

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO BODDINGTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen (and local dignatories), I would like to welcome you to this year's APM. It has been a very busy and demanding year within the Parish.

Firstly, I would like to introduce our new Clerk, Ann Morton who has been with us since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017, Ann has a great deal of experience as a Parish Clerk, and so brings a great deal of expertise to the Parish Council. I would like to thank Cllr Pat Stewart for her tremendous effort as locum clerk for 6 months. Pat's husband, Malcolm has taken on the role of Responsible Financial Officer to the Parish Council. Again with his wealth of experience in financial matters brings a great deal of expertise to the Parish Council.

I would like to thank Mike Wakelin for Chairing the Parish Council during this difficult year. Since the last APM, 2 Councillors have resigned, Steve Blundred and Peter Deeley. I would like to thank them both and Peter in particular for his many years service to our community, especially his work with HS2. I would also like to welcome back Garry Williams who had many months absence from the Council due to ill health.

Your Parish Council consists of 8 councillors, who are volunteers who give up their spare time to serve their community. We have a Clerk, who is part time and who is paid for by monies from the Precept. The Clerk is the Proper officer to the Council and offers professional advice and support to the Council. The Clerk's workload this year has grown enormously. The new clerk's hours have been increased from 27 to 40 pcm. In addition we have an unpaid Responsible Financial Officer, the role which was also part of the previous Clerk's job.

Under the guidance of Malcolm Stewart, we have introduced and updated many of our procedures and produced new documentation. This is time consuming but a necessity in order to comply with Governance and become more transparent. Our Health and Safety Policy is a good example and applies to our sub-committees and steering groups.

The work of the Clerk and RFO is important to the smooth running of the Parish Council.

Interest has grown within the Parish on many topics with the help of a first class Parish Council website, the use of email and social media and public attendance at PC meetings. I would like to thank Alan and Caroline Sheers for their work and support with this much needed work.

Following an unsuccessful co-option process to elect two new councilors, the first Parish Council elections for over 40 years took place last summer. Two candidates stood in both the Upper and Lower Boddington ward. A large turn out of electors confirmed the public interest in this matter, and two new councilors were duly elected. I would like to thank all 4 candidates and the members of the parish who took the time to cast their votes.

We have finally managed to have the new burial ground consecrated by the Bishop earlier this year. It was a long drawn out process but we got there in the end.

After much discussion, the Parish Council decided to employ an outside agency to commission a Parish Plan. A steering group was formed by the Parish Council to support this work. A questionnaire was produced which was sent to all registered electors within the parish. A total of 343 were returned, which is 54%. An excellent response which will allow us to truly gauge public opinion. The parishioners have made their views clear.

We have received both a summary report as well as a very comprehensive Parish Plan detailed analysis report. This is not an end point but the start of a journey.

Last evening the Parish Council debated the Parish Plan and to plan for the next step. As a result, five headings were produced. They are :

1. Community facilities and Leisure. Most respondents indicated support for activities on CCPF. Councillors will meet with Village Hall Committee, Cllrs Street and Gane.
2. Landowners. To discuss the intentions of those who put up land under Call for Sites at SNC. This is in response to housing needs of younger people in particular identified in the Questionnaire. Cllr Street.
3. Value Assets. To look at the true value of assets such as the Jubilee Field and Charles Cowper Field. Cllr Stewart and RFO Dr. Stewart.
4. Quick Wins. To analysis the full report to identify projects which can make a difference quickly with little cost. Cllr Burton and New.
5. Highways and related issues. Cllr Davies Wakelin and Stewart.

Council members have taken up the lead on these five sections and will be reporting back at the Parish Council meeting in July with information se we can plan the next step.

We have within the Parish a large number of Professional people who are experts in their field. It will be useful to know the names of these people. We see them as a source of

information which may help us at some point. If you feel that you have something to offer, please give your details to the Clerk for future reference.

I would like to thank Sue Jobbins and Mike King from Shaping Communities, as well as the members of the Parish Plan Steering Group who put in a great deal of time and work to produce the initial report. This is a project in motion and a great deal of work has still to be done. The parishioners have had their say in a democratic process. It is now time for the Parish Council to deliver what they want.

So how are we going to fund the various projects which will be identified during this process?

I am certain that it has not escaped your notice that the Precept has increased by over 20% in each of the last 2 years to maintain a standstill position with the Parish Council finances. In order to pay for the various projects we must raise more money. Yes, there are grants out there, and these need investigating, but they will be limited in many ways. We need to look closer to home. The future of the Jubilee field has been debated and the majority of respondents would like to see it partially developed for housing. This along with other Parish Assets will need fully evaluating before any further decisions can be made.

This may not sit well with those residents of the Parish who wish to see the Jubilee field retained in its present form. However, they must accept that a democratic process has produced this result. It is unfortunate that these individuals and groups are still pressing forward to block any potential development. They have already applied for and achieved the field designated an Asset of Community value at SNC. The Parish Council are in the process of appealing against this decision. They are also trying to designate the Jubilee Field a Local Green Space.

Again, a decision that the Parish Council does not agree with, and has stated this to SNC. Remember, the Parish Council purchased the Jubilee Field to “Control any future development” NOT STOP IT. This is well documented. These decisions will block ANY development now and in the future and so greatly devalue a valuable Parish asset. A Parish Asset which we ALL will be paying for for the next 9 years, to the tune of over £6000pa from the Precept. So despite the majority wanting the field developed, these groups continue with their canvassing. The majority of respondents also indicated that they DID NOT want the Jubilee Field designated a Local Green Space.

I would now like to mention the Village Hall Committee and the excellent work it does. The Village Hall and its recreational facilities serves many parishioners as well as visitors. You only need to see that from their weekly timetable. The Coffee morning each Friday, the mobile Post Office, the Seniors Christmas lunch, Line dancing, Zumba to name but a few. They continue to work hard to find more ways to utilize this building. It will be no surprise to you to hear that the Village Hall was the most utilized recreational facility in the Parish Plan with over 90% of respondents saying that they used the facilities.

Finally I want to briefly mention HS2 before welcoming representatives from “Friends of Boddington”.

The reality of this project is now upon us. After the HS2 bill achieved Royal assent, it would appear that nothing short of a miracle will prevent this going ahead. There are already preliminary investigative engineering works taking place locally. Recently, Upper Boddington had to bear the brunt of 4 weeks of tipper lorries back and forth to Woodford Halse using the Warwick road as a short cut. The devastation this caused to our roads, verges, kerbstones and pavements is a stark reminder what is coming our way with HS2. Lower Boddington will bear the brunt of this. However it is the Parish of Boddington which must stick together during these difficult times and support the work of “friends of Boddington”

I will now call upon Philip Freer representing ‘Friends of Boddington’ to update us on developments. Philip has gone to great lengths to put together a formidable team who are the voice of Boddington in matters relating to HS2 and do so with the full backing of the Parish Council.

Thank you for your patience and continued support.