

Chairman's Report at 31st March 2018

This past year has been both busy and successful for the Parish Council.

The Village Pond. A significant amount of work was carried out on the pond during this year. Lewis Collins was contracted to advise and carry out initial works on the pond. Alan dredged out the silt. George and Bob headed up this work together with numerous parishioners to clear vegetation. The pond is now much more open and healthy and makes the centre of the village much more attractive.

The parking by the east side of the pond was also improved to provide extra parking and so that during the winter the area does not get muddy.

Works. We are grateful to Alan once again for the several works he has carried out during the year, including the pond, the posts around the Green and the War Memorial, the renovation of the village sign near the church, the new village sign near Buck's Alley and the ditch behind the Baker Arms. Football goals were erected on Bayford Green. Grass cutting was carried out during the year by John O'Conner.

Land Registration. Over the last year David Aumeyer, of Edward Oliver & Co, Solicitors, has done a considerable amount of work on behalf of the PC to register all the various parcels of land gifted and bequeathed to the PC over many years. These include the Recreation Ground (Cricket Pitch), Bayford Green (football pitch and car park), The Memorial Hall and the various verges. This has now been completed. The process was made more complicated because of the unconventional nature of the transactions and the length of time since the transactions took place. We are extremely grateful to David for completing this arduous task.

The Annual Meeting. 'Protecting Your Money' was the subject of a talk given by PC Terry Morris. The talk was well attended and valuable.

Playground. Following lengthy discussions, and the results of the questionnaire, it was decided not to renovate the existing Playground on the site next to the Vicarage and not to renew the lease on this land. The benches from the old playground will be moved to Bayford Green. During the summer we will review this facility to determine if further works are needed.

Water Leak. After many years of problems with the water 'leak' opposite Fourways the cooperation of Hertfordshire Highways was sought in resolving this issue. Cllr. Ken Crofton put us in touch with James Vine (HH) who has subsequently laid a new drain under the roadway, the old drain being compromised by the roots of the hedge. We hope that during next winter the road will be much safer.

The War Memorial. It became apparent in the early part of the year that a further section of the war memorial, on the west side of the plinth, was in need of repair. It was decided that the best way to tackle this was to replace a section of stone, since previous repairs involving the use of fillers had proved unsuccessful. A grant was sought from the War Memorials Trust. This process, involving both a Pre-application and an Application, proved extremely lengthy and has not yet been concluded. The approval process took some 6 months. The completed acceptance and notification of the contractor were sent off last month but were not received by the Trust. I e-mailed copies to them but it is still not clear if this has been accepted by them. The value of the grant is only £375, 75% of the cost, so it is questionable if it was worth all this time and effort.

Village Clean-up. George once again organised the annual clean up. The weather was not so good,

but nevertheless the turnout and results were excellent, a significant quantity of rubbish being collected. Without this event, the wider areas of the parish would never have litter removed. Paul Curzon continues his excellent litter picking in the centre of the village.

Traffic Calming. The additional village sign was erected near Buck's Alley. After much deliberation, and a visit to County Hall by Jane and me it became clear that a 'smiley face' (SSID) was the only traffic calming measure open to us. Most other measures are not available due to shortage of finance at HH and the absence of street lighting. This was fitted near The Round House and after a site meeting will be moved slightly further north. This will allow it to be reversed and monitor traffic both leaving and entering the 30 mph zone. The SSID device logs speed but not registration numbers. This information is downloaded periodically by the police.

A major contribution to traffic calming has been made this year by the DriveSafe scheme. Jane and her team monitor traffic in Ashdene Rd using a radar device which measures speed and captures registration numbers. This information is reported to the police. The drivers then receive a letter from the police. Further action can be taken against habitual offenders. The information logged through this exercise might also result in us being allegeable for additional traffic calming measures.

Church Path. Due to the generosity of both Neville and Caroline and Stephen Fletcher the problems associated with the Church Path have been resolved by the construction of an alternative path in Neville's field by the side of the driveway. We trust this will be beneficial and satisfactory to all parties involved.

David Sitwell carried out the internal audit for which we are most grateful.

The Rose Triangle – Les Swain was contracted to maintain the rose triangle. This is a difficult task as it is frequently run over particularly by lorries.

Thanks. Finally we must thank most sincerely all the Councillors for the work carried out during this year. We are also grateful to all parishioners who have attended our meetings and assisted in the various projects. We are particularly indebted to our clerk, Maggie, who carries out numerous tasks; planning matters, correspondence, insurances, invoices and who prepares our agendas, writes the minutes and manages the finance and internal audit.

Michael Wainwright
1st April 2018