

At our last meeting we agreed our Budget and Precept, which we were keen to keep low to ensure we didn't add to the burden of the current economic uncertainties. This does mean that we have not allocated any council money towards the Kings Coronation or the A39 traffic measures. However, we do have plans to spend the grant we obtained last year towards speed indicator devices as soon as possible, but also to obtain a grant to install a new commemorative coronation bench on the Bowling Green. As and when this grant is through, we look forward to working with the wider community to sort out the bench design and an inauguration event. Fairfield Estate have confirmed they are happy for us to proceed with this.

Our carpark is also on Fairfield land and we have agreed with the Quantocks AONB that they will use the current Access Grant and their contacts with Fairfield to organise the filling of the potholes at the entrance to the carpark. However, this may not happen this financial year, as they have already allocated much of their project budget.

I was also invited to take part in the Annual Quantock Deer Count at the beginning of the month, which was a very early start but it's something that gets people from all walks of life to work together on a project which offers a little bit of insight into how things are going for the larger mammals on our hills.

Another project relating to the AONB is the Nature Recovery Plan proposal for which they are running a workshop next week and I plan to attend.

With so many new councillors on board again, it will be crucial to sort out roles and responsibilities and for the appropriate training to be undertaken. I know that Sarah, Ann and I took part in the SALC Councillor Essential Training course last month, which I thought as very useful and should be taken up by the rest of our Councillors. Ann also joined the Planning specific training Course and has made the slides available to all.

Next month we will be hosting the Annual Parish Meeting. This is not a Parish Council meeting and hopefully its slightly more informal nature will encourage more parishioners to attend and have their say, as we still have a very small minority of villagers expressing interest in what we get up to on their behalf.

Today will be our last meeting before completing a year since the previous Parish Council stood down in May. It has been a very steep learning curve and only two of us elected onto the council last year remain, although Terry isn't far behind! It goes to show how much time and dedication this role entails, and I don't think many people appreciate this. Here's hoping we can now move forward with a full complement of councillors who are able to put the effort in to ensure our parish and parishioners are appropriately represented.

Emily Heckscher