



Chairman's report to the Yaxley Annual Parish Meeting 10th March 2020

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. The Parish Council has also funded the provision of a lifestyle coach and assistant to run the street sport sessions on a Tuesday on the 3G pitch between 4.15pm and 5.15pm, this is followed by the Boxing Club who meet in the Owen Pooley on a Tuesday between the 5.30 – 6.30pm. Both groups are for 11 to 16 year olds. Led by an English Boxing qualified coach they learn the technical and tactical aspects of this sport in a safe environment. 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 Countryside Trust, the Fenland Trust and Yaxley Open Gardens to name a few.

We have, with the help of Gemmas Hearts, installed a defibrillator at Queens Park Hall and have agreed to a machine being fitted on the outside of the Pavilion on Middleton's Road Recreation Ground.

The Community fridge has been running for 2 years now and in partnership with Food for Nought has redistributed over 10 tonnes of surplus food. Big thanks to R B Organic who provide a sack of carrots each week. A special mention should go to Sue McGurk who volunteers every week by weighing in the food and setting out the produce.

A ground water risk assessment has been commissioned for an area of land opposite the current cemetery on the A15. The land measures 3.3 ha and has been identified within the Great Haddon Development S106 Agreement as possible cemetery and allotment land to be managed by the Parish Council. The ground water risk assessment is a requirement for new cemeteries and extensions under Environment Agency Guidance.

We have had three councillor resignations, Councillors Sheila Wayland, Marion Southgate and Paul Richardson and have been saddened at the passing of Paul and Former Councillors Graham Bellamy and Ann Rees.

However, following the usual adverts for councillors I'm pleased to welcome Councillor Debbie Seaton who has been co-opted to the Council, anyone interested in filling the other vacancies should contact the Parish Clerk to have an informal chat.

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

We have once again had a very active year within the Council with some very positive changes. Thank you to our Clerk, Helen Taylor, who has managed the changes, which have resulted in a well-structured and productive work environment.

Sadly, we have said goodbye to our Grounds Team Supervisor, Andy, who has moved on to new challenges. We have welcomed a new Supervisor in the form of Dawn Hodgson, who most will recognise from her previous police related duties within the village and surrounding area. We thank Dawn and her team for the continued excellence in providing the grounds maintenance within the many areas of the village that the Council is responsible for.

A special thank you must go to Ray Allen for standing in as temporary supervisor during the transitional period. Michael Tesloff has joined us as a new Grounds worker and has hit the ground running with his keen attitude and friendly personality.

Being a man down during the autumn and Winter period, Chris Chandler joined the team on a temporary basis and proved a valuable addition to the team during his period with us.

Helen's team in the office continue to administer the needs of the Council. Michelle Darbon has now been promoted to assistant clerk and supports Helen with her various duties in supporting the needs of the village and our parishioners. Michelle will particularly focus on the a new website and organising the repair cafe.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome Holly Fieldson to the team in the position of Bookings Clerk. Holly has taken on many of Michelle's previous responsibilities and is proving a valued member of the team.

Beverley Porter continues to provide the council with accounting services, ensuring that Full Council and our related Committees are provided with the high standard of reporting that we have become accustomed to.

Beryl continues her many and varied duties within the Council, looking after the cleanliness of our halls and offices in addition to the varied support that she provides Helen and the team.

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

Community Facilities Committee - Chairman Cllr Jayne Lusted and Vice Chair Cllr Gavin Needham

This committee meets up to eight times a year 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 but the grass pitches at both Queens Park and Middletons Road Recreation Ground have been impacted by the very wet autumn and winter with the vast majority of games being cancelled due to the weather. One of the adult pitches at Queens Park has been reseeded and the other adult pitch is scheduled to be reseeded in when the weather improves.

We are awaiting a start date from Cambridgeshire County Council for the zebra crossing between Jasmine Way and Mere View. Another LHI bid has been submitted to the County Council for parking restriction measures around Norman Cross and if successful this work will be undertaken in 2021/22.

The Parish Council was successful in receiving funding from the Tesco's Bags of help scheme for the project to extend the skate park with a new area suitable for younger children, the weather again has had an impact on installing the new equipment which we hope will happen soon.

A community project that is growing is the Middle Ground Coffee Club which started in November meeting in the Pavilion on Recreation Ground every Monday 10am to noon and has now added a Friday. The Repair Café also meets in the Pavilion once a month this new initiative aims to repair household electrical and mechanical devices this new initiative has been supported by a group of volunteers to which we give our thanks.

We continue to collaborate with local groups, such as Yaxley Community Allotment and Yaxley Countryside Trust led by Reg Bingham and his small band of volunteers. One of the Trust's main projects this year has been the planting of a new community orchard in the Recreation Ground 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 Robert Doncaster

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

As part of the Councils energy efficiency measures the car park lights at Queens Park have been changed to LED as have the hall lights and the inefficient over the door heaters in the hall have been replaced by an air conditioner that heats the room more efficiently than central heating would.

Having gained listed buildings consent the windows on 50 Main Street have been replaced in keeping with this listed building.

The Pavilion has had new changing room doors installed that are more robust and secure. Following this work the exterior of the building has been painted and the railings around this area taken down. With the pavilion main room being used on a regular basis, the area has benefited from a new carpet and better seating.

Planning - Chairman Paul Russell.

It has been quite a busy year again – the committee meeting almost every two weeks – and we continue to review over 40 planning applications, ranging from the Great Haddon and Hampton Water developments, through smaller industrial estates (Eagle Business Park) and larger individual developments (Olivemedes and 2 Park Close), to single storey domestic extensions, 'change-of-use' applications and Tree Preservation Orders.

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 now the new 'Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036' has been finalised and we are, no longer, '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 V E Day celebratory Pensioner's Afternoon tea on 8th May, the expansion of the Skate Park and the cemetery.

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 2020/21 and all it brings.

Rodney Butcher

Chairman

Yaxley Parish Council

Mark Oliver

Vice Chairman

Yaxley Parish Council