

## BCPC Chairman's Report 2018-19

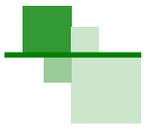
Presented at the Annual Parish Assembly 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

At this point in time, given the local Government 4-year cycle, it is important not only to look back on this previous year but also reflect on the whole term in office of this particular Council. It humbles me to say that as a group we instigated positive change which we should all be proud of. Today's Parish Council has a very different culture from the Council we inherited four years ago. As a new Council we decided that decisions should be made by all Councillors rather than a select few; the Committee structure should be reviewed and changed; Council staffing reviewed and restructured; our Parish Office doors opened and the Parish Council taking part in important community events such as the Street Fair and contributing toward the Christmas lights. This positive change I hope will continue into the next political term with the new Council. As I said last year, the "Parish Council simply cannot function without committed staff and dedicated Councillors who give up their time on a voluntary basis. Currently, we are very lucky to have both, which helps to ensure that the Parish Council not only fulfils its statutory duties but strives to increase wellbeing in our community. We should not underestimate these efforts, and as Chairman, I would like to acknowledge this and congratulate staff and Councillors on the difference they make both collectively and individually. On behalf of our community I thank you – your time and commitment are a valuable gift." If anyone here this evening would like to get involved in the Parish Council, please do not hesitate to seek further information from either an existing Councillor or staff member. Your community needs you!

Turning now to this last year... I have asked each of the Committee Chairs to summarise their year...

Cllr Val Perry has Chaired **Community Committee** and this year:

- The War Memorial was finished and rededicated by Bishop Rachael;
- The boxing club has been taking place for 12 months. For those that don't know the boxing club takes place in the community centre every Friday evening. The club took two years to set up and the Community Committee have worked very hard on this project. The club as an excellent coach and last December ten young people gained their level one award and are now working hard towards their next award.

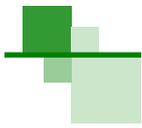


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- The Community Committee are pleased to announce that we now have a Youth Council comprising of young people aged from 13 to 18. They are an amazing group of young people we have worked well together to deliver the projects they have been given. Currently the Youth Council and Community Committee are working together to set up Youth Hub. We are all very proud of their achievements to date. If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Youth Council, you would be very welcome to attend their meetings which are the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month from 5 pm to 7pm.
- The Community Committee continue to work with our local police officers who keep the PC up to date with any issues involving young people. The Boxing Club love it when they pop in and see them and spar with them.
- Cllr Andy Walker has been out litter picking with resident volunteers helping to keep our village looking attractive, keeping our community areas free from waste and safeguarding our local wildlife.
- Cleeve Street Patrol has also proved a great success with a marked decrease in the number of house burglaries. However, due to a shortage of volunteers they have had to pause their operations.
- Community Committee have been busy trying to keep the parish gardens looking nice by planting bulbs and spring flowers. Last year with the help of Mark from Gotherington Nursery we replanted the big planters at the Sports Pavilion.
- The PC again opened up the Community building for the Christmas lights switch on with members of the Boxing Club selling tea, coffee & cake. They also organised and ran a toy stall to raise money to buy tea shirts with the club logo on. The Youth Council had a raffle and raised money for the Guide Dogs for the Blind. The Parish Office was also opened for the Street fair with exhibitions.
- This is the second year for the Young Persons Award which recognises how hard these young people work and contribute to the local community. I am sure we all agree they are a great credit to their families and our community.
- Grant funding has been given to a number of local groups including The Colts; Transition Cleeve; St Michael's Centre; The Cleeve Players; Tithe Barn; the Scouts and the ATC.

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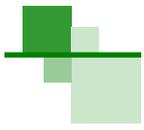
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Cllr Bob Stayt has Chaired **Buildings and Grounds** Committee this year. To summarise the events of the year:

- We have now completed the new Astro upgrade that included new mat and LED lighting and the feedback from users is that they are very happy with the work we have done.
- We are in the process of upgrading our water and heating system at the sports pavilion, the old one is starting to struggle with the use that is now required due to the increased bookings from football clubs.
- The Council has just taken ownership of the new allotments at Homelands that will give the parish a further 54 plots. The take up has been very positive, and with the ones we had last year at Cleavelands this secures over 100 plots for allotment users now and for years to come. (There are a few plots available if you know any one that is interested).
- We have been working hard to keep our parks and land up together for our users. And to help with this we have entered an agreement with TBC for them to include our waterways as part of their works contract to ensure that all the banks and water beds are kept clear. (We do not want a repeat of the 2007 floods).
- To reduce the chance of travellers gaining access again to Cutbridge Meadow we have replaced the top gate and beefed up the fence either side, plus removed the lower gate and installed a much stronger fence in this area.
- The Bowls club had some subsidence with their building due to the floor supports getting wet and failing we have supported them in getting this fixed as this is a great amenity for the village and is growing in strength year on year.
- To help all our users and staff with bookings of the buildings we have installed a swipe door access control; this will save us having to keep opening and closing up after every user. This will only have to be done in the morning and the end of day.
- To reduce our carbon foot print and electricity costs we have had Solar Panels fitted to our Parish office.

