**Annual Parish Meeting 4th May 2021 Reports**

**Chairmans Report**

**Brian Lewis**

As a District Councillor for the area, I was co-opted onto Bromsberrow Parish Council in July 2019, and elected Chairman in July 2020.

It has been my pleasure to serve in these two capacities, with the help of my fellow Councillors, some of whom have a much better understanding and knowledge of the area, than myself.

The perennial problem has been attracting new members to join the Council. They would bring in fresh ideas and help undertake new projects in the village. Such recruitment continues to exercise our minds, and it is hoped that new people moving into the area may take an interest.

We have not been entirely unsuccessful, and Councillor Carol Adams has recently been welcomed into our organisation.

All meetings since May 2019 have been conducted under the shadow of the infamous Coronavirus epidemic and therefore have been conducted via Zoom. This method has assisted us all in the opportunity of gaining better computer skills.

We also are grateful to have our new Clark Charlee Robets, who is starting her career in Parish Council work. We have supplied her with much needed new computer equipment, and also the required training through the GAPTC.

She has developed our new website herself, which is now fully operational, which we are grateful for and I hope this over time, will truly give visitors an insight and flavour of the Parish, as well as fulfil its Statutory duties.

The War memorial continues to be a focal point in the Parish and Remembrance Day to be an important occasion. Attendance was inevitably down this year due to Coronavirus. I have no doubt this will return to its previous popularity next year. To support this event information is still being added to our new website, which overtime will become an increasingly fitting tribute to the fallen.

Our VAS equipment has been active this year, Councillor Graham Warren has been tracking and analysing and reporting the information every meeting. The information is now displayed on our website. Beware that its not Your Car that is the spike in the data!!

There have been many other issues discussed over the year, including dog fouling, preparations for the next 3 Shires car Rally, the grass cutting contract, and by no means least, the Quarries. Councillor John Stephens has been diligently monitoring activities. I am pleased to report that activities seem to be much more under control and less concerning than in the past. We are grateful to him for striking up a working relationship with the contractors, as this is a potentially hazardous site and can adversely affect the village and the wider area.

The most recent event is the approach by our local shop for assistance in its endeavours. They wish to expand their Charitable activities, including serving meals to vulnerable people in the area. This work is most laudable and the Council has yet to decide on how to assist.

In summary, we look forward to a healthier and less virus limited future, and with an increased Council size one day, perhaps a few extra local projects.

In the meantime I wish to thank all Counsellors in helping to achieve a collegiate and constructive Council this year.

**Finance Report**

The Parish Council began the year at the 1st April 2020 with a balance carried forward of £8,040, receipts for the including the precept amounted to £7,541 and expenditure was £11,975

The balance at the end of the 31.3.21 was £3,606 to cover for unforeseen expenditure.

There are currently no earmarked/allocated reserves but this is to be considered during 2021-22 to be included in the budget and precept recommendations for 2022-23.

The Precept for 2021-22 has been set at £8,300.

**Report of District Councillors**

**Brian Lewis**

This report comes at time when Perda is still active and therefore I have tried not to flavour this with any political remarks. This report is therefore a brief and more personal reflection on the year.

I have been a District Councillor now for two years. For those that do not realise , I represent the Conservative party, which is in opposition to the existing ruling coalition Cabinet.

The Cabinet are the committee that general decide policy and direction of the Council, and as they progress along their chosen route, they then ask the Full Council for ratification of their ideas.

So the Full Council votes are normally where the final decisions are made.

To date, the ability of the Conservative group (due to its low numbers) has been very limited in its influence.

For me the major decision point of this year is still in play, namely the Long Term Housing Development Plan. This highly controversial plan has no right or wrong, and the ability to upset everybody, no matter what decision is made. Also there is much confusion as to the detail of the actual proposals that are being considered.

The only clear point likely to emerge from the consultation, is that nobody wants development of their own area. We all await the next step in this drama.

I have spent a lot of time in my work on the Planning Committee. This is supposedly a non political body, who’s main duty is to decide controversial or large planning decisions. Those decisions are purely based on existing Planning policy as previously agreed by the Council, or Planning Law enacted by the government.

