

FENSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - 126th Annual Assembly – Tuesday 4th May 2021

Introduction & Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for contributing their personal time without remuneration, they have diligently dealt with the many issues brought before them during the year, throughout the very difficult Covid Pandemic period. Particular recognition goes to Cllr Kevin Mitchell, for his major contribution as acting Clerk and RFO from July following the resignation of our previous Clerk / RFO. During this time we were actively recruiting our new Clerk Jo Perez, who joined us on 16th November, and has settled in effectively.

My thanks also go to District and County Councillors for their service throughout the period, and Parishioners who have supported the Parish during this period.

My recognition goes to the late John Davies, St Ives Town Councillor. John was first elected to the District Council in 1992 and was one of the longest serving District Councillors. John lived and worked in St Ives for more than 40 years, he dedicated nearly three decades to the Huntingdonshire community through his service on the District Council and was a most well respected and well-liked councillor. He was well known across the district for his desire to engage with his community at every opportunity, to make a difference to the people and communities of our district. His loss will be deeply felt by many across Huntingdonshire.

Particular mention goes to Cllr Ian Bates, who is retiring after 20 years of continuous service as our County Councillor. Ian has overseen many defining moments whilst in office, such as implementation of the Guided Busway and the new A14, establishing the new towns of Camborne, Northstowe and Alconbury Weald, and rolling out broadband across Cambridgeshire. Ian's most recent contributions to our parish have been to create the Fen Bridleway and to secure the CCC Grant to enable our Village Hall to be built. My thanks go to Ian for his service, support and major contribution to the Parish, and we wish him every success, good health and happiness in his well-earned retirement.

Particular mention is also made of Martin Crawshaw, who has contributed a significant amount of his time and expertise towards the work of Fenstanton Flood Working Group, which is being led by Cllr Nigel Ferrier, working with local Government Departments to investigate the cause, impact and proposed solutions required to mitigate the future risk of experiencing the significant floodwater levels that encroached upon Fenstanton on Christmas Eve 2020, damaging properties and significantly disrupting the lives of residents.

My appreciation also goes to the volunteer litter teams and the 22 team members on volunteer list who contribute freely of their time, performing the much-needed task of keeping our village tidy.

During the current period we received 2 resignations from Cllrs Ian Caswell and Jackie Turner. We wish them well and thank them for their valuable services during their time serving the community.

Five new Cllrs, Amit Puntambekar, Jerry Schonfeldt, Sam Polhill, Joseph Middleton & Mark Richardson were co-opted during the period, bringing the Parish Council up to a full complement of 13 Parish Councillors.

Covid-19 Impact and Regulations

Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time of the 2020 Annual Assembly Meeting did not permit face to face meetings to be held (as is still the case). The Chairman's 2020 Annual Report was published via notice boards and social media, this publication approach remains unchanged for 2021.

During the initial six months of the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown period, the Chairman and Vice Chairman, together with our Clerk, dealt with any issues that were brought to the attention of the Clerk by Parishioners, as permitted under emergency legislation. This approach was implemented as an emergency arrangement, until the introduction of Zoom meetings on the 13.08.2020, all Councillors and parishioners were subsequently able to attend monthly Parish Council Zoom meetings.

This year's Annual Assembly Meeting is being held via Zoom, to give residents the opportunity to attend and/or raise issues in respect of the Chairman's report.

As the U.K. Government slowly eases Covid 19 restrictions, the Parish Council will shortly be permitted to resume socially distanced face to face meetings, at which the press and members of the public will be invited to attend. Residents will be notified accordingly.

To comply with Covid regulations this year's Parish Council AGM will be held on 6th May 2021 via Zoom.

Draft Financial year end accounts are currently being prepared for the period ending 31 March 2021. The audited Annual Accounts will be made available to members of the public between Monday 14th June to Friday 23rd July 2021.

Parish Projects Delivered & Initiated

Against the backdrop of damaging floodwaters, the Covid pandemic, social distancing constraints, the resignation of our previous Clerk and recruitment of our new Clerk, your Parish Council has continued to work through difficult circumstances to deliver a significant number of additional new amenities and activities as follows:

Projects Part and Fully Delivered

- Fen Bridleway implemented and repaired after flood damage.
- New Parish Council Website launched and fully operational.
- Village Pond renovation and fencing works partially completed. (great crested newts caused delay to final work until the autumn).
- Clocktower, bell and surrounds refurbished.
- 10 extra litter bins installed.
- 2 new benches installed on Hilton Road & junction of Cherry Tree Way and Bell Lane.
- Launched the Community Warden scheme jointly with Fen Drayton and Lolworth, providing support to the vulnerable in our communities.
- 30mph speed limit introduced on Cambridge Road Slip Road off A1307.
- Completed consultation and gained CCC Highways approval for 20mph High Street speed limit.
- Cleaned up A1307 underpass and applied anti-graffiti paint.
- Established the Fenstanton Flood Working Group and completed the flood report, submitted to CCC, HDC & Highways England, ongoing.
- Committed funds to support the new Village Hall.

