

## **Chairman's Annual Report May 2020 to April 2021**

### **Introduction**

Firstly, I would like to thank all my vice chair, fellow councillors and the staff at the Parish Council for their support and assistance given over the past 12 months.

I have set out below some highlights for the municipal year 2020-21 which shows the level of work that the councillors and staff have put into running the services provided by the Parish Council.

It has been another busy year and throughout we have been plagued by the Covid pandemic that has changed our lives for the foreseeable future, including all our meetings being held virtual via the internet.

We all were soon familiar with ZOOM meetings and shared documents with ease and the public continued to join our meetings.

We commenced the start of the municipal year with 13 councillors and two vacancies of the 15 seats available. We had hoped to co-opt two new members at some point during the municipal year, but with Covid limitations this was not possible.

Sadly, in February 2021, Amanda Greenwood resigned for personal reasons.

We wish her all the best for the future.

### **Full Council (all 15 councillors)**

#### **Chair Cllr Fishwick, Vice Chair Cllr Wooldridge**

Full Council including the Annual Meeting of the Council has met 11 times during the municipal year.

The Council reviewed the staffing structure, and two new part-time appointments were made with the removal of one original part-time post.

The new posts were filled in the early autumn of 2020 and we welcomed Kate Lang as the Assistant Clerk and Joanne Yeomans as the Community Engagement & Lettings Officer.

### **Climate Change Emergency**

There are a number of standing items on the Agenda, but additional areas covered during the year included the continued reporting of progress by the Climate Change Working Group.

Some successes included the completion of replacing the more energy hungry fluorescent tube lighting in the Parish Council facilities with low energy usage LED.

The Council also changed its waste and recycling contractor to enable more to be recycled. Dual use waste and recycling bins are in the process of being installed in Bearwood Recreation Ground.

We also transferred to more sustainable energy supply during 2020 for our facilities.

The 64-panel solar system was installed in 2016 but received a software upgrade in April 2019 that enabled an increase in electricity generation. Over the last 12 months it

has generated 15.259 MWh and since initial installation 55.13 MWh watts of green electricity. According to the Solar report that equates to 14,191kg of CO2 saved and the equivalent of planting 649 trees.

6 new trees and a small Sindlesham Oak sapling grown from an acorn were planted in the corner area of Bearwood Recreation Ground. In addition, hedging was introduced in the same area.

We have eradicated bonfires from all Winnersh Parish Council controlled land, extending it from Bearwood Recreation Ground where bonfires were already prohibited to the Woodward Close Allotment agreements issued September 2020 which prohibits bonfires.

We have commenced the establishment of a Wildflower meadow off Hatch Farm Way in partnership the developers Bovis Homes and Persimmon Homes.

### **Winnersh Sustainable Transport Group**

The Parish Council successfully adopted Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle Stations on behalf of the Winnersh Sustainable Transport Group in partnership with South Western Railway and The Community Rail partnership.

The impact of Covid has severely limited the first project at the stations in partnership with The Forest School and CLASP to create Artwork for the existing waiting shelters at both stations.

However, the success in adoption raised the profile of Winnersh station where trackside graffiti and litter were cleared by Network Rail in March 2021.

### **Winnersh and District History Group**

Winnersh Parish Council, together with some local residents, has formed a working group whose initial objective is to collate, catalogue and preserve archival material donated by the Winnersh & District Historical Society when it disbanded in 2015 and then to build on this material and share it widely for educational and leisure purposes.

### **Planning Committee (8 councillors)**

#### **Chairman Cllr Taylor, Vice Chairman Cllr Fishwick**

Planning Committee has met 16 times over the year all of which were virtual meetings since the Covid – 19 lockdown to enable Planning Applications to be reviewed and comments submitted to the Planning Authority, Wokingham Borough Council. 7 members of the public attended over the year.

The committee reviewed 83 planning applications and made 6 objections and 19 comments.

The committee responded to six consultations, including the Borough Council's Speed limit Review and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, the government's proposals on Pavement Parking and Forward Planning White Paper and the SEN School and Winnersh Farms screening.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021, Cllr Taylor represented the Parish Council at the Wokingham Borough Council Planning Committee expressing the reasons for objecting to the Grovelands Park application 203439.

Unfortunately, Community Speedwatch which the Parish Council was planning to be involved in, has been impacted by the Covid pandemic but it is hope that we will be involved later this year.

### **Recreation and Amenities (8 Councillors)**

#### **Chair Cllr Wooldridge, Vice Chair Cllr Hanna**

The Recreation and Amenities Committee has met 11 times over the year and attracted members of the public.

The committee has successfully overseen the second full year at the Woodward Close allotment site and recently set up a Winnersh Allotment Association.

The new site continues to flourish, and all plots remain full with a small waiting list.

The committee responded to the Wokingham Borough Council's Arts and Culture Strategy and also have representation Borough Council working group going forward.

The committee managed the replacement of the outdoor gym equipment at the Bearwood Recreation Ground.

The committee also managed the replacement cladding and extension to the Winnersh Community Hall where work commenced last month.

The committee have also started the feasibility of upgrading the Parish Council's facilities at Bearwood Recreation Ground.

Sadly, the summer fete and Christmas lights event succumbed to the Covid pandemic, but it is hoped both will see a return later this year.

### **Finance and General Purposes Committee (8 Councillors)**

#### **Chair Cllr John Southgate, Vice Chair Cllr Linda Wooldridge.**

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has met 4 times during the year.

The main role of this committee is to oversee the finance of the council, make grant donations to local charities that assist Winnersh residents and review policies and procedures.

£1,000 in Community Transport Grant funding was awarded to 1 charity.

£1,950 in grant funding was awarded to 5 organisations.

Once again thank you for your support over the past 12 months and I look forward to working with you and leading this Council over the next 12 months.

**Councillor Paul Fishwick, Chair Winnersh Parish Council**