

Outgoing Holford Parish Council Chairman's final Report May 9th 2022

Local Government re-organisation : One Somerset goes ahead and the new unitary council will be in place in 2023. The Chairman joined a group of local parish councils members for a Zoom meeting to interrogate some of the team involved in the changeover to the Single Unitary Council. The 'One Somerset' website has lots of information but it can be challenging to get any answers from the team setting this up. We will just have to wait and see.

The Hunt There are on-going complaints about the local police inaction against poor Hunt behaviour. The Police had promised a meeting in February to include a member of the Parish Council and still no invitation. No doubt the new Parish Council will follow this up.

Planning : An outstanding issue for Holford PC is the demolition of the illegal Strawberry Field building. This should be done by the July deadline so needs monitoring. Falcon Housing have promised to update the playground and have begun by removing fencing and dangerous play equipment. This was some months ago and nothing has been done since.

The Environment : The Chairman and Councillor Copleston took part in a one day meeting on Carbon Literacy on January 17th. Somerset is the only council funding this training day at present. It was very detailed and comprehensive and it was a full day and quite challenging. This course will be repeated for new councillors to raise awareness of the issues and plan for reduction in the use of fossil fuels.

I'm sure you are all aware that there will be a four day holiday in June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Parish Council has agreed to fund the daytime celebrations on Saturday June 4th and the new council will need to expand the number of volunteers to enable a successful day. A meeting held on February 28th discussed some ideas for the event. A maildrop has been sent out to tell Parishioners what is planned. An updated and hopefully (!) final program will be sent out shortly. The Holford and District Village Hall committee has agreed to fund the **ceilidh** in the evening and the Plough has agreed to run the bars. The Jubilee Team are badgering all local people to get involved. Unfortunately it is also half term and a lot of young families are off on holiday so the number of children around on the day (Saturday June 4th) may be disappointing. Please volunteer if you can via Mo Plomgren or Emma Cavendish. As the current Chairman will have stepped down on May 9th the new Parish Council will be responsible for the overall management of the project. With this in mind it is suggested that the current Jubilee Team and the new councillors get together for a meeting shortly to discuss how to move forward. If you haven't yet seen the poster please ask for a copy.

Traffic issues continue to be a problem. The Community Speedwatch Team continues to monitor the main road. Some good news is that we have new, brightly coloured speed signage at the village ends. We were also promised a 'No Through Road' sign at the triangle and that hasn't yet appeared. We do now have a sign at the Corewell Lane junction to deter HGVs from turning down the lane. Councillors Plomgren and Copleston were successful in getting a grant to buy Speed Indicator Devices for the village but unfortunately the grant request to EDF for ongoing expenses after purchase was declined.

SWT has failed to get sufficient funds from central Government to upgrade our appalling bus services. The team at SWT tasked with laying out proposals were very efficient but they were only granted a fraction of the funds requested. Councillor Grandfield is the PC representative on this topic and will no doubt continue to fight for a better system around our area.

Rewilding of the grass verges on the A39 on entering the village from Nether Stowey has had mixed results. Laminated signs have been made to deter grass mowing in May (by SWT) but unfortunately the council's response to a request NOT to mow in May was unsuccessful as the mowing plans have been in place for some long time and individual requests for change fall on deaf ears. We have, however, altered the mowing regime for our contractor so that the inner edges of the verges can be left to seed and hopefully flower in peace.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the councillors for their hard work over the last four years that I have been on the Parish Council. Regretfully family and work commitments have meant that I need to step down. It has been an honour and a privilege to carry out the role of Chairman and I would like to welcome all our new (and one current) councillors to the Parish Council and wish them all the very best for the future. This report will appear on the Parish Council website.