



HOLLOWELL & TEETON PARISH COUNCIL

Gillian Greaves (Clerk) Tel: 01604 761470
96 Martins Lane
Hardingstone
Northampton
NN4 6DJ

Email: pc-clerk@hollowellandteeton.org.uk

Web: www.hollowellandteeton.org.uk

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 20 May 2020 at 7.30 pm

Chairman's Report

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Administratively the Parish comprises two wards, Hollowell, which includes Highfield Park, and Teeton. There are eight Councillors, two of whom represent Teeton ward, supported by one paid employee, the Clerk, Mrs Gillian Greaves, (appointed in September 2016) who also holds the position of the 'Responsible Finance Officer'.

Delegated Roles & Responsibilities: (2019 – 20)

Hollowell Ward:

Andrew Crisp [Elected May 2016] Chairman / Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator / Police Liaison / Highways Representative / Hollowell Notice Board / Street Lighting Co-ordinator / Finance Signatory

Emily Curtis [Elected May 2016] Vice Chairman / HPPAC Liaison / Asset Management support / Jane Letts Trustee – from May 2018

Allen Eaton MBE [Elected May 2016] Mowing Co-ordinator / Jane Letts Trustee / Pocket Park Support / Finance Signatory

Graham Leah [Co-opted July 2016] Representative on Hollowell Village Hall Committee / Jane Letts Trustee – from 18 July 2018 / Finance Signatory – from 18 July 2018

Sue McCubbin [Co-opted June 2016] Rights of Way (Public Footpaths) Representative / Council Asset Inspection (twice year) / Finance Signatory

Hannah Oswin [Elected May 2016] HPPAC Liaison / web site and computer support

Teeton Ward:

Chris Blake [Co-opted July 2018]

Mike Tomalin [Elected May 2016] Tree warden (Hollowell & Teeton) / Internal Audit / Pocket Park Support (H & S Inspections)

NB: The Council does not qualify for 'General Power of Competence' under Sect 8 Localism Act 2011, which requires two thirds of councillors to be elected, together with the Clerk holding a specified qualification. Although two thirds of Councillors were elected in 2016, the change of Clerk in September 2016 has removed the specified qualification.

ASSET SURVEY

Assets within the Parish, that are the responsibility of the Council, are inspected in accordance with the Council's Risk Assessment Policy. Details of these assets are recorded on the Asset Register which can be viewed on the Council web site. A substantial part of

these assets is comprised of the equipment within the Pocket Park and these have been increased in the last year and will be added to in the coming year. It has also been necessary to remove and replace some equipment.

The 'Millennium Bus Shelter' located at the junction of Church Hill / Creaton to Guilsborough Road at The Green in Hollowell is one of the prominent assets, having been constructed by volunteers from Hollowell Steam in 1999 – 2000. However, for a period in 2019 time stood still when the double faced clock mounted on top of the thatched roof stopped working. Local resident Chris Jilbert volunteered his expertise and after thorough checks of the electronic equipment he successfully re-instated the passage of time in Hollowell. His efforts are greatly appreciated.

COMMUNICATIONS

H & T PC Web Site (Openness & Accountability)

The statutory requirements for 'Openness & Accountability' have continued to engage Councillors and the Clerk in the management of Council communications and information. The Council web site is the primary source of information for the public regarding agendas, minutes and important council related issues and Councillor Hannah Oswin has continued with the maintenance and development of the web site to ensure compliance with the 'Openness & Accountability' procedures. The work undertaken by Hannah is greatly appreciated.

Hollowell Facebook

The Hollowell News Facebook web site has enhanced the Councils links with Parishioners. This is not a Parish Council responsibility, but was developed and is managed by Councillor Emily Curtis. I take this opportunity to yet again express appreciation for the time and effort that Emily devotes to the management of the Facebook page.

The Village Link

This is a local bi-monthly publication, with web site, that provides news from, and is distributed free of charge to, the Northamptonshire villages of Cold Ashby, Cottesbrooke, Creaton, Guilsborough, Hollowell & Teeton and Thornby. Information about recent activities of the Parish Council is submitted for publication to assist with maintaining Parishioners awareness. Councillor Emily Curtis contributes time and effort into ensuring that activities of groups within Hollowell and Teeton Parish receive appropriate publication.

FINANCE

In reviewing the budget and changes in grant funding the Council resolved to increase the precept to £11,016.00 for 2019 - 20. The Council is responsible for budget management but relies heavily on the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer.

