

Chairman's Report, March 2022

All the usual tasks have been completed. The precept has been agreed, the audit carried out, litter picked, grass cut, meetings arranged, attended and minuted.

Last year, after several onsite meetings and two aborted attempts, the outfall to the pond was finally unblocked and I am pleased to say that, during the heavy rain some weeks ago, the pond not overflowing.

Alan has done some work to improve the bridleway south of Bayford House. This land is prone to flooding, largely due to the ditches being full. The reinstatement of these traditional ditches would be a major undertaking, as they are filled with trees. We may schedule a work party later this year to clear some of the less healthy trees on our verges.

Jane has continued to pursue the issue of traffic calming, particularly with respect to Ashdene Road. In 2020 Jane was involved in a Road Safety Feasibility Study (paid for by the PC) and subsequently a report was written listing a number of alternatives. The process due to follow this report has been severely delayed due to the effects of COVID on the County Council. At present we have no costings for the various schemes. We are awaiting discussions as to which elements will be implemented. The following were suggestions:-A staggered speed limit along Ashdene Road suggested 60 - 40 -30 mph. An unmanned pedestrian crossing by the school with a possible 20mph speed limit at the school in the morning and afternoon busy times. Clearer markings at the rose triangle, anti-skid surfacing, and clearer bend signage for the sharp bend in Bayford Lane just down from the church. This process has taken a number of years, and has required many hours of work and patience. But this is the path we have to follow in order to improve road safety in Bayford.

Bayford PC requested that the mobile police speed cameras be used in Bayford. This has happened a number of times, but necessarily this only last for a few hours.

The closure of Brickendon Lane for an extended period caused problems in Bayford as inevitably, traffic used Bayford Lane as a diversion. Discussions took place with A T Bone, whose yard is in Brickendon Lane.

Litter picking was another activity which was disrupted by the COVID restrictions and also by Paul Curson being out of action for some months. We hope to resume this worthwhile activity later this year. Meanwhile a number of ad hoc litter picking events have been held. We have now purchased some sets of litter pickers and hi-vis vests so we are not reliant on borrowing these from East Herts.

The managers of the Baker Arms resigned during the year, and we were concerned that the land might be sold and re-developed. This has not happened, as fortunately new tenants, Martin and Beverley, have come forward. We would like to wish them every success.

The sale of the Old Playground caused considerable consternation. Extensive discussions have taken place between this Council and the agents for the Diocese. It is not clear whether the land has actually been sold at this stage. We have had several communications with Gavin Nelson, of Bonnel Construction whose bid was chosen by the Diocese. Provisional plans have been made available, and Gavin has provided progress reports. The Council received £3,500 for the easement of services over its verge, plus £1,000+VAT for legal expenses.

Amongst other work, the Best Kept Village sign was reinstated, the bridleway south of Bayford House was improved, the hedge opposite 'Fourways' was cut back, the bus shelter roof was fixed and further maintenance to the hedges around the Village and School ponds was carried out.

Pot holes in Bayford Lane were (as always) the subject of a protracted exchange between this Council and Highways/Ringway. Having at first stated that no action would be taken, the pot holes were finally filled.

The precept was kept at the same level as last year.

Finally a tree has been planted on the village green to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We are grateful to all Councillors for their work during this year. Maggie's work as Clerk has also been more exacting, not least, trying to determine how and when meeting could take place. We are grateful to David Sitwell for acting as our auditor. Also, to all parishioners who have given up their time to make Bayford a better place.