

## **Chairman's Report 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

Another busy year, but it always is a grass roots level! This report is up to 31<sup>st</sup> March this year –

We welcomed Sarah Peay to the Parish Council in June so we were at full complement until the end of our current term.

We dealt with 31 planning app, mostly non contentious – especial thanks to Brian O'Connor who does all the hard work for us.

Finance – Our Precept was £62,000. Highest Expenses were the Neighbourhood Plan and Legal Costs for the KFF Appeal. Grants were made totalling £8,400, mostly to village organisations and when I attended the Village Trust AGM in October, I was pleased to listen to the many club reports thanking the Parish Council for their support.

The cost of re-siting the fence from the top to the bottom of the village green was also financed by the Parish Council. This should prevent any unauthorised access.

We also purchased a new heavy-duty strimmer to make the job of strimming the railway verge and the Orchard easier for my long suffering “volunteer” husband.

The Barns Green Development Fund monies are now almost all distributed with the completion of the Village Hall Extension, which was mostly paid for from this fund. £20,000 was awarded to St Nicolas Church towards the cost of replacing the stone pathway and we have allowed £120,000 towards the new sports changing rooms at the Village Club. This will be financed from a loan we have taken out with the Public Works Loan Board for £110,000.

The saga of the damaged fingerpost at the bottom of Weston's Hill finally came to an end in October. Following repair and replacement by James Sheppard and a long drawn out battle with Heritage Fingerposts, we were refunded all the money we had paid out.

Litter Wardens Pat & Pete Cochran are making a real difference to the parish and once again I would like to thank them for the splendid job they do.

We have made a feature of the felled tree on the village green by installing a WW1 Tommy silhouette on the stump and it is much appreciated by all who pass by.

The crisis that was going to be VELO South was averted when to the relief of the village, it was called off at the last minute.

I would like to thank the Traffic Sub-Committee for all their efforts in curbing speed and making the roads safer for pedestrians particularly around the school. The three “20 is Plenty” poster campaigns have been particularly popular with the children and WSCC have agreed to finance a Lollipop person. Also, a safe crossing place for the schoolchildren is being planned. There are also plans for a pavement between Farm Close and the Sumners Ponds.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have met monthly and are very close to producing the first draft of the Plan, which will be sent off to Dowsetmayhew within the next couple of weeks for them to put into Planning Speak. It will then be submitted to HDC for consideration, a process that is expected to take 6 weeks.

I think our greatest achievement this year is our success in taking on (together with HDC), the Kingfisher Farm issue – as requested by the parishioners at 3 successive village meetings. Victory has come at some considerable financial cost but at the Appeal hearing in June/July, the Inspector found for us and a subsequent request in November for leave to appeal her decision was dismissed by HM Courts. As a result, the land has to go back to agricultural. My thanks to Sanjeev Joshi for his input on this – his knowledge and legal contacts were vital to our success.

Last year' annual village meeting was very well attended - a packed hall and I hope this year's one will be too. My thanks to all of you for your work and support during the past year - also to our District and County Councillors. If I am re-elected as your Chairman, I will do my best to serve you for another 12 months.

Penny Simpson, Chairman.