

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - 20th MAY 2023

Good morning, everyone and welcome to the Cheselbourne Annual Parish Meeting.

My name is Andrew Taylor and I was honoured to be elected as chair of the Parish Council in May last year and at the Parish Council's recent AGM, I was re-elected for a further twelve month period.

I would like to run through with you some of the things which have happened in Cheselbourne in the last year but before I do that, please let me welcome our guest speakers this morning, Mr Chris Loder, MP, Councillor Ray Bryan, the Rev Stephen Waine and PCSO Alison Donnison.

Last year's Annual Parish Meeting was held on a Monday evening, immediately before the Parish Council's AGM. Several members of the public attended the meeting but, as an experiment, the Parish Council agreed that this year's Annual Parish Meeting would be held on a Saturday morning to see if more Cheselbourne residents were able to attend.

In the last twelve months, unfortunately Robin Maslin resigned as a Parish Councillor but at the start of this year, we were extremely fortunate to welcome co-opted members Roger Sewill and Dennis Walsh. This means that I am delighted to confirm that we now have a full compliment of seven councillors all with a fantastic range of skills which can only benefit the operation of the Parish Council. I would like to thank all of them and our dedicated Parish Clerk for their hard work and the support they have given to the Parish Council over the past twelve months. The term of office for all councillors expires in May next year.

Following a survey of residents, it was agreed that the area of the playpark containing the swings etc. should be fenced off from the remainder of the park to prevent this area being used for the exercising of dogs. The fencing materials were purchased on residents' behalf by the Parish Council and we were extremely fortunate that Langham Wine Estate paid the costs of erecting the fence. Once again, we would like to thank Langham Wine Estate for this investment in what is a great asset for the village.

The Climate Action Group, led by Cllr Carol Byrom has continued to be active in the village. The Group has focussed on areas where a small difference can be made, such as

- Encouraging households to increase habitats for pollinators in gardens, on roadside verges and in the churchyard.
- Seeking tree and hedge planting opportunities
- Encouraging people to reduce waste and recycle such as placing recycle bins at the village hall for soft plastic, tetra packs and tin foil.

In addition, the Climate Action Group and Cllr Nicky Searle together with a dedicated group of volunteers, have arranged regular litter picks both within the village and along the roads leading into it from as far as the junction with the B3142 near the North brook roundabout. The Parish Council is grateful to everyone who gives up their valuable time to help keep the village and its environs as neat and tidy as possible.

Cllr Searle has also been instrumental in re-establishing regular community speed watch sessions at various locations throughout the village. Again, she is supported by a dedicated group of volunteers who have all received training in the use of the speed watch equipment by Dorset Police. It is encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority of vehicles have been recorded as travelling within the 30mph speed limit.

Many people will be aware that discussions took place at the end of last year regarding the introduction of a 20mph limit through the village. A village-wide survey was conducted and of those who responded, the overwhelming majority supported the Parish Council making an application to Dorset Council to reduce the speed limit through the village to 20mph. We are currently awaiting a response to that application.

The Parish Council was instrumental in having the yellow zig-zag lines repainted outside and opposite the school and we purchased a new no parking bollard for the school. Parking outside the school during drop off and pick up times continues to be monitored.

The Parish Council continues to raise the issue of the non-existent footpath which is supposed to have been built by the developer of Brook Green between the village hall and the existing footpath at the top of the site. The purpose of this footpath is to provide pedestrian access, especially for school children, from the centre of the village to the playpark. We continue to maintain pressure on Dorset Council's planning department to insist that this part of the development is completed in accordance with the approved plans.

There has been no real flooding in the village during this year although there was some serious road flooding at Chebbard during January and there have been some blocked storm drains. Regarding the Chebbard flooding, whilst this area is outside the Cheselbourne Parish Council boundary, the Parish Council did liaise with all stakeholders to seek a solution including Dewlish Parish Council, the Environment Agency, Dorset Council and the landowner. Graham Waters, as flood warden, has remained alert to these issues. Sandbags are available for householders' use from the store at Mayden Revel. The Community Emergency Response Plan was last updated in December 2022 and a copy of this can be found on the Parish Council's website.

Last year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations for our late Queen, organised by the village hall committee, was a tremendous success aided, of course, by some glorious weather. We were also very fortunate that our MP, Chris Loder was able to join us to draw the raffle and we are grateful to the many local businesses which contributed so generously to it. This year, of course, for the King's coronation we have had the photographic exhibition and we are delighted that so many villagers agreed to have their pictures taken. Our thanks go to Lucy Sewill, the village hall committee and the band of helpers who assisted Lucy on the days the photographs were being taken, for making this so successful. You will be aware that the photographs are now held digitally by Dorset Council's archives. We hope that the historians of the future will find these pictures to be an invaluable resource. In addition, the Parish Council would like to thank the organisers of a fantastic village picnic held on Monday, 8th May and for taking a lead on this.

Now some thank you's (in no particular order) on behalf of the Parish Council and all Cheselbourne residents:

- The Roberts and Bere families for organising the putting up and decorating of the Christmas tree outside the school which is admired by everyone;
- Everyone who maintains the flower boxes at the entrances to the village and near the school;
- John Lilley who kindly repaired one of the finger posts by the school after it got broken off;
- Sara Timlin for all her work in maintaining the defibrillator by the front door of the village hall;
- Sue Widdowson for her hard work in ensuring that the village news is published each month and to everyone who distributes it.
- Bev Waters and the village hall committee for ensuring that the hall remains at the centre of village life;
- Chris Haskett who has done a wonderful job over many years in cutting the grass in the village's public spaces but has now retired. The Parish Council is actively looking for someone to replace Chris's work.

If I have missed anyone whom I should have thanked, please accept my apologies for not having done so.

Finally, if you have any concerns or ideas you wish to raise with the Parish Council or would like to volunteer for such things as the regular litter picks or community speedwatch, please contact the clerk, Amanda Crocker or any of the councillors directly. Alternatively, please do come to one of the bi-monthly meetings which always begin with an open forum. Contact details are on the Parish Council's website.