The experts in the committee are the Officers, and the Elected Members are required to give Planning Balance where the policies or law are not definitive.

Although prima facia the committee is a non political body. in my opinion, due to the political flavour of make up of the committee, it could be said that some bias still does come through.

In any event, at times I have seen some colourful decisions made, and, these have felt quite stressful.

Finally I am pleased to say there have been many issues where I have been able to help locally. Flooding help and advice, assistance in the planning process, Planning Appeals assistance, Coronavirus support for the vulnerable, Parish Council advice and support, Liaison with County with issues such as roads and a miscellany of other issues.

This concludes my brief reflections of the year.

**Philip Burford**

My report covers a period which seems like half a lifetime for us all, hopefully we will soon be able to meet in a way which we will think is more normal. I fear, however, that even with the best of progress it will be some time before the new normal is quite the same as the old normal.

The district council has been very busy over the past year and a bit and has taken on additional work administering many government initiatives to support business and the community. Part of this work has involved thousands of person to person telephone calls from both members of the council and officers to those identified as the most vulnerable in our society.

During such times and while focus falls outside the normal function of the council it is sometimes difficult to remember to do the day job but I am pleased to report that a good job seems to have been done in maintaining the waste collection service, dealing with benefit claimants, the collection of council tax and maintaining the leisure centres in a state to reopen as soon as regulations allow. This maintaining of the leisure centres has been a big undertaking and has cost a great deal of money but this has come to the district as support from central government.

Regrettably some functions have suffered to a noticeable extent, the planning service seems to have been at the head of this list. The main concern here relates to the planning enforcement service which has been close to non existent for substantial periods and is still significantly under strength.

My main concern however still relates to the progress and proposals for the next local plan and the way this is being progressed. In my view there are still very real threats to the environment and landscape we all value in the north of the district.

 These proposals are being brought forward by the cabinet who are of course not from the north of the district. I wish I had more faith in the members responsible for this work, their motivation and what that means to our parishes and our neighbouring communities.

As always a pleasure and privilege to represent Bromsberrow on the district council. Very happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Report of County Councillor**

**Will Windsor-Clive**

The County Council has set its budget and is the lowest rise of any in the south west and the third lowest in the Country.

There is a massive investment into infrastructure improvements that is agreed and will be delivered over a number of years over and above the Council doing the ‘day job’ and there is a Nuclear Fusion project that is going to somewhere in the UK and Gloucestershire is hoping to capture this at Berkley and Oldbury which would be a huge boost to our economy.

The election is on the 6th of May so meetings have stopped during purdah and candidates are out trying to get elected and officers will wait to see which Manifesto they will be required to deliver over the next four years.

**Dementia Action Alliance**

Thank you for inviting me to deliver an update on all things Dementia in the Forest of Dean and County of Gloucestershire this evening.

1. Response to COVID – transferred all of our awareness and training online, which has enabled us to open our offer up Countywide.

a. Dementia Awareness Sessions – one to one, closed group, open group

b. Community Dementia Link – Growing our connections, specifically within the Forest of Dean.

c. Dementia Friendly Buildings – Andrea now providing a shorter session online – Dates attached.

2. Again in response to COVID, just over a year ago myself and my family were asked to put together a very short Dementia Awareness video to support people who were being asked to go above and beyond shopping and collecting prescriptions for others in their communities.

This video can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O8Pnif5yJY

This is not a COVID specific film and would be good to share with your community.

3. Following the team completing Dementia Friendly Building Audits we arranged a Thriving Communities Grant where we secured a pot of funding to enable groups who have done an accessibility audit to access some quick win funding for small changes.

4. Resources and projects – we still have a lot of resources – and are still working on developing some too.

a. A newly formed resource is about the dementia and domestic abuse leaflet that we produced during lockdown which looks at behaviours that challenge – this was in response to an issue highlighted by Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service)

b. Steve Gaskins OFP project – a community member trying to raise awareness and raise support – he has done this himself, with our support. The website can be found here:

<https://ourfavouriteplaces.org/>

c. Project Engage - we secured funding from Barnwood Trust to source and test specialist equipment that might support people with a cognitive disability. We have discovered this is far wider than responding to this during COVID and are now working on Prevention, Response and Wellbeing in connection with the use of IT and Technology when it comes to isolation.

