



**CHILTON POLDEN PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
17TH MAY 2023**

CHAIR'S REVIEW

I'd like to start this review of our Parish Council's activity over the past year by thanking all the volunteer councillors who take time to attend meetings, read documents and support and drive many things that concern and have an impact in our village.

Without these volunteer villagers, there would be a significant gap in how the village community functions at this level of local government.

I'd also like to thank those parishioners who attend our monthly meetings, and to the one, very dedicated villager, who attends nearly all of them – you're very welcome and it's much appreciated to have your involvement.

I'm also pleased to say that we have a full contingent of councillors, with a good mix of people from across the village who represent us all well and who play an active part on the council. There still remains a vacancy for the salaried post of Parish Clerk, and I have been covering this to the best of my abilities since March 2022. I'll return to this item later.

As a council we have worked on various projects and events, as well as the regular reporting and liaison with Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council.

This includes reviewing and commenting on planning applications, and this remains the main topic that generates the most interest (and attendance at Parish Council meetings for villagers. In all cases the Council is asked to support, object or make no comment as part of the consultation process, and at all times we try to act fairly and respond to the Planning Department in line with valid planning grounds and in line with our Village Design Statement, and taking into account the views of the applicant and other villagers.

In addition to planning matters, the Council has dealt with issues involving road and drainage repairs; signage; event licensing; fly tipping; road gritting; and waste bins etc., all of which have been handled with county or district councils and have mostly been resolved. The Council also managed the election and audit process last year so that the village is represented and activity monitored, without the support of a Parish Clerk.

On more community related matters, your Parish Council has worked with other volunteers and village organisations to run a memorable Platinum Jubilee event in the Playing Field in June last year, and just earlier this month, led the

celebrations for His Majesty's Coronation, with a very well attended Big Lunch Street Party in Townsend Lane.

The Council also organised another Annual Village Litter Pick in March, which helps ensure the village is an attractive place to live. Although the number of residents coming out for a couple of hours to litter pick was fewer than previous years, it was good to note that the amount of rubbish had not significantly increased.

The Council has also continued to support the Playing Field Association, with councillors helping at the fireworks night, and financially by funding all the grass-cutting fees, which is done by the district council. The Parish Council also makes a donation to St Edwards Church towards the graveyard grass-cutting, to support this historical place for nature and the well-being of villagers. This year the Council has also contributed a small amount to the Neighbourhood Watch Group, to help with their excellent communications.

The Council has also worked to help ensure the safety of children using the Priory Green play area, which was in an unfinished state when the Persimmon responsibility was being transferred to a management company.

Three other investments are underway; the first for a new Parish Council noticeboard; the second for a defibrillator to be installed on the Village Hall; and the third for a commemorative Coronation stone for the village. The current noticeboard is not fit for use and a new one has been built by a local company, so the regulatory notices for the Council can be displayed – this will be installed soon. The defibrillator is being ordered and will be installed on the north side of the external wall of the Village Hall, with an electrical supply already having been fitted – this is sure to be a significant benefit and reassurance for villagers. Finally, a piece of Somerset stone will be installed near the village noticeboard to commemorate the Coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

I'm pleased to report that as a Parish Council we are financially sound and have kept our precept at the same level as last year, incurring no increase for villagers as part of their overall Council Tax. As a result of savings made by not having a Parish Clerk's salary to fund, and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) payments made to the Council from the building of Priory Green estate, there is budget available that can be used towards village projects. All suggestions from residents are welcome on how this can best benefit the village.

Finally, my thanks again to my fellow Councillors for their time and hard work this year. We continue to look for someone to take on the position of Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, for the max of 20 hours per month. Having covered this role for the last 13 months, this isn't something that I can continue to do on a longer term, so anyone interested in this role is welcome to contact myself or any of the Councillors.

We look forward to continue to working together for all of us in Chilton Polden.

Tim Hayne, Chilton Polden Parish Council Chair and Interim Clerk