Changes in financial regulations are a determining factor as to how the Council manages the budget and what audit processes are applied. By maintaining a budget of under £25,000.00, the Council is able to limit the level of audit but has to comply with transparency regulations. Even with this reduced level of audit there is a heavy burden on the Clerk / RFO in ensuring the Councils accounts comply with regulations and procedures.

As Chairman, and on behalf of the Parish, I wish to record my appreciation for the work undertaken by Mrs Gillian Greaves in maintaining the Councils finances.

GRASS MOWING CONTRACT

The Council web site has details of the areas which the Council has designated for mowing of verges and grassed areas within the Parish. The Council has received a small grant from Northamptonshire County Council for undertaking maintenance of roadside verges within 30 mph restricted areas of the Parish.

Elm Tree Garden Maintenance (ETGM) was appointed as the contractor from 1 March 2017 and the Council has extended this into 2020 - 21.

Councillor Allen Eaton MBE maintains a working liaison with the mowing contractor to ensure the contract is fulfilled efficiently. This work is appreciated.

HIGHWAYS & RIGHTS of WAY

The financial issues affecting the County Council have had a direct impact on road maintenance, particularly gritting, in Hollowell. After receiving notification from the County Council, in August 2018, that two of the four grit bins located on Church Hill, Hollowell were to be withdrawn, the Council resolved to take over responsibility for the bins and determined options for having them refilled. The relatively mild winter of 2018 – 19 resulted in less use of the bins and NCC Highways then changed policy and undertook to refill all the bins. The winter of 2019 - 20 was also relatively mild and there was no requirement to arrange for refilling of the two Parish Bins.

This will remain an issue for the Council unless or until the County Council (and future Unitary Authorities) determines to re-adopt the bins.

The Miss Jane Letts (Hollowell) Charity

The charity is required to be managed by three Parish Councillors, in accordance with the will of James William Boothe Letts, who died on 16th December 1940, although it is not a Parish Council statutory responsibility. It has been necessary to change the Trustees during 2018 -19 and the new board carried out a full review of its responsibilities. I commend Councillor Emily Curtis for her perseverance in researching the processes and preparing appropriate reports and accounts.

LITTER PICKING

Yet again residents have volunteered their time and energy to undertake a litter pick around the Parish in early spring, co-ordinated by Councillor Emily Curtis and supported by Hollowell Steam with the contribution of litter picking equipment. Several bags of various items were collected and passed onto the DDC Environmental staff for disposal. Parishioners, Councillor Curtis and Hollowell Steam are thanked for their effort.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH [NHW] AND POLICE LIAISON

Councillor Andrew Crisp continued to undertake the role of NHW Co-ordinator and Police Liaison. NHW requires the participation of residents by remaining vigilant and reviewing the security of their homes, vehicles and property if a low crime rate is to be maintained.

The Parish Council continues to support the Hollowell & Teeton NHW but no expenditure was incurred this year.

The scheme remains active and maintains close liaison with Police staff on the Daventry Rural Policing Team. Neighbourhood Alert messages, advising of recent crime incidents and prevention, are circulated to members and this distribution is supported by Hollowell News Facebook.

PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (DOG FOULING)

The 'Paint Means Poo Campaign' that was promoted by DDC in 2018, to encourage dog owners to clean up after their animals, was supported by a group of volunteers who undertook the marking exercise around Hollowell. The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), which sets out rules that dog owners must comply with, extends to 2021 but it remains an issue as to what the new Unitary Authorities will do when the Order expires. The Parish Council continues to expect all dog owners to act responsibly, particularly around the areas where the grass is mowed. The area towards the top of Church Hill remains the place where excessive amounts of fouling have taken place. This reflects on persons who exercise dogs within the Parish and has previously been referred to the DDC Environmental team with a view to enforcement under the Public Spaces Protection Order.

PLANNING

Planning Applications

The Parish Council has been required to hold extra-ordinary meetings to deal with Planning Applications referred by DDC Development Control. The Village Design Statement (VDS), for Hollowell and Teeton Parish, adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2008, remains a valid reference when responding to applications but National and District Planning Policies dictate planning issues. Notifications were received from DDC Development Control Department of a variety of Planning Applications within the Parish and the Council endeavoured to work within the time constraints and procedures to provide representation. Chapter 5 of The Settlements and Country Side Local Plan (Part 2), now adopted by DDC, relates to 'Development in Rural Areas'. This indicates that development within the rural areas will be guided by a rural settlement hierarchy that will comprise the following categories:

- PRIMARY SERVICE VILLAGES;
- SECONDARY SERVICE VILLAGES;
- OTHER VILLAGES; AND
- SMALL SETTLEMENTS/HAMLETS.

