

Bayford Parish Council. Chairman's Report at March 2021.

The start of this Parish Council year coincided the start of the lockdown. All meetings have thus been via Zoom. This has turned out to be not as bad as I envisaged. Some Parish Council activities have proceeded as normal. There have been the usual number of planning applications, the trees in Ashdene Road were trimmed and the grass was cut.

But some have not taken place. Litter picking will be different this year confined to small groups from the same household. Also Paul's litter picking has been disrupted. The audit was disrupted; there being some confusion over the dates. This was not completed until September. The balance however, remains healthy.

The item dominating the last six months has been the Village Pond. The drainage pipe, which passes beneath the verge in front of the old vicarage became blocked and the heavy rains in October caused the level to rise and Ron Turner's overflow to cause considerable damage to his newly laid patio. Two attempts were made to clear the blockage caused by a tree root. Finally, a team from Ringway tuned up in March with the right equipment. Within a couple of hours the water was flowing once more. Several sessions took place to clear and renovate the School Pond, led by George and Bob. The ponds were dredged and the undergrowth cut back. A complete transformation has taken place, returning the ponds to a pleasant and attractive feature of the village. It is also much richer in wildlife. The old entrance gate was re-opened, to allow a one-way system. The gate had to be renovated by Bob. It is not clear if this gate will continue to be used. It was closed many years ago as it was thought to be dangerous for children and parents to exit straight on to the road.

The item has been the sale of the Old Playground. In particular, the Easement, for the laying of utilities beneath the verge, which is owned by the Parish Council. It was known that this land was 'Highway Maintained', and thus, the Parish Council could not prevent passage over the land either on foot or by vehicles. But the laying of water, sewage or electricity cable is subject to negotiation between the owner of the land, The Diocese, and the owner of the verge. This has proved to be a long drawn out process and is even now not quite complete. The Diocese has agreed to pay us for the easement as well as our Legal Expenses.

We are indebted to Jane Honeyman for the many hours she has put in pursuing the various traffic calming schemes over several years. In previous years, a team of parishioners received training on the use of a speed monitoring device and motorists who were caught speeding received letters from the police. This was followed up by a similar scheme where our PCSOs carried out checks. The PC also purchased a 'smiley face' device, installed in Ashdene Road.

Meanwhile during last year Jane took part in a Road Safety Feasibility Study and subsequently a report was written listing a number of alternatives. 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. Clearer bend signage for the sharp bend in Bayford Lane just down from the church

Jane contacted Sarah Elliott HCC's Road Safety Officer to arrange a meeting with the school re their travel plan. Long term hopefully this will allow us to establish some changes to the safety around the school and particularly on Ashdene Road.

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.

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 all parishioners who have given up their time to make Bayford a better place.