

Chairmans Report for Annual Parish Meeting 23/5/22 (Cllr Colin Osborn)

Before reporting to this Annual Meeting, I read the last 12 months committee and council minutes. The Parish Council started the year meeting remotely, using Zoom. We did not meet face to face until July 2021.

12 months ago, The Parish Council reported to Wiltshire Council the damage to the road leading to West Lavington, since then the road has continued to come apart and Wiltshire Council has done nothing. Drivers and riders are having to drive down the middle of the road to avoid damage caused by the pothole. Prior to COVID we were working with a local landowner and Wiltshire Council to confirm the route of a public footpath and arrange the construction of a stile. Despite recent contacts from the landowner and ourselves Wiltshire Council has shown no interest in the problem. Black Dog Junction. Please send photos and reports of potholes and blocked paths to Wiltshire Council using the 'MyWilts' phone app. If they have to send someone out every week to examine something because different people complain, then something might be done.

Following discussions between local councils and Wiltshire Council, it was agreed in May 2021 that there needed to be improved sight lines and additional warnings to drivers that they were approaching a junction. This was to be passed to Atkins Consultancy, for more detailed planning and costings. We have heard nothing since.

This doesn't mean that we haven't been able to work with Wiltshire Council to get highways maintained and improvements made. In the last 12 months the Parish Steward has made regular visits and has completed small tasks around the Parish. The Devizes Area Board and the Community Area Transport Group have also provided matched funding for local works, including 5 dropped curbs, which will improve wheelchair and disabled vehicle access around the village and through to the schools. The Market place needs repairing and resurfacing, and we will ask the Wiltshire Council Contractors and others to bid for the work. We have looked at installing an Electric Vehicle Charging Point there, but the ongoing requirements made this unattractive.

At the last Annual Meeting the Sea Scout Group told people attending the meeting that they were going to hold a community consultation about the repair or replacement of the existing Sea Scout HQ. There was strong support for a new purpose-built hall. There have been discussions within the Parish Council and with the Sea Scout Group about ways of putting this into practice. It is likely that the Parish Council will lease some land to the Sea Scout Group at The Elisha Field and the Sea Scout Group will build a new HQ and meeting room, with facilities for sports clubs using the field or building, including changing facilities and secure storage for equipment. Nothing has been confirmed yet.

There have been suggestions for COVID-19 projects that can be funded entirely by government grants. Various options were examined but most of the effort will go towards improving access to and the resilience of Canada Woods and the field below it. Unfortunately, some people living alongside the woods are use them as a tipping point for garden waste, or they are cutting down trees without permission, which makes planning improvements difficult. The works will involve selective removal of some trees to ensure a healthy mix of both mature and younger trees.

So many people and organisations have to be consulted before we go ahead with any work. So, there are various things in the pipeline to be completed. I hope that whoever the Council chooses as Chairman next year will be able to say. New Sea Scout HQ, completed. Broadwell playground, completed. Railings along The Muddle, completed. Extra waste bin and seating near the community Hall, completed. Covid 19 project, Completed. Safety work at Black Dog Junction completed.

Footpath MLAV3 full access along its length, Completed. Spin Hill Speed Camera, completed. And also, be able to list new projects that the council and parishioners will have brought forward.

I wish to end with thanks.

To the Parish Councillors and Carol our Clerk.

But also, to the villagers who have done so much to make this a better place to live. The team who organises the Vintage Event, the people who look after the flower beds in the Market Place and the planters in the phone box. The knitters who decorated the phone box, and the people who have painted the phone boxes. The chap who walks our footpaths and clears ivy off trees that are being starved of light, water, and food. The people who came out on different days to tidy Canada Woods and The Broadwell. The people who go around the village picking up litter, not just Mr Lever who cleared litter for 6 months as part of his Duke of Edinburgh's Award, but also those older people who quietly keep the village tidier.

And especially, the volunteers who run the local groups that make this Parish such a Vibrant place to live, From Mums and Chums to the Monday and Tuesday Clubs, via youth groups, sports groups, and interest groups.

Thank you to you all.