Hollowell Parish remains classified within 'Other Villages' and Teeton is classified within 'Small Settlements/Hamlets'. This strategy and the VDS continue to be applied by DDC Development Control Officers to manage development.

Community Governance Review

Daventry District Council carried out a Community Governance Review during 2018 - 19. This is the process that allows the Council to make changes to parishes, such as boundaries and the numbers of parish councillors.

The Parish Council submitted 3 recommendations to DDC to amend the Parish Boundary and these were subject to a consultation period. One was rejected during the first phase (to amend the boundary around Ravensthorpe reservoir). The two others (to amend the boundary around Gulliver's Lodge on the Teeton to Guilsborough Road and to amend the boundary across Hollowell Reservoir) were taken forward and agreed by the DDC's Strategy Group and implemented by Order on 1 April 2020.

POCKET PARK

Annual Health & Safety Inspection

I acknowledge the contribution of Councillor Mike Tomalin who carried out monthly inspections of the Park and play equipment. The issues raised in the Annual Health & Safety Inspection Report were considered by the Council and remedial work undertaken when and where necessary. The Hollowell Steam Rally supporters group, led by Councillor Allen Eaton MBE, continued to volunteer their assistance with maintenance work and this support is greatly appreciated.

Hedgerow Maintenance, Grass Mowing and Weed Control

The hedgerows on the north, east and west boundary were trimmed by Roger Heygate of Heygate Contracting Ltd. It was intended to undertake more substantial work on the east boundary hedge, which was planted in 1998, but the substantial period of wet weather (September 2019 – March 2020) prevented this. It will be reviewed in the autumn of 2020. The areas of grass are mowed in accordance with the agreed plan which provides for frequent cutting around play equipment where weed control has to be monitored.

Replacement Dog Waste Bin and Notice Board.

When the Park was opened in 1998 a local carpenter, 'Pete' Tucker, made a wooden bin and installed this in the Park near the main gate. Regrettably the bin had to be replaced and a new

Broxap K9 Dog Bin was installed in August 2019. The Park remains open to dogs and the majority of dog owners adhere to the rules and use the dog waste bin by the gate. A wooden framed Notice Board was erected near the main gate in 1998 and displayed information about the Park. This had become weathered and in need of updating so a decision was made to install a new Notice Board and thanks go to the support of local resident Sean Cooksley, who designed the Information Layout, and Dave Rose and staff of D & H Sign & Display Service who made and installed it.

Hollowell Pocket Park Action Committee (HPPAC)

Councillors Emily Curtis and Hannah Oswin are members of the HPPAC which assists with them providing liaison between the Council and the Committee. The Council has continued to support the HPPAC initiatives and agreed where additional equipment can be installed during this and the coming year.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Hollowell has been served by a Public Bus Service (59 / 60) linking the village with Northampton and Market Harborough. This has operated with subsidies funded by Northamptonshire County Council but in May 2018 the County Council announced that, due to its financial difficulties, all subsidies would be stopped and the service ended by July 2019. The Chairman of Spratton Parish Council, John Hunt, in liaison with John Ellerby, Principal Bus & Rail Development Officer, Northamptonshire Highways, co-ordinated response from the Parishes directly affected by the threatened withdrawal of services and, with the support of DDC Councillors Richard Auger and Sarah Peck, this resulted in Daventry District Council funding a revised service to the amount of £30,000:00 to allow it to continue until 30 March 2019.

Further efforts were made to identify funding options to support the service into 2019 - 20 and following a grant from Central Government and agreement by local Parish Councils to contribute funds, the service has been secured until March 2020. Hollowell and Teeton Parish Council resolved not to contribute to the service during that period, based on the level of funding required, low passenger numbers from Hollowell and the fact that Teeton residents are not able to access the service.

Further representation was made by John Hunt in February 2020 seeking financial support to continue the service after March 2020, with lower contribution than originally quoted. The Council agreed to make a contribution of £220:20p to extend the service until July 2020 but did not give any commitment beyond then.

STREET LIGHTING

The 32 Street Lamps located within the parish are managed under contract by E.ON Energy Solutions Limited. Faults are reported to Eon and remedial work undertaken as part of the maintenance contract.

This is separate from the supply of electricity which is determined through an Unmetered Supply Certificate (UMS). The supply is provided by Total Gas & Power on a fixed price contract extending to 30 September 2020

The Council received representation from three residents at Teeton regarding street lamp 22 and the options to reduce the hours of operation. After seeking comment from Teeton residents and options for changing the hours (from Eon) the Council agreed to have Eon install a 'part night photo cell'.

