

Chairman's Annual Report - 29th May 2007

May I start by welcoming everyone here this evening?

This report aims to give you all a summary of what has happened in the village this year and what your Parish Council has been doing.

Thankfully we are not saying goodbye to any councillors this year and we have finally managed to fill the last spot with Ian Hardy joining us.

Three new positions were created this year; Mr Senior became Police Liaison, Mrs Aylott became Neighbourhood Watch Representative and Mrs Watkin and Mr Senior took on the responsibility for Health and Safety.

Youth Group

Mrs Adams and Mrs Aylott were the representatives this year. The youth group has continued its good work and remains a great success with the lower ages.

The group have been liaising with the Memorial Hall committee over a multi play facility in the grounds of the hall and have also been investigating a source of funding for the project. HDC have advised that this is a permitted development.

The Youth Group has still, unfortunately, not had as much support from CCC as was hoped and still have problems with the availability of permanent youth workers in the village. The older age group meetings have had to be suspended due to lack of support staff and one of the detached youth workers being made redundant. It remains the dedication of the Youth Group committee that has kept things going.

Flood Alleviation

Unfortunately the Environment Agency did not submit plans to Huntingdon District Council in August as expected and then subsequently announced that they no longer had the funding to proceed for at least another 2 years, a fact that we only discovered by reading the local papers. The Parish Council has been working with HDC and our local MP on this matter and will continue to do so, although it must also be stressed that the Parish Council has not decided to approve the current scheme.

Bus Shelter

Due to the flood alleviation scheme delay it was decided that we could not rely on the Environment Agency replacing the bus shelter for us so, after further liaison with the Huntingdon Community Safety Partnership, we decided to accept the quotation to remove the old bus shelter and install a clear bus shelter with seats and sides.

In April the old bus shelter was removed and a new one was partially installed without seats and sides. The Parish Council are pursuing the Community Safety Partnership concerning the completion of the new shelter.

Quality Council Status

This year the Parish Council began its journey towards Quality Council Status. Mrs Lancy only has 3 more sessions to complete before the council as a whole will begin to get more involved.

Speed Restrictions

The Speed Restrictions on the Great North Road have begun, with the installation of some speed humps. We are, as yet, unaware when the remaining measures will be put in place.

Parish Plan

Over the course of the year the results of the Parish Plan have been examined in detail and an action plan built up along with a full report which was submitted to Cambridgeshire ACRE towards the end of 2006. It was anticipated that this would be put in front of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Executive in January 2007 and go before the full board several weeks later. As yet we have had no response and have recently discovered that Stan Rees has retired.

As part of the parish plan, as well as being a requirement for Quality Council status, the Parish Council has now started producing and distributing a bi-monthly newsletter under the editorship of Mrs Dyer.

Another concern identified by the Parish Plan was losing the village shop, as you may have heard that may now come to pass. The Parish Council intends to support any community led initiative to retain this valuable amenity.

Alconbury Sports and Social Club

The Alconbury Sports and Social Club celebrated its 25th Anniversary this year and Liz Adams remained as a representative and was joined by Paul Watson this year. They have finally had a grant offer from the Football Foundation for 72% of the cost of the extension project and the parish council was able to honour its pledge of funding.

Village Precept

The Parish Council is aware that villagers do not want to see a rise in the council tax precept but has had to request a rise for the coming year primarily to fund the doubling in grass cutting costs also the costs to obtain Quality Council Status.

Although there has been an increase we have endeavoured to keep this to a minimum and it should be noted that the Parish Council's precept is still much lower per head than many of the parishes in the district.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our Clerk, Sue Lancey and all the Parish Councillors who continually work towards the more mundane, but equally important tasks, of keeping the village in good order.

Thank you.