

Chittlehampton Parish Council Chairman's Report May 2019.

As the May AGM approaches and I reflect on another eventful and at times stressful year with the sudden serious illness of our long time and well loved clerk Rose Warren, who I am glad to say has made great improvements and we hope will be back to full fitness very soon. Karen Wylde then stepped up to the mark and did an excellent job as clerk, but after a few months she decided it was not for her and resigned on 31st. January. Luckily Alvin Scott approached me about the post and as he was already clerk to the school governors it was felt he would be ideal for the job and was employed from 1st. February. He is settling in well and I'm sure he will fill the post in an exemplary way.

The damage to the bank around the Eastacott Cross raised it's ugly head again. Myself and Karen Wylde attended a site meeting on a very cold December morning with Nick Russell from Historic England and Richard Sables from Devon Highways. After much discussion it was decided the best way to solve the problem would be to move the cross back slightly and re-profile the corner. As this would cost in the region of £6,000, of which a good part would have to come from the Parish Council, it was decided to forget the project and leave it as it is.

After months of chasing and having to apply for planning twice, which was an absolute farce, the air ambulance night landing lights on the playing field were completed at the end of January. Thanks must go to Toby Russell of the air ambulance, Cllr. Richard Edgell and Cllr. Walter White for their grants, Carole Henderson-Begg for her coffee morning, Grenville Buckingham for his donation and Cllr. Colin Timberlake and Cllr Howard Hooper for all of their hard work on the project. Just to prove it was money well spent, it was used for the first time less than two months after completion when the helicopter landed at about 9:00pm on a Sunday evening to take a patient to a specialist burns unit in Bristol.

The saga of the affordable housing goes on and although the Parish Council thought it was a waste of time and money a new "Housing Needs Survey" was sent out to the whole community in March and the results of this should be available soon.

Due to a change in the software used to update the Parish Council website this has now been rebuilt and redesigned and so far has met with approval, it also continues to be updated on a regular basis. If you haven't checked it out yet, then please do so.

The notice boards in Cobbaton and UMBERLEIGH have been replaced and again thanks must go to Cllr. Walter White for his help in funding these.

The areas around the two trees at the top of the square are complete with concrete and pebble infills and the bottom four will be dug out and a membrane and gravel will be laid in the near future.

The threat of the school closure has been a real worry, a meeting between Cllr. Richard Edgell, Cllr. Walter White, myself and two of the school governors took place in March where we were assured all was being done to keep it open. Despite the assurances shortly after the meeting the school cook and the two mealtime assistants were made redundant, which only added to our worries.

The next problem was that J & J Bins, the contractor who had been collecting the dog waste from our bins, informed us that they would no longer be doing this from the end of March. At the moment it looks as though N.D.D.C. will be taking over the collection of the waste, the sum charged has to be confirmed but we are assured that it will be comparable .

All the above report was written before I went on holiday on the 16th April and sadly I heard the news of the death of Walter whilst I was away. Walter, over the last 8 years, has supported our community with grants and assistance beyond the call of duty and will be greatly missed by all.

Finally I would like to thank all my fellow councillors and parish clerks for their service to the parish in the last year.

Martin Ives. Chairman.