

Stawley Parish Council: Annual Parish Meeting, 4th June 2019

Chairman's Report

This is a summary of what the Parish Council has been up to over the past year.

Membership & Responsibilities

There was no election of Councillors in May of this year which was fortunate as it saved us about £3,000 in election costs. Subsequently the Council remains the same:

Paul Musgrove –Chairman, Clerk and Website

Simon Buttars – Roads

Pat Sweet – Responsible Financial Officer

Clive Wall – Planning

Matt Vellacott – Footpaths & bridleways

Finance

The Parish Precept was set at the level of £2,400 for 2018/19 – the same as it has been for many years. However it was decided during the year to increase the precept to £2,820 for the year 2019/20 as it is likely that in coming years we will have to procure our own salt for roads as Somerset County Council are reducing their coverage of gritting.

The balance held by the Council is sufficient to allow grants in the coming year should a justified application from local bodies be forthcoming.

Planning

The Parish Council has an advisory role in the planning process – we do not determine planning applications ourselves. We are consulted by the planning authorities – mainly Taunton Deane but for some applications it is Somerset County – and we give our views. Sometimes our views are listened to.

Highways & footpaths/bridleways

We liaise regularly with County highways over problems & maintenance of the roads in the Parish. While we can't dictate when repair work is undertaken we do regularly review and chase the County Council about unresolved highway problems. Progress has been made during the year specifically on Bishop's Hill where the spring or damaged drain which caused problems at the entrance to Tremlet Farm has been repaired.

The finger road sign at the Holcombe Rogus junction in Greenham has been repaired and repainted during the year by a contractor. Although on that side of the road it is in Devon, it is a Somerset County Council sign and as it is at the entrance to our Parish the Council decided it should be improved as most of us pass it at least once a week.

Website

The www.stash.org.uk website covering both Stawley & Ashbrittle continues to be updated with news of Stawley Council Meetings.

The Globe Inn

One of the highlights of the year has been the re-opening of The Globe. After many years of neglect and false starts we now have a great facility thanks to the hard work of Roly Willett the landlord. Many thanks to him!

Telephone Boxes

The Telephone Boxes have been purchased and renovated by Mike Parkinson and Bob Higgins; many thanks to them for their great work. The one in Appley will be used as a Parish Notice Board as we are required to post Agendae of meetings in a public place and the old notice board was knocked down when the new school fence was put up. This box can also be used for other purposes should anyone in the Parish wish to take over some of it. The Box in Greenham will become a museum of Greenham artifacts.

Broadband

Last year at the Annual Parish Meeting we heard how a company was going to revolutionise our broadband access. Unfortunately the promises faded quickly. Despite the great efforts of Clive Wall and Maurice Stanbury other attempts to boost our chances of being served by faster broadband has also come to nothing. So the best we can recommend is to use alternative means of gaining broadband speeds such as satellite or mobile signals. We will continue to push for optic fibres to be installed in our area.

Paul Musgrove

June 2019