

## **Chairman's Report - Parish Council meeting November 8<sup>th</sup> 2021**

There are two big issues challenging the Parish Council at the moment.

The first is the continued anti-social behaviour of the Hunt in and around the village. An agenda item will discuss what action can be taken by the Parish Council given that the Police do not seem to be engaging with this problem. We are grateful to Emily Heckscher for bringing this to our attention.

The second is the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation, the transition to a single unitary council known as One Somerset. The Chairman went to a whole day meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup> where a hundred plus Town and Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks were present. As you can imagine there were some lively questions from the floor. The details of this will be discussed under item 10. This is an enormous undertaking and progress so far and the Parish Council action going forward will be discussed at length during the meeting. The Chairman has been in contact with a number of local Parish Councils to consider what we all need to do to make sure our local voices are heard. So far there has been very little engagement from SCC. It has been decided centrally that Parish Council elections will be held a year early to coincide with the main council elections, basically to save money. Thanks to Stephen Campbell for writing to the council on our behalf with our objections to the suggestion that if we did not agree to the re-scheduling of the elections the PC would have to bear the burden of the costs involved. We would welcome any new prospective councillors putting their names forward in the Spring. We really had no choice in the matter.

I am pleased to report that Falcon Housing has finally begun work on the Portway Play Area in line with their planning submission. It is likely to be a while before they complete the work but at least it is now underway.

The Parish Council supported the Village Hall with an application under the 'Community Engagement' grant which was successful and a sum of £1,179 has been awarded. This will fund some free sessions to encourage people to start to join in local events again, particularly those who may have become isolated or anxious during these trying covid times. It has been a slow start but hopefully more people will come along as word gets around.

The rewilding of some verges in the village is ongoing and it was decided at the last meeting that we should put up some signage to better inform people of the project. There has been an issue with littering along the verges which need to be cleared before the last mowing was done. As I write this it is obvious that we will need to assess whether the triangle should return to a regular cut as there are problems leaving it uncut all year. Chairman will be joining the Rewilding Somerset meeting on Nov 19<sup>th</sup> which will hopefully give us some encouragement and advice!

Speeding on the A39 through the village continues to be a danger. Our thanks go to the Community Speedwatch Team for their continued monitoring. It is

hoped that we can obtain a grant to install Speed Indicator Devices along the road. Councillor Copleston will give an update on the grant application during this meeting.

Councillor Grandfield has agreed to take on the responsibility of the PC representative for Bus Back Better. During the meeting PG will report on the latest developments from the recent meeting on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. This project has a sizeable grant in place and we will have the opportunity to input our local needs.

At our last meeting it was pointed out that no-one should do any major tree work within the Conservation Area without planning permission. It is illegal and there can be large fines for not gaining permission.

The Quantock AONB are proposing putting in new ditches to discourage inappropriate parking on the roadsides.

After a spate of thefts of catalytic converters in Watchet the Police were able to arrest 5 suspects after their vehicle registration was spotted by a resident from their video doorbell. Great result! A reminder from the police that as the nights draw in there is always a steep rise in thefts from sheds so we must all be extra aware of locking away tools etc. Power tools are particularly targeted.

On a personal note I would like to express my gratitude for the generosity of all those kind people who have given warm clothing for Afghan refugees in their hour of need. Your dedication in turning out your cupboards and wardrobes, not to mention washing and ironing, will be greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Jill Jones for galvanising Kilve residents into donating 4 large bags of clothing. This request is now closed due to the fact that I have no room left to store anything!

Emma Cavendish  
Chairman