5. The DAA is currently refreshing our Forward plan, but if you would like any support in the Community, or any training please contact us on foddc.daa@fdean.gov.uk or via my email sarah.davies@publicagroup.uk.

6. Last but not least, the FODDAA is having a Celebration Event the week prior to Dementia Action Week, where we will be hosting a weeks’ worth of dementia friendly sessions and information. Anyone and everyone is welcome… the link to what we have going on is here and attached is the poster we are using to advertise.

https://spark.adobe.com/page/OxibG1Bfp9ou0/

Thank you very much for your ongoing support of me personally in my role, and our Team.

Regards,

Sarah Davies | Dementia Friendly Community Enabler | Forest North Areas

Community Engagement Team | Forest of Dean District Council

**Village Shop**

As for the rest of the world it was a year like no other! However, we were in a great position, and were willing and able, to provide a service to our Community that could not be provided by anyone else. At the height of the first lockdown (late March – May) our turnover had increased by a factor of 4 over the first 10 weeks of the year! Included in this was a new home delivery service running at 50 deliveries a week within five miles of the Shop. Opening hours were only slightly reduced to allow orders to be taken, packed and distributed. The pressure on the management and volunteers was incredible and it is to their great credit that all was managed so successfully – we are aware of a number of community shops who were unable to continue to operate. We were particularly fortunate in gaining a tranche of younger volunteers at this time since many of our older, long-time volunteers, were obliged to remain at home for health reasons or Covid regulations.

Again to the credit of staff and volunteers the heightened activity became the norm and was managed accordingly. The increased isolation and other needs led to a growth in calls to the Shop for support and assistance, which we could answer either through our own resources or through our network of contacts. Finally the bi-monthly Community Lunches, that had taken place in the cafe pre-pandemic was converted into a fortnightly “Lunches at Home”, and since November to date, has averaged 50 meals each session.

In summary 2020 has transformed the Shop, doubling the turnover (and the services provided) that it had achieved in any of its previous 6 years and appreciably increasing the number of volunteers whilst decreasing the average age! What follows relates to the first four months of 2021 however it builds on our achievements in 2020, not least surviving the year and looking to achieve more for our community.

The transformation is not limited to the Shop since there has been a great awakening in the Community of the worth of the Shop not just in providing vitals but in providing a Hub. We have experienced the “buzz” and we have set out to embrace the community and the related institutions. The Hub, when complete, needs to be self sufficient and over the next six months we aim to achieve that. At the outset we have been successful in gaining funds (£5241.74) to revamp the kitchen, obtain IT equipment to manage the operation, improve communication with customers and provide a basic internet cafe. Also to produce publicity to remind people that Covid restrictions remain in force and are focused on safety, and that we offer that in the Shop and through home deliveries.

We have gained further funding (£1500) to cover the cost of coordinating hub activities in the short term whilst we develop a business model.

The kitchen development is progressing. The plumbing, electrics and redecoration are complete and we will shortly be able to put in the new kitchen fittings. We’re hoping to complete the work before the end of May and resume the cafe operation once restrictions are removed.

The Shop continues to operate as a general stores and over the year our fresh fruit and veg, meat, frozen food, and other foods has expanded significantly along with our ranges of local and national brand beers, ciders, wines, spirits and soft drinks. We sell very high quality garden plants and bedding and we have a wide range of local producers selling through us. We continue to have a visiting post office twice a week.

We are here to serve the whole community so we try to offer good value for money whatever people’s budgets are.

We have advised the Parish Council, St Mary’s Church, the Village Hall and the School of our plans and look forward to working with them to develop these ideas to strengthen our Community. The School, like the Shop, is in operation daily and we are working with them on exciting ideas to benefit all ages within the community.

We particularly look to the Parish Council as leaders in our Community to develop a partnership with us to the mutual benefit of all.

Jo Davidson and Percy Hunt (Co-Chairs The Shop at Bromsberrow). 26th April 2021