

Chairmans Annual Parish Report - 2018

Another year passes and Winsham – our wonderful, small rural parish continues to operate above the national trends and prove it is a ‘wonderful place to live’. Despite it’s relatively small population we still have a pre-school, a primary school, a community shop, a post office, a pub, a sports & social club, and a thriving and up to date community hall. We have an award-winning Parish Council. I’d like to think we set the bar that other councils look to follow, but all we are doing is following ‘good practice’. We look especially to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the guidelines they lay down in their local government award scheme.

Last year, the Parish Council received the prestigious “Foundation” award as part of the Local Council Award Scheme from NALC. This achievement recognised that the council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Moreover, that the Parish Council goes above and beyond their legal obligations, leading their communities and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

So how did we get here? Well, thanks mostly to the Localism Act, which is an Act of Parliament that changes the powers of local government in England. The aim of the act is to facilitate the devolution of decision-making powers from central government control to individuals and communities, including what’s known as "general power of competence" which states "a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do".

Let’s demonstrate what is meant by that by comparing April 2010 parish council agenda with that of April 2018. Admittedly this is purely a visual demonstration and doesn’t reflect the amount of time the individual items took to discuss – but it does show, we hope, the changes in amount of work done in the intervening eight years:

April 2010

1998 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES
1999 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
2000 DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS
2001 MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
2002 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH MEETING held on 3rd
2003 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE AND ANY SUBSEQUENT ACTION TAKEN
2004 PLANNING APPLICATIONS
2005 AMENITIES
2006 RIGHTS OF WAY
2007 FINANCIAL MATTERS
2008 CEMETRY
2009 UPPER RECREATION GROUND
2010 JUBILEE HALL
2011 HIGHWAYS
2012 CORRESPONDENCE
2013 MEMBERS QUESTION TIME & ANY OTHER BUSINESS
1997 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

APRIL 2018

(0) PUBLIC FORUM
(1) TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN
(2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(3) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
(4) PLANNING MATTERS x 3
(5) FINANCE x3
(6) RELOCATION OF SHOP AND POST OFFICE TO THE OLD GEORGE INN
(7) DOCUMENT REVIEW x 4
(8) 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR COMMEMORATIONS
(9) BUS SHELTER REPAIRS
(10) MUGA
(11) STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE CONSULTATION
(12) REVISED SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID) PROGRAMME
(13) PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
(14) DRAFT SOMERSET STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2018 – 2022
(15) JUBILEE HALL REPRESENTATIVE
(16) COUNCILLOR SURGERIES
(17) WINSHAM STREET FAIR 2018
(18) ANNUAL PLAYGROUND INSPECTION AND RISK ASSESSMENT OFFER 2018
(19) EXTENSION OF 30MPH LIMIT ON THE B3162 TO BERE FARM
(20) TO APPOINT ANOTHER COUNCILLOR TO THE FINANCE GROUP
(21) TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
(22) OUTSTANDING ITEMS UPDATE
a) Action Plan Review
b) Land Registry of Parish Council's Land Assets
c) Letter to SCC CEO regarding obstructed footpath CH30/7
d) Assets of Community Value – School
e) Bus Service meeting with Somerset County Council
f) War Memorial Cleaning
g) Networking Event – Chair Business Voice
h) Annual Parish Meeting – Tuesday 15th May 2018
(23) ITEMS FOR REPORT
a) Parish Assets:
Cemetery, Upper Rec/Lower Rec, Resource Centre, Bus Shelter, War Memorial, Seating, Signage and Bins.
b) Web Sites, Welcome Pack
c) Public Rights of Way
d) Grass Cutting Report
e) Highways and Bus Services
f) Reports from member representatives on outside bodies
g) Clerk's report and correspondence – see attached Agenda Notes
h) Parish Council Newsletter
i) 'Meet Your Councillor' Surgeries
(24) QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN
(25) COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
(26) CLERK'S APPRAISAL FEEDBACK
(27) DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 2018

It’s worth noting the number of parish councillors hasn’t changed – there are still nine seats to be filled! In the past year we’ve had 241 agenda items at the Parish Council – that’s an average of 20 items per month.