- Gained a Local Highways Initiative Grant for Chequer Street parking bays, currently awaiting CCC committee sanction.
- Established Highway Drain clearing Working Group, clearing seven gully blockages during the period.
- Completed Multi Use Games Area negotiations with CCC, School and Highways England securing 100% A14 Legacy Funding.

Projects & Initiatives In Progress

- Implement refurbishment of bus shelters.
- Implement 20mph speed limit in the High Street.
- Improve parish footpaths working with CCC Right of Way Officers.
- Digitalisation and location mapping of village burial records (historic records to be retained).
- Install Chequer Street parking bays.
- Village Pond works completed, History board & 2 picnic tables installed.
- Clocktower history board and whipping post installation.
- Fenstanton Flood Working Group activity continues, by working with HE, CCC, HDC, Anglia Water and the Environment Agency to mitigate future risk of village flooding and prepare an Emergency Flood Plan for the Parish.
- Highway Drain Working Group to continue clearing blockages until introduction of CCC Highways Bi-Annual scheme is operational.
- Implement Multi Use Games Area on school grounds during July 2021.
- Complete online mapping of all parish areas.
- Install additional benches in parish churchyard, Honey Hill, High St, Pitfield Close, Rookery Place and Fen Bridleway.
- Co-ordinate VE Day celebrations (Galaxy Big Band), deferred to September 2021, due to Covid-19 impact.
- Further development of the Hamptons open space & football field for sport, exercise and social use.

Parish Matters General:

Cambridge Road A1307 slip road

Following completion of the new A14, HGV parking on the Cambridge Road slip road was expected to diminish, ceasing to be a significant concern for Residents. This has not been the case and dangerous HGV parking has continued to be a police matter. The volume and speed of vehicles along this stretch of road has been monitored, using the Parish Council's Speedwatch equipment, collecting evidence of significant speeding along this section of road.

The Parish Council developed and submitted an Initial Proposal to HDC, applying for the release of Retained Community Infrastructure Levy, required to improve the Cambridge Road Slip Road surrounds and mitigate / discourage HGV Parking. Our initial application for funding was rejected by HDC in January 2021. The proposal has since been re-drafted to reduce cost and focus on pedestrian health and safety and will be re-submitted to HDC Community Infrastructure Levy Committee to be considered for funding approval in June 2021.

Meanwhile, to help mitigate dangerous parking of HGVs, the Parish Clerk is contacting all Hauliers whose vehicles are parking overnight and causing an obstruction, requesting them to cease this activity.

Transfer of land from Kier Living to Fenstanton Parish Council

Kier Living have offered, and the Parish Council has accepted the transfer of title to a section of land known as the Old Orchard on Cambridge Road. The legal transfer of title to this land at has now been completed. A lease is currently being drawn up in favour of Fenstanton Scouts for the siting a new village scout hut. The scouts will be responsible for future maintenance of this parcel of land.

Community and S106 grant allocations

- Community Café £500.
- Glebe Allotments Steering Group £540.
- United Reformed Church £1,000.
- Fenstanton Friendship Club £250.
- Fenstanton Football Club £12,000 From S106 monies received from the renovation of the Ladybird Nursery.
- Fenstanton Primary School a max £6,000 “Pound for Pound” fund matching scheme to support school improvements.

Parish Planning Matters

A total of 40 Planning Applications (55 previous Year), have been processed, in respect of which the Parish Council have been consulted in an advisory capacity by HDC Planning.

Burial Board Matters

The Parish Council is currently progressing with the validation and digitalisation of Village Burial Records (historic records to be retained). This will be enhanced with a new, on-line high-resolution digital map of the open graveyard.

Due to the shortage of known available plots, these can only be purchased in the event of a parishioner death.

The Parish Council is continuing to progress an initiative with CCC and the school, which would provide additional land required for expansion of the graveyard.

Parish Precept & Funding

In order to maintain the current level of service provided, meet agreed commitments to the Village Hall Trust and Community Warden scheme and achieve a balanced budget in the coming financial year 2021/22, the Parish Council has unanimously voted to increase the Parish Precept by 20%, which equates to an increase of £1.17 per month for a level D property in the village.

The Parish Precept remains within the bottom 25% of comparable sized parish precepts within the Huntingdonshire district.

Financial balances as at the year-end 31/03/2021 were as follows:

• Lloyds Current Account	£ 5,945
• Precept Account (Lloyds BIA)	£ 112,162
• CIL	£ 160,672
• Pitfield Fund - Nationwide BS	£ 18,931
• Youth Club Fund - Cambridge BS	£ 2,444
• Izettle (VE Day transactions)	£ 413
Total in Banks	£ 300,567
Cash	£ 92
GRAND TOTAL (Banks and Cash)	£ 300,659

Fenstanton Parish Council Chairman

Paul Kent