



Chairman's report to the Yaxley Annual Parish Meeting 12th March 2019

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

Full Council – Chairman Cllr Rodney Butcher and Vice Chair Cllr Mark Oliver.

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

Yet again our council's support for groups in Yaxley continues, with grants in the form of free use of facilities being given amounting to £9,750. We have seen a new group benefit this year, the Boxing Club which is a group of 11 – 18 years old who meet in the Owen Pooley on a Tuesday between the 5.30 – 6.30pm. Led by an English Boxing qualified coach they learn the technical and tactical aspects of this sport in a safe environment. Staying with support, the Parish Council has also aided and supported the setting up of a Wednesday morning fitness group that meet at 10.30 to undertake various sports including fitness at the outdoor gym and walking netball.

Additionally, small grants have been made available to groups such as the Library reading challenge, Yaxley Community Allotment, Magpas Air Ambulance, Citizens Advice, Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue and the North Hunts Community Car Scheme to name a few.

We were approached by Cambridgeshire County Council over the removal of funding for the bikeability scheme in schools, which sees year 6's be taken through the cycle training programme, gaining practical skills and an understanding of how to cycle on today's roads. In recognising the skills and confidence this offers we have agreed to fund half the cost of each child taking part in the village, it is early days but one local school has welcomed this and has discussed with its parents about the remaining funding.

March 2018 saw the launch of the Yaxley Community fridge followed by the Community allotment. Both have been a tremendous success with the Community Allotment known as the Cuckoos Clearing growing from 1½ plots on Whiteheads to 2 ½ plots. What started out with a group of residents being guided by the Parish Council it is now a self sustained group of over 30 members who help and support each other. Huge thanks must go to Odette Piniger who has been an important part of making this project happen, without her the project would not be the success it is. The Yaxley Community Fridge was set up to redistribute surplus food and to help stop waste, in partnership with Food For Nought it has redistributed over 4 ½ tonnes of food and has attracted a great deal of interest from the community.

We have had six councillor resignations, Councillors Alan Bartle, Graham Bellamy, Chris Bolton, Jonathan Orchard, Clive Thorne and June Willis 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 Robert Doncaster, Erica Gilchrist, Gavin Needham, Sheila Wayland, Simon Sanderson, who have all been co-opted to council, there is currently one vacancy which we hope to fill soon.

A special mention should go to former Cllr June Willis for being available to meet residents at Yaxley Library monthly and to Sheila Wayland for taking this role on in the future. June has been an important part of the Parish Council for the past 8 years and we wish her a happy retirement. I would also like to thank Kevin Gulson who stepped down as Chairman of the Parish Council in May last year to concentrate on his District Councillor role, I am pleased to say Kevin has stayed on the Parish Council and continues to work for and promotes the village.

Personnel Committee – Chairman Cllr Andrew Wood and Vice Chair Cllr Kevin Gulson

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

After some changes in personnel in the previous year, we are now enjoying a period of stability with both our Head Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, Andy Wright and Council Office Assistant, Michelle Darbon progressing well in their respective roles.

The Members of the grounds team continue to maintain the village a to a level that we are all able to enjoy. Additional training has been undertaken during the year to expand the team's abilities.

The Parish Council's buildings are maintained to Beryl Maltby's usually high standards and we all thank her for the work that she does in preparing the halls for a variety of events.

The standard of reporting for the Parish Council accounts continue to improve under the expertise of Beverley Porter. This, as always, assists in the decision making process for council meetings throughout the year.

Following the redesign of the Council Office, our Clerk, Helen Taylor, has been able to structure a team in an environment which is both helpful to parishioners visiting the office, and productive for the staff. The benefits of the transformation are already being appreciated. Helen continues to liaise with many local groups in addition to Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and the Police.

Our thanks go to Helen, and her team for their work and general commitment in providing facilities to the Parish at such a high standard.

Community Facilities Committee - Chairman Cllr Jayne Lusted and Vice Chair Cllr Paul Richardson

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

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. The grass pitches at both Queens Park and Middletons Road Recreation Ground continue to be very popular and the ongoing maintenance programme for these pitches now includes reseeded of two of the adult pitches as well as verti drainage. It is very pleasing to receive comments such as "this is the best pitch in the area" from teams playing on the facilities.

A LHI Local Highways Initiative bid has been submitted to the County Council for an additional zebra Crossing towards the Mere View end of Broadway, we will be told this month if we are successful.

The installation of a new disabled accessible roundabout in the Recreation Ground was a major project this year, and despite a few teething troubles it is now in situ and is accessible to all the children in village. Looking forward we intend to extend to extend the skate park with a new area suitable for younger children, we are pleased to report that this project was accepted for the Tesco bags of help scheme and we encourage everyone to vote for it !

The Community Fridge scheme has been a great success with over 4 tonnes of food being distributed since it opened last March. A special mention should go to Sue and Paul who volunteer each week by weighing in the food and setting out the produce.

Another community project that has soared over the last twelve months is the Community Allotment, a seed of an idea sown by the Parish Council this project has been cultivated and grown by Odette Pineger and through her hard work is now self sufficient with an active membership and committee.

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. 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 Mark Oliver and Vice Chair Jayne Lusted

This Committee meets quarterly and is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of Yaxley Parish Council Buildings and the facilities within them.

As far as possible the Council uses its own experienced cleaning team, and work force for general maintenance and decorating.

There has been much work done on the Intruder Monitoring System on the Amenity Centre which is now up to the required standard and improvements have been made to the Fire alarm system also.

After much hard work from our Clerk the Council have now received the required Listed Buildings Consent to replace some of the rotten windows in 50 Main Street as this is a Listed Building.

The Committee is about to commence an Energy Efficiency Review of Queens Park Hall.

The next challenge for the Committee is the Pavilion in the Recreation Ground where the Committee will be carrying out a detailed report on the required Improvement and Feasibility Study to bring the building back into main stream use, alongside the valuable role as changing facilities for football and cricket.

Planning - Chairman Paul Russell and Vice Chairman Mark Oliver

It has been quite a busy year – the committee meets almost every two weeks – and we have reviewed over 40 planning applications, ranging from the Roxhill Development, through smaller industrial estates (Eagle & Discovery Business Parks), to single storey domestic extensions and 'change-of-use' applications.

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. The role should become slightly less fraught when the new 'Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036' is finalised later this year as we are, currently, 'between Plans'.

Members of this committee also have to regularly attend District meetings – to put our case in more detail when necessary and for training – so we a very busy team of councillors...!!

Looking forward -

The Councils action plan looking forward includes the expansion of the Skate Park and the introduction of energy efficiency measures at Queens Park Hall.

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'd like to thank all the councillors for volunteering their time not only for council meetings but for giving your time freely to supervise the 3G pitch during school holidays, assist with cemetery inspections, allotment inspections etc. 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.

Thank you all for coming along, here's looking forward to 2019/20 and all it brings.

Rodney Butcher

Mark Oliver

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Yaxley Parish Council

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