

## Chairman's report 2020- 2021

The past year has been a challenging one for both the Parish Council and the Parish as a whole. It has shown us both the positive and negative aspects of living in a small community under trying circumstances. On the positive side, it was encouraging to see the community pulling together especially during the first lockdown. Help appeared from the the Church, Village Hall, The Bertie and Village residents to ensure that those who needed support were looked after.

On the negative side, the lockdown seems to have focused attention on officialdom at a time when local councils have had to function under trying circumstances, mainly at a distance, either by working from home or meeting using social media. Uffington Parish Council has experienced such focus and has found it's procedures and practices under scrutiny, resulting in an official complaint under the Code of Conduct for Parish Councils concerning the legality of one of its meetings. This is currently under review by the SKDC legal department.

We find ourselves halfway through the four year period for which Parish Councillors were elected, the second year as Councillors for those who were new to the Council. It has proved very challenging for them and at times they must have wondered what they had volunteered for. Thankfully I did not receive any resignations and it is a credit to the whole Council that we end the year still intact. The Council has recently undergone a change of Parish Clerk, Lorraine Thurston having resigned at the end of March. We must thank Lorraine for her hard work during her time as Clerk. We are extremely fortunate to have engaged Katie Turner who has also joined us at a difficult time, having to cope not just with the year end accounts but also with an abnormally high amount of correspondence.

Having relatively new Councillors has brought a fresh perspective to the Council, they have challenged and questioned some of our operations and policies, highlighting that the Council did need to review the way it had functioned in the past. When looking at other Councils in the district, we were lacking policies that both us and the public could access and refer to. Our website also needed bringing up to to date, a task not made easy with the introduction of a new platform by LCC with which many councils struggled. Lorraine, Katie and Councillor Wolf have all contributed to this update, which is now up and running. It now contains meeting minutes, agendas, policies, correspondence and other documents and will be updated and amended on an ongoing basis. We have adopted a charity policy, updated the allotment tenancy agreement, introduced an agreement with the newly formed Bee Keeping Group and for transparency now publish a list of all correspondence received by the Council along with its meeting agendas.

Covid brought a halt to many community activities. The Council have not held a face to face meeting since February 2020, there was no annual Parish Meeting or AGM and thanks go to Councillor Barratt for taking responsibility for organising our "Zoom" meetings. Speed-watch activities were also halted for much of the year but their activities are now receiving more active support by the police due to the high number of speeding motorists currently being reported to them.

During the year the Council have responded to a number of planning applications within the Parish, with varying degrees of influence on the final decisions.

The possibility of a cycle path into Stamford is once again under discussion, and currently we are working with Sustainable Stamford, who are presenting the proposals to the local authorities.

A proposal from Tallington Parish Council was received which involved a by pass through this Parish, the Council strongly objected to the plans and the way it would impact our Parish.

The condition of local roads and infrastructure continue to be a concern. the Council have expressed their views on this to LCC but the reasoning behind their priority list is still not clear. The Council does not appear to have any influence over decisions taken ie: the 50 mph limit around Newstead corner which we objected to was still instigated despite our reporting of numerous accidents. This has also occurred with the flooding issue on the same corner.

The play area continues to be used, although it too at one point was closed due to Covid restrictions. Maintenance of the hedge and trees along the footpath are planned for this year as well as sowing a wild flower area.

Finally a mention of Councillor Genever's fifty years service to the community. During this time he has served as a Parish Councillor, Chairman of the Parish Council and as a County Councillor. We have still to decide how this milestone is to be officially marked.

My thanks go to all the Parish Councillors for their support during the past year.

Barrie Brown