

Steeple Aston Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm Monday 20th May 2019 in the Village Hall
Committee Room

Minutes

1. To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Martin Lipson and Amanda Rodgers
2. To receive the minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2018 were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting
- 3 Chairman's Report
Steeple Aston Parish Council Annual Report 2018-19

Whereas 2017-18 appears to have been a year of unprecedented change on the Parish Council, I am pleased to report that 2018-19 has been one of relative stability and consolidation. Statutory elections were held in May. All members of the council stood for re-election, with the exception of Helen Wright who stepped down for family reasons. As there were no other candidates, the existing council members were duly re-elected. Amanda Rodgers was then co-opted and welcomed as a new Councillor in September.

First I would like to express my thanks to everyone who has worked for the village, in both paid and unpaid capacities, throughout the last year. I'd like to thank my fellow Councillors for their patience and support in guiding me through my first months as Chair. It was not a post that I ever anticipated taking up but I hope I have discharged its duties satisfactorily. A big thank you to Cathy Fleet not only for carrying out all her usual duties of dealing with correspondence, payments, meetings, and general administration; but also for letting me know what I can and can't do, for not allowing me to make too many huge mistakes, and for being patient when I decide to do things my way not hers.

Thanks also to Bob Bickley, who looks after the play area and the public toilet: an essential but not always pleasant job; to Nigel Prickett, whose grass cutting keeps our village looking tidy through the summer months; to Helen White, who carries out our internal audit; to Jenny Bell, who looks after the village website; and to the many other volunteers, who help to maintain village facilities and to run the Village Hall, the Sports and Recreation Trust, the allotments and all the other clubs, societies and organisations that make Steeple Aston such a vibrant place to live.

Looking back over the past twelve months, probably the most significant event has been the adoption of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. This was voted on in a referendum in March, received a huge public endorsement, and will inform and influence planning decisions in Mid-Cherwell until 2031. Enormous thanks go to Martin Lipson and John Coley for their tireless efforts in getting the plan formulated, agreed and voted for.

There have been the usual trickle of planning applications throughout the year to keep the Council busy. Two possible development sites are currently still under consideration. The first is

along Sixty Foot, where Rectory Homes are still trying to find a suitable way to provide pedestrian access from the site into the village. The second is at The Beeches, where a recent application for up to 8 houses has currently be withdrawn, I presume pending changes before it is resubmitted to Cherwell District Council. Both sites have their merits and neither has been rejected outright by the Parish Council.

The village streets continue to provide a number of challenges for the Council. Parking, especially along Southside, has been an issue this year. The Parish Council has written to villagers pointing out the difficulties, and is in the process of considering what action, if any, could be taken to alleviate the problem.

Potholes continue to be a problem, especially along The Beeches. Graham Porcas is now a registered Super User of the *Fix My Street* website. This means that he can input information about potholes directly into Highways system, with the result that they get filled much more quickly. Recent experience suggests that this new process actually does work. As for The Beeches, the Parish Council has been in consultation with the Highways department about the possibility of a new drainage system that we hope will provide a long-term solution to the problem.

Much of the Parish Council's work is to do with the upkeep and general day-to-day running of village facilities. The play area has undergone a certain amount of general maintenance this year both of the equipment and the fencing, along with a large delivery of new bark; another large delivery of bark is planned over the next 12 months, and there will doubtless be more work required to keep it up to scratch. There is new signage in the play area. We have engaged a new contractor to spray the weeds on roads and pavements throughout the village. Other developments include the updating of the village welcome pack and the emergency plan.

Over the next 12 months the Village Hall will be undergoing something of a makeover. The outside (doors, window frames, guttering, pipework, etc.) will be repainted. Inside, the kitchen will be completely refurbished making it much more user-friendly and fit for the 21st century. Many thanks to the Village Hall Committee for their hard work on this, and especially to Richard Preston for his fund-raising efforts for the latter.

As I have said earlier, Steeple Aston is a vibrant community and the Parish Council is committed to making sure that it remains so. Our aim is to ensure that the village has the quality facilities it needs so that the various village organisations and services can continue effectively to serve the needs of the community.

4. Public Participation

Members of the public did not make any comments.

Signed Chair SAPC

Date