



Bulkington Parish Council

Wiltshire

Chair Person's Report May 2020 – May 2021

It's been a year like no other, COVID-19 has taken the world as we once knew it and changed it forever. We've lost loved ones and gained new ways of living, connecting with friends and family digitally and working from home where possible. We've seen community groups form to look out for each other and in our own very small village some of our residents who took it upon themselves very early in the pandemic to take on the role of supporting those in need, and we thank them all for their commitment and support they have provided and continued to provide throughout the pandemic. Thank you.

The Parish Council Team has seen a lot of change in the past 12 months too, with a high number of resignations from long standing positions. We'd like to thank those who have since moved on, for their contribution to the parish over their period in Councillor role. However, this movement of Councillors has enabled a new team to form and despite spending most of the year virtually connecting and getting to know each other, has achieved good team morale and equal split of responsibilities and workloads. The 2021 election also created the opportunity for the final place on the team to be filled by the election process. There were only 7 candidates for 7 roles which means the team is now at full strength and is set for the new year ahead.

The team is now formed by the following people:

Hannah Becket – The Parish Clerk

Amy Powell

Simon Downey

Andrew Grabham

Alex Breach

Carla Haslam

Julie Anderson-Hill

Alison Howard-Evans

With that I'd personally like to thank the support I have received from ALL of the current Councillors and the Parish Clerk in the role I have held since the resignation of the previous chairperson. I've held the acting Chairperson position since August 2020, and with the support of the Councillors and Hannah we have managed to maintain the services, achieve some goals and set in motion a new way of working with the community, here are some of our highlights for me this year;

- All our governance documents are now up to date and available on the website
- Our Clerk has been given a contract of employment and a representative pay scale, thank you to Simon and Julie for supporting this work.
- The 2019 bonfire site was cleared when we knew the 2020 bonfire event wasn't going to happen, making the Recreational Ground tidy and free from debris. Thank you Simon, Nicki & Alex.
- The village quarterly Newsletters keeping the community connected with what we do and how to get more involved. Thanks to the Team for helping with content ideas and volunteering their time to help distribute these.
- We successfully received £2500 from Melksham Area Board in September for the new equipment in the Recreational ground.



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- Our recreational ground has had unsafe equipment removed and replaced with a new Climbing tower.
- Our grass maintenance contract has been refreshed and renewed with Idverde to meet the expectations of the villagers who wish to use the grounds for ball sports. Thank you Andrew for negotiating with the contractor on this.
- We have a new community website with fantastic collaboration with Sue for community content and the Parish Council are now self-managing Parish Council pages, removing the burden of maintenance from Sue & Calum. I've learnt a new skill in creating a website and moving data from the old site to the new one.
- We've removed payroll costs from David Owen Accountants and brought them in house, thank you Andrew for taking on this role and helping remove some costs from our annual Precept.
- All stiles on our footpath network have been repaired by the land owners, thank you Alex for working with the other land owners on getting this sorted.
- Dog fouling continues to be a problem in the village despite the additional bins we installed. We are supporting land owners who have informed us of problems with providing extra penalty notices for their fences. Thank you Julie for making this happen. We continue to explore ways to improve this and welcome any input from residents.
- The Recreational Ground Committee has been reformed and with the dedication of some of the Council Team (Alex & Andrew) there has been significant improvements made to the upkeep of the grounds, with more still to come from the new Committee. Thank you to Carla and the members of the Recreational Ground Committee for stepping up and wanting to be part of this.
- The new Recreational Ground Committee successfully secured £1000 funding from Melksham Area Board for the smaller maintenance jobs needed in the Recreational ground which gave the new Committee a financial start along with a very generous donation from Councillor Andrew Grabham and another donation from a former resident. Well Done Carla on securing funding to kick start the Recreational Ground Committee.

We look forward to a new year ahead where meeting in person will eventually become the new norm and we can resume our meeting in the Village Hall supporting this wonderful facility. We have made a request to the Village Hall Committee to consider an internet connection so that despite we as a team meeting physically again every month we can continue to invite those who wish to attend by digital means can continue to do so. Therefore, making our meetings more accessible to all those who cannot physically attend due to childcare arrangements, physical abilities or just prefer being in their own homes while still playing a part in their village community. We will continue to pursue this option and will keep the community informed on how our meetings can be attended.

We have consulted the community on a large topic of the Precept over the last quarter of this financial year and we will inform the community of the responses in due course when we've had time to review the data. We're really excited about the possible opportunity to create a Recreational Ground for the whole community and not just the children, making it a space everyone can benefit from.

Financial;

At the time of writing, the Parish Council's accounts for 2020/2021 have not been finalised, we are also in the process of changing our accounting services.

The Precept setting for 2021/2022 was kept to a minimal increase to cover general increase in costs for the day to day running of the Parish.



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Thanks to Jonathan Seed who has supported Bulkington Parish Council for many years, but now due to the boundary changes Jonathan is no longer our local Councillor. We welcome Tamara Reay as our Devizes Rural West Councillor and we look forward to getting to know Tamara more as we build a new supportive network with Devizes Rural West.

I also thank Calum and Sue for their support and work on the old website for the past 10 years and look forward to working more closely with Sue on the content and community engagement with the new website and Sue's ongoing work on the various FaceBook pages.

We look forward to working more closely with our community over the next 12 months and we welcome you all to attend our meetings to come and find out more about what we get up to and how you can get involved.

Thanks
Amy