

CHILTON POLDEN PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – MAY 2015

We held our normal complement of eleven Council meetings without any extra meetings this year. Our new Clerk Jim Murray has settled in well and has brought extra skills to the job in the area of web sites and printing which will be referred to later.

There were few problems on **Highways** this year and no gritting was required. The Council decide not to renew the gritting arrangement with Burtle after the three year initial period. As the cost remained the same it was felt the benefits were not enough. The calming measure of white lining that we have been asking for at the East end of the village was finally carried out after pressure was applied through the Polden Cluster.

Speeding in the village raised it's head again with two parishioners raising concerns. A Speed Indication Device was installed in the village centre for fifteen days. The results were that 80% of drivers were under 30mph, 19.5% between 30-40mph and .5% between 40-50mph. On Police calculations this meant that the speed limit was being observed. We have recently trained additional Councillors on Speedwatch so we will be out and about in the summer.

The **Welcome Booklet** for new residents was revised again by the members of the Parish Council. This was edited by our retiring Councillor and printed by our Clerk. This is available free from any Councillor and the Clerk.

Our Community Asset the **Village Hall** has been the subject of discussions between the Council and the Parochial Church Council over the need for an Albemarle Lease for the Village Hall Group to take on it's management as a registered Charity. The PCC Hall Management Committee has refused to give us specific evidence of use but has admitted that the main use of the Hall has been for social purposes. The Parish Council has approved a statement showing that the Parish Room has always been held in Trust for the inhabitants of the village. The PCC Hall Committee asked the Council for help with the legal costs being handed on by the Diocese but the Council had to say they could not assist them. However we have told the Village Hall Group that in the event of a Lease being appropriate it would help with their legal costs.

On **Planning** there has only been one contentious issue when a low wall in Broadway was knocked down to provide off road parking, which triggered an Enforcement Notice. When an Application was received it was found that there were reasons for the action and the Council supported the retention of the parking space.

We have had a **Spring Clean Litter Pick** which was organised and Risk assessed by our new Councillor. This was carried out very successfully in March.

There remains a continuing problem involving **Watercourses and Drains**. There continues to be flooding at times of heavy rain at the top of Goose Lane caused by

restriction under Combe Lane. Lower down there is a problem with blocked ditches. Neither problem has a solution as yet.

Our **Playing Field** has had another successful year as our main village asset held in Trust by the Parish Council for the inhabitants. It has strengthened its Management Committee following the departure of two stalwarts. A full programme of events was mounted in addition to keeping the field itself up to standard.

We have had changes in our **Councillors** this year. We thanked Peter Callaghan for his four years of service on his resignation and welcomed Brian Parsons as his replacement. We have also thanked Keith Ulliyatt for his twenty eight years of service including a spell as Chairman as he has not stood in the recent election.

Now that we have lost our **Post Office** a new site for the Post Box in the centre of the village has been identified by the Council. This is now in the hands of the Post Office to action. We may also be able to make use of the Telephone Kiosk if we can find a suitable place for it.

We now have a fully flexible **Web Site** with a .gov address designed and serviced by our Clerk. This can carry a full range of information concerning the village and can carry links to other sites. It has up to date minutes and information on events and everyone is encouraged to log on frequently.

Our financial situation remains sound and we have maintained our **Precept** at a level which enables us to provide support to local activities and Charities that contribute to the quality of life in the village. We also hold some funds pending release on Health and Wellbeing projects.

The information and consultations that take place require our Councillors to make considerable effort to come to meetings fully briefed. E-mail has helped this to happen and is also used extensively in our contact with District and County. We have maintained our involvement with the Polden Hills Cluster, Somerset Association of Local Councils, the District Council, and the County Council through meetings they have organised on matters of interest to our Council. The new Clerk has worked hard and effectively at handling all our communications and finance and on your behalf I would thank him for his efforts.

ARLC 13 May 2015