

## **BISHOPS LYDEARD AND COTHELSTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**

Firstly, welcome to this Annual Parish Meeting.

This meeting is not a meeting of the Parish Council. As Chairman of the Parish Council, I am required to hold an annual Parish Meeting where I report to the parish and invite residents to raise any local concerns or problems which they would like the Parish Council to consider during the forthcoming year.


As I write these notes, the village is colourfully festooned with the work of the yarn bombers in readiness for the Somerset Day celebrations over the weekend of 13-14 May. I congratulate Kathy Ford and her band of organisers. They raised the sum of well over £2000 for charity last year and I am sure that they will equal, if not exceed, that figure this year.

Next, I am very sorry to report the resignation of Philip Morency from the Parish Council and also as a member of the MUGA committee due to ill health. We wish him well and a speedy recovery. Philip's resignation means that there are currently two vacancies on the Council. If anyone is interested in being co-opted as a member for the next two years until election time in 2019, please contact the Parish Clerk, Amy Shepherd, in the first instance.

The Parish Council has dealt with many matters in the twelve meetings we have held during the financial year ending in April. Time and space does not permit me to cover them all. I will concentrate on the more significant ones. In any event, the minutes of every Parish Council meeting are recorded and posted on the village website.

### **THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

I am delighted to report that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was finally adopted by TDBC in July of last year and is, therefore, now part of the planning process affecting applications for planning permission within the Parish.



The Council has been concerned that TDBC has overridden objections from the Parish Council in relation to applications involving the infilling of gardens. Policy H4 of the NP is intended to discourage the granting of such applications. Unfortunately, the original wording in the draft NP was modified by the independent inspector during the review process as it was deemed contrary to the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A meeting has been arranged with TDBC to discuss whether there are any steps open to the Parish Council to apply to have its original intentions reinstated.

The NP will be considerably tested when we come to consider any planning application affecting the land designated for housing on Taunton Road. This land has now been acquired by David Wilson Homes (DWH). This company built the houses at King's Yard on Taunton Road.

The working party committee appointed by the Parish Council has met with DWH and its planning consultants on two occasions. At the time I write these notes, no plans have yet been presented by DWH for discussion. DWH and its advisers have been informed that full compliance with the policies laid down in the NP is expected.

### **THE A358 ROUNDABOUT**

This was an item on the agenda every month last year!

The work on the roundabout commenced on schedule in October of last year and was scheduled to be completed by the end of March. In the event, the work is nearing completion, albeit two months later than anticipated. Unfortunately, the work required at the junction of Greenway and Station Green has had to be postponed due to some unforeseen utility pipes being found which has necessitated the plans being re-drawn. I understand that, all being well, these works will be carried out next month.

### **OTHER LANDMARKS**

Other landmarks which have appeared over the past year include the new bus shelter on Hither Mead near the bridge, a cycle park in the surgery car park and street signs in Mount Street.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

We have considered 35 planning applications and 11 applications relating to trees which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders and/or which are within the Conservation Area.

Apart from the applications which I have previously referred to relating to garden infilling, the only application which caused real concern to the Council was yet another application from Taylor Wimpey relating to its land at Station Green. This was a repeat of a previous application which was strenuously opposed by the Parish Council and this latest application was equally opposed. I am pleased to report that the application was refused.

## **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

I touched upon this topic in my Annual Report last year when I advised that the Parish Council has set aside a budget of £5000 to requisition a report from traffic management consultants. We have now appointed Traffic Planning Associates in Bristol to advise upon traffic issues generally within the parish. We have had one preliminary meeting and a further meeting has been arranged for next week. I will be reporting progress from time to time in my Notes for the Fiveways magazine and we will also post information on the Parish Council website.

## **WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY (WSR)**

In January of this year WSR made a presentation to the Parish Council of its ambitious plans for the expansion of its facilities at Bishops Lydeard railway station and WSR subsequently held a public consultation at the Village Hall on 6 May last. Full details of these exciting plans can be found on the WSR website. They are fully supported by the Parish Council for it is to be hoped that the development will generate local employment and attract additional tourism. I urge everybody who has not done so to view these plans and to lend their support by whatever means they are able.



### **PARISH PRECEPT**

At its January meeting, the Parish Council resolved to increase the precept by 5% which is the smallest increase since 2012/13. For a Band D council tax payer, this is equivalent to an increase just under 4p per week. Councillor Mike Rigby warned the meeting that Somerset County Council was facing a huge deficit and that it was more than likely that the Parish Council will be called upon to provide services previously undertaken by the County Council and that was something we had to consider in assessing our budget.

### **PARISH LENGTHSMAN**

Once again we have to be grateful to Jon Manning for all his hard work throughout the year. Without him, the parish would look a shabbier place! I know that I speak for all my fellow members of the Council in thanking Jon for his input and his interest generally in the welfare of the parish.

### **IN CONCLUSION**

I now come to the end of my second year as Chairman and, as previously, it has been an interesting and busy year and I expect the next year to be no less busy! I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my fellow members for the support I have received from them over the past year. Most of all, my thanks go to our Clerk, Amy Shepherd, who again throughout the year, has rendered invaluable assistance and guidance to us all. Thank you Amy.



Henry Davenport

10 May 2017