

Annual Parish meeting May 2018 - Annual Report

This last year has again been busy with a number of local improvements taking place.

The Parish finances are in good shape under the attentive management of Julie Smart our Parish Clerk, and she will update you on that separately.

On the strategic planning level we are continuing to work closely with Pill and Easton in Gordano. Murray Stewart is the driving force on that and he will update you separately on the joint Neighbourhood Plan..

There continue to be a number maintenance issues on the A369 that we try to work with the District Council to resolve. The North Somerset Council Area Officer that covered this area was Paul Smart who retired last year and the role has returned to Shelley Lee who has been our area officer in the past. Julie had a meeting with her recently to raise our current issues of concern. A significant issue that North Somerset are aware of is the condition of Sandy Lane and they are trying to work out the best solution and when to carry out the works. Another issue that North Somerset have agreed to address is the matter of dangerous parking on the verge of the A 369 below the George.

Bristol Rugby Club have been granted planning permission for their new training facility on Beggar Bush lane and have now completed the land purchase. As part of the planning application Bristol Rugby offered the Parish Council a contribution towards to costs of getting the speed limit on Beggar Bush Lane reduced from the National Limit to 50 MPH. We have been liaising with the neighbouring Parish Councils and have made a coordinated approach to North Somerset Council. North Somerset have agreed to start the process to change the speed limits on the B3129 Beggar Bush Lane to Failand and Belmont Hill. Also they will include reducing the speed limit on the A 369 from 50 to 40 MPH between Dennyview Road and Martcombe Garage (originally proposed by Don Davies). They hope to get the Traffic Regulation Order process started later this financial year.

The Parish Council are now getting the benefits of the new street lights which were installed just over a year ago with lower energy costs and very limited maintenance.

Gigaclear have been awarded the contract to provide Superfast broadband to Abbots Leigh and several other local rural communities. They will be laying fibre optic cables down all of our roads and will be contacting householders to see if they want to sign up. They have a number of teams working on this. the first team has started by getting the cable across the Suspension bridge and they are at the top of Bridge Road and will then be heading along the A369 and on towards Portbury, which they hope to reach after about 4 months. Other teams will do the side roads and one has nearly finished Dennyview Road. Once a new distribution box has been installed and connected opposite Sandy Lane it will start to be able to connecting up.

I would like to thank the large number of those of you who came out to help in the annual litter pick which does help to keep the verges of the roads free of litter and make the parish look a more cared for, despite the people passing through the village who throw their litter out of the car windows or fly tip.

It has been suggested by someone in the village that we should introduce local street coordinators or representatives who could advise on how to report potholes, defective street lights or other highway matters. In addition they may be able to promote local small scale litter picking of their street by local residents. Any thoughts on how this could work through a soft approach would be very much welcomed.

The Portishead Lions have provided the defibrillator which has been installed in the phone box by the Parish Council. Contributions were made by the Parish Council and the Civic Society. Thanks to Paul Whitehouse who is doing the required fortnightly checks. Audrey Telling has offered to repaint the phone box and sort out some book shelves, I am sure that she would appreciate offers of help.

In the Old School Field we have put in new curved benches and replaced the stile with a self closing gate, with the help of North Somerset Council Rights of way Team. We are now benefitting from having all the equipment formally inspected once a month by the play equipment company who installed the new equipment and inspect the play equipment in Pill.

With regards to planning applications unfortunately Audrey Telling who takes the lead on these matters can not be here this evening. Almost all planning applications that are submitted in the parish are extensions or replacements.

The developers of Leigh Warren Bungalow on the A369 near the cricket field having had their permitted lawful development upheld by the planning inspector, applied for planning permission for two large detached houses which was refused by North Somerset Council and it has now gone to appeal.

The Parish Council together with the Civic Society have continued to work with Jason Cox of North Somerset Council in order to keep Abbots Pool as a treasure for the local community and continues to receive the annual Green Flag awards. The volunteer working parties continue very ably organised by Jo Chiverton and our thanks are to her for the hard work that she and the volunteers put in.

A lot of our effort this year has gone into the Village Hall and Skittle Alley. We have had the stage changed to be flexible and redecorated the hall with additional curtains. Thanks very much to John Butler who does a huge amount for the Village Hall and the fact that it is in such good condition is to his and John Prodger's credit. The hall now has a proper license so that alcohol can be sold. John Butler will give more detail a little later on.

With regards to Skittle Alley, we are delighted and relieved that it has now been put to good use by letting it to James Tantram and the Fit Tank. James has fitted the building out internally. the Parish Council had the external approach cleared, removed outbuildings and put in a new fence as well as reroofing the building. The Civic Society has given a small grant towards the works, which is appreciated. It all looks much tidier now and we look forward to a long relationship with James.

We are very grateful for all the work that the Civic Society continues to do in organising several events throughout the year and in particular the popular Fireworks display and Festival in the Field. This partnership with the Parish Council whereby the Civic Society organises social events and the Parish Council deals with the routine and formal matters is very much valued and is of great benefit to our community. Elizabeth Anderson acts as the Parish Council coordinator being on both committees. Congratulations to Tommo and the team for all of the work that they do. The monthly Tommo's Taverns as a substitute for the pub are proving very popular, another one tomorrow. This is much easier and cheaper to arrange now that we have a license. In conjunction with the Civic Society the Parish Council has successfully applied to have the George registered as an Asset of Community Value. Murray will give you more background later in the Agenda.

The website is a very valuable asset to the village. Thanks very much to Paul Whitehouse who acts as the webmaster. Please keep him posted about anything that is happening and

if you haven't already signed up for emails, please do so. You can always unsubscribe if you don't want to continue to receive them

The closer connection with our neighbouring Parish of Pill and Easton in Gordano continues to be great benefit, primarily through the tireless work of our District Councillor Don Davies from whom we get a huge amount of support and the work of our Parish Clerk, Julie Smart, where we gain from her local experience and the energy she puts into Abbots Leigh. Murray and I are also on the board of the Pill and District Community Land Trust which Don chairs.

In addition to thanking Julie I would thank John Proddger very strongly supported by Jan, looks after the Village Hall going and provides a lot of additional input keeping the hall in very good condition. Nigel Mayle as the village orderly continues to keep the school field, the green and some of the verges trimmed back.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow councilors, Audrey Telling our Vice Chair, Elizabeth Anderson, John Butler and Murray Stewart.

Simon Talbot-Ponsonby
Chair