



Chairman's report to the Yaxley Annual Parish Meeting 13th March 2018

Welcome to Yaxley's annual Parish Meeting of the Electorate. This annual report has been compiled by the Chairs of each committee.

Full Council – Chairman Cllr Kevin Gulson and Vice Chair Cllr Rodney Butcher.

It's another very busy and I believe fruitful year for the Parish Council and Yaxley as a whole.

Yet again our council's support for groups in Yaxley continues and grows, with grants in the form of free use of facilities being increased from £7500 last year, to just under £12,000 this year. New groups benefitting are, Yaxley Youth Club, the Well Being club, Yaxley Dementia Club and the Young Technicians. We wish all groups well for future. However sad to report that the Young Technicians have withdrawn at the moment due to low attendance but they are hoping to come back into Yaxley and we would look to continue supporting this venture.

Again we were a key contributor to the Yaxley Festival in 2017 with a £12,000 grant and additionally free use of all facilities over the festival period. This year councillors were in Chambers during the festival, where a number of people including Warwick Davis came to see what we do and ask questions.

Additionally, small grants have been made available to groups such as the Library reading challenge, Yaxley Youth Club, Citizens Advice, The Yaxley Countryside Trust, and Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue to name a few.

The Yaxley Young Peoples Working Group consisting of Representatives from The County, District and Parish Councils, Yaxley Partnership, Yaxley Youth Counselling Service, Police, Luminus and St Peters Church worked to get a Youth Club up and running. This has been a success story of working together in the community to provide for the community and now where a core of volunteers have been able to hold a regular club night every Thursday in the Queens Park Hall since the start of summer last year. We wish the Youth Club continued success going forward.

We have had four councillor resignations, Councillors Philippa Croke, James Reed, Lloyd Mawhinney and Sue Butler due to a variety of work and personal reasons. I wish them all well for the future and thank them for their support working with the Parish Council.

However following the usual adverts for councillors I'm pleased to welcome Councillors Paul Richardson, Jonathan Orchard, Marion Southgate and Sadie McMullon who have all been co-opted to council.

We are pleased that in our submission of Cllr Mark Oliver in recognition for his work on the Parish Council, Yaxley festival and previously District Council was successful for Mark and his wife Christine to attend the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. I understand they both had a fantastic day.

I'd like to thank all the councillors for volunteering their time not only for council meetings but opening and closing facilities such as the 3G pitch during school holidays and opening and closing the Youth Club, Cllr June Willis for being available to meet residents at Yaxley Library monthly, Cllr Chris Bolton for providing expertise for safety risk

assessments, a number of people working on projects with Yaxley Countryside Trust and cemetery inspections. It's great that you have freely given additional time to our village.

Personnel Committee – Chairman Cllr Andrew Wood and Vice Chair Cllr Alan Bartle

This committee meet quarterly dealing with matters relating to our work forces safety, training and development etc.

Andy Wright joined our team in August as Head Grounds Maintenance Supervisor. He comes to the position with a wealth of experience in maintaining sports facilities and has fitted into the team with great enthusiasm. We very much look forward to a successful future with Andy at the helm of the grounds team.

The work of this team continues within the village. The maintenance over the last year is showing the benefit of rejuvenating growth and tidier public areas. Peter Marchant, Ray Allen and Jason Thorne continue in their individual responsibilities of improving the environment and public spaces within the village.

Having increased her responsibilities since last year, Beryl Maltby looks after our facilities with her characteristic gusto and can be regularly seen travelling across the village to her next task. We very much appreciate her positive work ethic and ongoing commitment to the parish council.

The high standard of detailed Financial reporting has again been maintained by Beverly Porter, who continues to provide the council with clear and accurate reporting, enabling us to make informed decisions getting the best value from our income.

Michelle Darbon has joined the team since the last report and has proven a valuable addition to the Council. Michelle's organisational and front of office skills have proven a positive attribute and has been of great benefit to the Clerk.

Our clerk, Helen Taylor has had yet another extremely busy year. With recent staff additions she has been able to focus her attention delivering more of our 5 year plan plus continued improvements for Yaxley. Helen's work encompasses many varied responsibilities, relating to both Cambridgeshire County and Huntingdonshire District Councils, the Police and many local groups.

The team, led by Helen, work together to maintain the facilities and provide an environment which Yaxley Parishioners can enjoy a variety of interests, from team sports to individual recreation, from youth activities to those for the more mature age groups. Our thanks go to Helen and her team for their dedication to Yaxley.

As you can see, our workforce has continued to rise to the challenges, improving facilities and reducing costs to the benefit of the community. Using their individual skills and expertise to ensure Yalxey village continues to be maintained and supported. Thank you.

Community Facilities Committee - Chairman Cllr Jayne Lusted and Vice Chair Cllr Graham Bellamy

This committee meets monthly and has a wide range of responsibilities including cemeteries, street furniture, play areas, pitches, equipment and allotments.

The work program this year included repairing and painting the Parish Council bus shelters, painting Queen's Park, while maintaining weekly schedule of emptying the 60+ bins around the village every week and maintaining Parish Council and some County Council grass areas.