The provision of Street Lighting remains a substantial element of the Parish budget and precept and will continue to be monitored to ensure it is cost effective.

TREE SURVEY

The Councils Risk Assessment Policy requires a survey to be undertaken every three years to assess the general condition of trees located around the Parish that are the direct

responsibility of the Council or their location may impact upon a Council asset. [E.g. 'The Stumps' bridleway adjacent to the Pocket Park]. No work was necessary during this year.

PARISH ACTIVITIES

Hollowell FAFF - the second Fete and Flower Festival was organised by a group of residents and held in Hollowell on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 August 2019. The event comprises open gardens, various stalls, displays around the village and teas in the Village Hall. The success of the event is reflected in the monies raised for the Church, Village Hall and Pocket Park with profit from this year's FAFF being £6500. I acknowledge the time and effort invested by all those residents involved with organising the event.

Hollowell Steam & Heavy Horse show and Annual Firework display– has been organised by Councillor Allen Eaton MBE, aided by his wife Jane and committee of volunteers, since 1986. The event has raised substantial funds which have been distributed to many worthy causes in the area. In addition to the Rally, they have been instrumental in arranging the Annual Bonfire & Firework display and the local pensioners Christmas lunch. Allen and Jane decided to stand down after the 2018 Rally but still provided support to the organisers for 2019. Weather conditions in early November resulted in the Firework Display being postponed from the normal Saturday evening to the following Tuesday with reduced displays and facilities. I make no apology for reiterating my acknowledgement of the immeasurable contribution Allen and Jane have both made to Hollowell and the local area.

Village Hall – Residents volunteer as committee members to manage the Village Hall, located off Church Hill, Hollowell, below the church. Work was undertaken to complete refurbishment during the year. The Hall provides excellent facilities for local events and several social functions have been organised by residents.

Village Planters – three planters are located around the Bus Shelter in Hollowell. Councillor Curtis and resident Mrs Vivian Benjamin had undertaken to maintain these, supported by neighbouring residents Jan & Alan Winterburn. The Council acknowledges their kind efforts and refunds the cost of the plants and compost.

We are Hopewell

In October 2018 Hollowell residents Paul and Cheryl Charter set up a local support group with a mobile, email and Facebook link. Their introductory message reads: *We called it "Hopewell" because we wanted to fill a gap where anyone who is feeling "Hollow" and their "well" of strength has run dry can find a source of "Hope"*.

They have held monthly Coffee mornings in the village hall since November 2019 which they describe as *"Coffee and a Chat" which is exactly what it says. Everyone is welcome. You don't have to be in need but just enjoy meeting people over a cuppa.*

This support group came to the fore when the impact of Corvid-19 required residents to stay at home and the welfare of many who were regarded as 'vulnerable' needed to be addressed.

SUMMARY

That was the year that was!

At the start and throughout, issues at National and Local levels continued to impact on the Parish Council and occupy the time (and expense) of the Clerk and Councillors. Local Government Reform (the abolition of the County and District / Borough Principal Councils and replacement with two Unitary Authorities – North and West Northamptonshire) continued apace with Parishes needing to keep abreast of developments and assessment of impact on Parish Council responsibilities. Elections were scheduled for 7 May 2020 for Shadow Unitary Authority councillors as well as Parish Councils. Then came the world pandemic of Corvid-19 and complete disruption to all that we have known. Elections were postponed to May 2021 requiring councillors to continue in office for a further 12 months.

Compliance with the Transparency Code includes the provision of web site and publication of documents, which is the reason Parishioners are encouraged to access the H & T PC web site to obtain information about the Council and the local services it manages.

<http://www.hollowellandteeton.org.uk/home>.

The 2019 -20 year ended with changes to legislation which allowed Council Meetings to be held in isolation using web sites to link Councillors and Public in formal 'virtual' meetings, thereby ensuring compliance with Corvid-19 restrictions on social gatherings.

The Council is not responsible (statutorily) for provision of bus services, libraries or highway maintenance (gritting / snow clearance) but the current financial difficulties at County level have raised expectations that the Parish Council cannot meet (financially and administratively).

Councillors are either elected or co-opted onto the Council and contribute their time (and expense) to the Parish by not only attending meetings (to which they are 'summoned') but in managing projects, attending training courses and dealing with practical and policy issues.

I acknowledge the contribution each Councillor and the Clerk has made resulting in Hollowell & Teeton Parish Council maintaining a budget below £25,000:00.



A. G. Crisp (Chairman)