We've achieved so much over the past couple of years – we now have comprehensive sets of policies and strategies, we have brought much needed order to the cemetery, we've tidied up most of the main assets in the village, in the wider parish the footpaths on the whole are mostly in good nick, we now have a news outlet, we are online with an impressive website, we offer our parishioners chances to have their say in many consultations that affect public life, we offer opportunities to people for training on computers to health & wellness checks, we've brought extra income into the parish, we replaced the trip hazard paving stones under the Church Street lych gate after 80 years of much wear and tear, we've had to cope with & replace a loss of a central government grant and create a depreciation strategy for our assets, we've undertaken a much needed housing needs survey, we've been more generous with grants than any other council I can see in our history, we have committed to a 4 year financial plan in which we will not put up our cemetery or allotment fees, we now have meetings every single month of the year, we also have informal 'meet your councillor' surgeries for those unable to make traditional meetings and prefer less formality, and we have yearly action plans for what to focus on in terms of our activities. We have at the very least 20 items of business every month – we are a council that does a lot, has achieved a lot - and, yes still has much to do! And finally, to get the first stamp of approval from the National Association of Local Councils in the form of Foundation was truly the icing on the cake. We should all be very proud of our achievements.

So what's to come? We still don't have an emergency plan! We need to refresh our parish plan after 5 years, because if you look back now you'll see not only it is dated, we've also completed quite a lot of it! But the question is - what is important to you now? What should we prioritise our action to? People have migrated to and from Winsham, so it's time we ask the questions again. The plan is to undertake this work in a couple of months time, heading into the autumnal months. Also coming later in 2018 will be some form of commemorations marking 100 years since the end of the Great War. This will be preceded by a cleaning of the Winsham & Cricket St. Thomas War Memorial. Further information will be released over the coming months.

May we congratulate Marjorie Fowler on her Community Service Award. Her recognition comes from votes sent in by 11% of the parish population is a stunning number, by any stretch of the imagination. A plaque noting the gratitude of the people will be added to the Jubilee Hall by kind permission of the Hall Committee, and Marj gets to spend some well-deserved money in The Bell Inn at her convenience.

It's also very important that we put on to record both our acknowledgement and gratitude to the contribution of the many volunteers who run and support the all of the activities and organisations in the parish. Without you, none of 'Winsham being Winsham' would be possible – so thank you!

The work of the Parish Council is never done, but it does continue apace. Please remember to keep your eye on the media outlets for the parish for updates and news, and to get in touch with the Clerk (in the first instance) if you have any ideas, suggestions or comments.

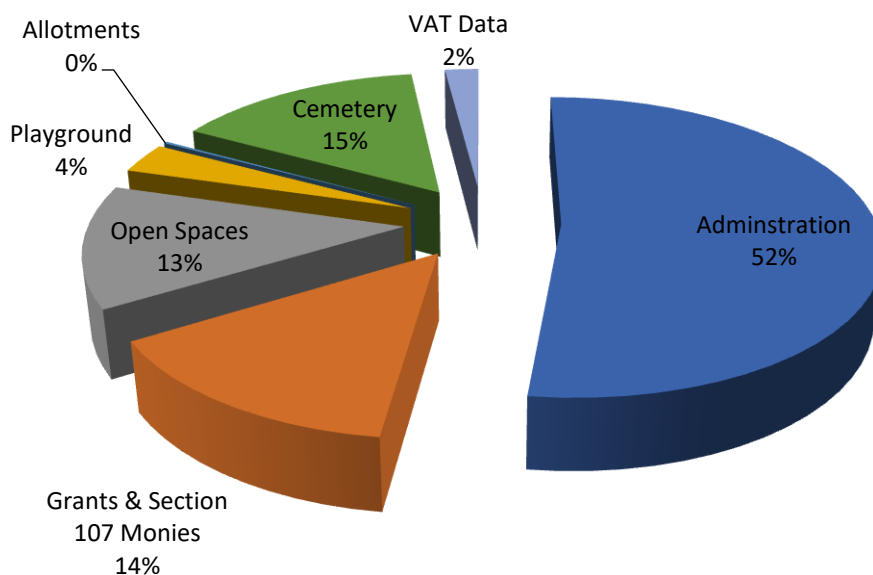
As Charles Dickens once wrote, "The pain of parting is nothing to the joy of meeting again". So here's to May 2019, and thank you for your time in reading this report.

Jason Stevens

Chairman, Winsham Parish Council

WINSHAM PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIALS
Financials for the year ending 31st March 2018

WPC Running Costs Y/E 31-3-18



Financials for the year ending 31st March 2017

WPC Running Costs y/e 31-3-17

