

Ogbourne St Andrew, Ogbourne Maizey and Rockley Parish Council

Chairman's report, July 2017

I would like to start by congratulating all of the parish councillors on their re-election in the poll held on the 22nd June. The work we do as parish councillors goes largely unrecognised, as Nick Parsons discovered on the doorsteps of the parish. Many parishioners did not know who we were or what we did and, in some cases, didn't know we existed at all. So the efforts you make, on an entirely voluntary basis, make you largely unsung heroes. So thank you for standing again and congratulations on being elected.

I would also like to thank our former clerk, Allison Grainger, who had to step down last autumn, due to personal circumstances. We are very grateful for the contribution she made and wish her much happiness in the future. In Allison's place we were fortunate to recruit Jenni Clarke as clerk to the parish council. Jenni has a wealth of experience to bring to the role and has learnt the ropes with impressive alacrity. It is a joy working with Jenni and I look forward to a productive working partnership in the future.

There have been three notable achievements this year. Firstly, we have a new parish website. We were awarded a small amount of funding (about £1000) by government to facilitate the creation of a parish website. We have used this money to buy a parish council laptop (cared for by Jenni) and to buy the services of 'Netwise', a company who specialises in website design for local parishes. Jenni and I have worked with Netwise to create the website and we are delighted with the outcome. Hopefully the new website will raise the profile of the parish council and prove to be a useful resource for villagers and visitors alike. Please take a look at www.osa.org.uk. Jenni has got to grips with the technicalities of running the website so please e-mail any contributions to her at ogbourneparishclerk@yahoo.co.uk.

Secondly, I believe we now have the go ahead to improve the footpath and bin storage area at the roadside opposite the war memorial below Crawlings Piece. This has been a tortuous set of negotiations with CATG, Marlborough Area Board and Wiltshire Council Officials. Approval has now been given by CATG to give this project its highest priority. Plans have been produced by Wiltshire Council and approved by us and by the residents of Crawlings Piece. Funds have been allocated by CATG (£9000, plus a £1000 contribution from the parish) for the project, so it should be all systems go.

Thirdly we have purchased and installed speed indicator devices (SIDs) on the A 346 at either end of the village. This entailed a significant amount of research and planning and is the culmination of a number of years of deliberation on this topic. We are grateful to Amanda Field for helping to drive this project along to a successful conclusion. Most people seem to feel that the installation of the SIDs has brought about a noticeable reduction in vehicle speed along the A346 through the village.

Overall, this year has passed smoothly with no unseemly controversies or disasters in the parish. Although this seems something of a non-achievement, in many ways it is what we hope for from our home parish and what our parishioners would want from us. Our first priority is to maintain a convivial and pleasant community in which to live – and we have at least achieved that. The only real controversy I can bring to mind is the mass felling of trees on the Rockley Road, along the perimeter of the Carter estate. Investigations by the parish council revealed that the correct consultation with the forestry commission had taken place and the official certification for the work was granted. Nonetheless, it has brought about a significant change in the landscape which, although replanting schemes have been mandated, will take years to recover. As an experience, it reinforced the fact that the parish council has relatively little power and influence in these matters.

This has been a good year for the parish council. Thank you for your support. Let us make the next year just as successful – if not, more so!

John Hetherington

Chairman