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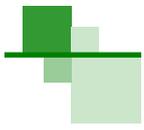


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Peter Richmond has Chaired **Planning, Highways and Environment** Committee, this year.

- The committee continued its work on providing statutory consultee comments on a fortnightly basis to Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) who are the planning authority for our area. The committee sends comments to TBC on all matters that come before them in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Their local knowledge and that of our residents is crucial sometimes to the best outcomes of an application.
- The Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) have now been installed in a number of locations around the parish as approved by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and appear to have had a beneficial impact on the average speed of traffic. Road safety remains a priority for the Council.
- The new footpath in Kayte Lane is now in place and provides a safe pedestrian access to the cemetery, sports field, and football club which includes (amongst other things) a playgroup.
- The saga of the pedestrian crossing lights that the developer (Persimmon) had failed to install in line with their legal agreement with GCC was truly shocking. It concerns the Council that this sort of infrastructure is not being provided when it absolutely obvious that such a facility is absolutely essential to the health and wellbeing of residents.
- There have been further developments on the Gloucestershire Highways front including a new highways manager for our area. We have met with him and plan further regular meetings with him in order to assist him in his role to deliver more works as promised to us by GCC.
- The long overdue repair to Two Hedges Road was completed successfully but we know there are other roads, large and small, which are badly in need of repair and/or refurbishment such as the A435 north of the Finlay Way/Hayfield Way roundabout. We regard this stretch of road as a high priority given the high and increasing volumes of traffic which is further exacerbated by the fact that the road is often used as diversionary route for traffic from other main routes such as the M5!
- Progress on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and Gateway Project have slowed considerably but hopefully the new Council in May will be able to focus again



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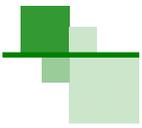
on these issues. We do want and need help from members of the public so if anyone is interested in getting involved, they can obtain details from the Clerk to the Council. Thank you.

- Further maintenance works have been carried out on Cutbridge Meadow and an outline plan to improve the biodiversity of this invaluable asset (similar to the Grange Field project) will continue to evolve over a period of years. This is fully consistent with the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) policy SD9: Biodiversity & Geodiversity.
- TBC is already reviewing the Joint Core Strategy (2011-2031) which was formally adopted on 11 December 2017. Responses are being made as and when necessary to formal consultations by TBC such as the recent JCS –Issues and Options Consultation which was conducted between Monday, 12th November 2018 and Friday, 11th January 2019.
- The new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into effect on 1 January 2019 and will be administered by TBC.

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Lastly, Tony MacKinnon, our resident accountant, has Chaired **Finance Committee** this year.

Not surprisingly, the main job of the committee is to set the annual budget and the precept that Tewkesbury Borough then collects from householders to fund the services we provide. Looking back over the last four years of this Council, we took over a budget that had been set at a level that was felt to give an over-generous margin for error in case Whitehall imposed spending limits on Parish Councils. In our first budget, (2016-17) we cut back by just over 10% and were still easily able to fund purchase of Cutbridge Meadow from the County Council. There was no increase the following year in the amount charged to each household and since then the increase has been a less than inflation 1.9% per annum. This means the cost per household in the new budget year is still around 6.5% lower than the rate we inherited. The amount collected has gone up by much more, simply because there are a lot more houses. We work with band D equivalents and these have gone up from 4200 to 4950. Because of discounts for single occupancy and a range of other exemptions, this greatly understates the number of dwellings in the village, which is well in excess of 6000. Cleeve is by a very long way the biggest contributor of council tax in the Borough, but not the highest per house.



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We always look ahead with a medium-term financial projection to give us the reassurance that the budget in future will sustain and increase the services we provide. Our obligation to maintain our assets – parish office, community centre, pavilion, astro, playing fields, play areas, water courses, trees and hedges, waste bins, the war memorial, bus stops – has gone up as the village has grown. There are more play areas to be put in our care, plus two new community buildings planned for Cleevelands and Homelands.

Reserves are still substantial and we have funded the renovation of the Astro and the war memorial. Other major spends have been the provision of Vehicle Activated Signs (with match funding from GCC), security at the pavilion, setting up the new allotments and extensive improvements to play areas and water courses.

Finances are sound and should remain so.

We have also updated financial processes in the parish office.

Finally, we also have spent and are spending money we get from developers under section 106 agreements. These have included much of the work on the pavilion (still ongoing) and planned work to improve the parish office. We have already installed solar panels to do our bit to combat climate change.

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I hope I have adequately captured what the Parish Council has been up to this past year. However, if there are any questions there is opportunity for them to be asked now. If I or my colleagues are unable to answer any questions we will endeavour to find out and get back to you.

Councillor Wendy Hopkins

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