Parish Council meeting on March 8th, 2021.

Calne Area Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan which was finalised in February 2018 now has to be reviewed to take into account the changes being suggested in the Wiltshire Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which is made up of Parish and Calne Town representatives and a number of interested local residents have started work on this and consultants have been appointed to help the group progress that plan with the community.

Solar Farm Proposal

Eden Renewables have consulted the Parish Council and the community on proposals for a Solar Farm at Forest Gate, Pewsham. The Parish Council awaits the submission of a formal planning application then it will be able to give the proposal proper consideration and make a response. In the meantime, residents and interested parties have been asked to send any views and comments into the Parish Council for information.

Retirement after 55 years on the Council

Lord Lansdowne retired in September 2020 after 55 years of service on the Parish Council. Elections have been halted by the Government due to Coronavirus, but as the community did not request an election in response to the Notice of Election posted by Wiltshire Council the Parish Council was able to use a process called co-option to seek a new Councillor. The Council was pleased to have 4 very able candidates apply for the role Marcus Lee was subsequently co-opted to the Council in December 2020 and will serve until 6th May 2021 when the whole Council is up for election.

Local Election May 6th, 2021

The government has said that the local elections will go ahead on May 6th this year. Our Wiltshire Councillor Christine Crisp has announced that she will not be standing again, and I would like to thank her for all the support that she has provided to the Parish both as our Wiltshire Councillor and as Chair of the Calne Area Board. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

All 15 seats on the Parish Council will be available at the election and the Parish Council has done what it can in recent months to encourage residents both to vote in the election and to stand for election. The Parish Ward boundaries have been changed by the Local Boundary Commission for England as part of its review and amended slightly on further request of the Parish Council. Residents will be made aware of the ward within which they live by Wiltshire Council on the polling cards or postal votes and the Parish Council has a link to the revised map of the Wards on its website.

The new Council will have a number of major issues to address following the election including work on the Wiltshire Local Plan, Future Chippenham proposals and the Wiltshire Council Community Governance Review. In addition, I hope that they will take up any issues raised tonight and invite the community to continue to work with them to plan for the future.

Finally, I would like to thank all Councillors for their work over the past two years and those retiring from the Council for their service to the community. To those standing for re-election the very best of luck.

Ed Jones
Chairman

Calne Without Parish Council

25th February 2021