Our old tractor and shredder have been pensioned off as becoming too expensive to repair and maintain, and we have replaced both with a wood chipper that can be towed with existing vehicles to site. This has proved invaluable with our tree and hedge maintenance around the village.

Use of the 3G pitch has continued to be strong, having a waiting list for evening sessions and weekend games including new football sessions for juniors. Qualified Councillors volunteered to make the 3G available to youngsters for an hour weekdays through school holidays and we would welcome any further volunteers from the public with this in the coming year.

Our LHI Local Highways Initiative for a new zebra Crossing at the pinch point on Broadway was successful and recently completed costing the Parish an additional £10,000.

The new external Gym equipment in Middletons recreation ground has been seen as a great addition to our facilities. Our thanks go to one of our residents Mr Richard Dykes who joined, myself Cllr Sue Butler and Cllr Jayne Lusted on a working group to investigate the type of equipment and where to place it. It has been so successful that an over 55s group was set up with a trainer from Hunts DC coming once a week to help with a workout programme. This we are looking to expand for younger groups of people on other dates.

We have joined the Community Fridge scheme, where those in the community who need it the most can enjoy surplus food that would otherwise go to waste from local businesses. This fridge is situated in the Austin Hall entrance. People wishing to know more about this please contact our clerk.

One thing we hope to have completed shortly is a tribute in Middleton's Rec to the youth of the village, plans are nearing completion and should be finished soon with all designs and funds coming from the youths own fund raising.

We continue to collaborate with local groups, such as Yaxley Countryside Trust led by Reg Bingham and his small band of volunteers. Reg is Yaxley's tree warden and he helps deliver various planting schemes, pruning and hedge laying in areas around the village. I am fully aware how much people care for our environment therefore anyone looking to help maintain existing or plant new trees or hedges please come forward and volunteer your details to our clerk who will forward to Reg Bingham.

Property Committee - Chairman Cllr Rodney Butcher and Vice Chair Cllr Chris Bolton

This committee meets quarterly and looks after the buildings, maintenance and facilities within.

A fire risk assessment has been conducted by Cllr Chris Bolton of The Austin Hall, Owen Pooley Hall, Council offices, the council work shop and Queens Park.

Much of the recommended work was completed by our own work force, and an updated smoke detection and intruder monitoring system has been quoted for and installed in the Austin/Owen Pooley halls and workshop.

It was recognised that our grounds team's welfare facilities were not adequate. Therefore a porta cabin was installed alongside the workshop providing much improved welfare facilities, kit room and drying room.

Going forward this committee will be looking to undertake minor pointing work to the Chapel, workshop wall repairs along with painting the windows frames at Pooley Hall.

Planning Committee - Chairman Cllr Paul Russell and Vice Chair Cllr Mark Oliver

It has been quite a busy year – the committee meets almost every two weeks – and we have reviewed over 60 planning applications, ranging from the Roxhill Development and the start at Hampton Leys, through smaller housing and industrial estates, to single storey domestic extensions and 'change-of-use' applications.

We pushed both District and County to ensure the footpath/cycleway along the A15 for the Hampton Gardens school was prepared and illuminated, and will ensure that the promised footpath through the development to the school is not forgotten.

We will continue to work for what is in Yaxley's best interests regarding the Great Haddon Development.

We strive to ensure all approved plans are in keeping with the needs of the village always bearing in mind a development's neighbours and the effect on the village – visual impact; traffic concerns; avoidance of overdevelopment; and public safety. We are not always able to get the result we want, but we keep trying.

Also members of this committee are required to regularly attend District meetings – for training and to put our case in more detail when necessary– so we a very busy team of councillors on this committee.

Looking forward -

The Councils action plan looking forward include:-

- Continued support while working with the Yaxley Young People Working Group

- Possible extension to the skate park or a BMX track

- Community allotment

- Community Fridge

And of course, continued financial restraint while maintaining key services delivered by the Parish Council.

Review -

While this is not a complete view of the services we are responsible for and deliver, I hope it goes some way to demonstrating the wide range and extent of the works carried out by Yaxley Parish Council.

However if you are interested to understand more of how or what we are doing, then you can go to our notice boards, web site, Facebook page or even pop along to one of our meetings where you can have up to 15 minutes to discuss items on the agenda or something you would like bringing up at a future meeting.

I would like to recognise all Parish Councillors who through the year who have volunteered their time working for the community delivering improvements within the village. Thank you to each of you.

My appreciation also goes to all our office, grounds and facilities personnel who work hard to maintain our buildings, land and village as a whole and continue to deliver these improvements through the year for our village.

Finally I will mention that this year is election year and we welcome anyone wishing to stand can obtain nomination forms from the Parish Council or elections office by emailing elections@huntingdonshire.gov.uk . The final date for nomination papers is 4pm Friday 6th April 2018.

Thank you all for coming along, here's looking forward to 2018/19 and all it brings.

Kevin Gulson

Chairman

Yaxley Parish Council