

Last year I finished my chairman's statement with the words "I look forward to your suggestions and support over the next, hopefully, more normal year." A degree of normality has resumed but not to the degree we hoped for!

Before I give you an update of the Parish council's activities last year let me first thank all the councillors and their long suffering partners. They are all volunteers and give up their time to help Winsham thrive and grow. I'd also like to thank Trevor Harris for assisting us for a short while and Jonathan Harding for joining us this year. Following the recent election nominations the full council has been automatically re-elected apart from Jenny Clampett who we thank for having brought a complimentary skill base and enthusiasm to the council but did not re-apply this year due to pressures of work.

You may know that County councillor Linda Vijah retired from being a councillor in January and her extensive knowledge, commitment and straight talking will be missed. Our District councillor Sue Osbourne is now our font of all knowledge.

So what has your Parish council been up to in the last year?

After forming a charitable trust to manage the Winsham Community Club, we have been working hard to get the community club up and running for the benefit of all parishioners. This has been a great success with weekly activities and regular events. The day-to-day operations of the club are self-supporting thanks to much-appreciated volunteers as well as the hard work that several of the Councillors put in. Grants have been obtained to improve the fabric of the building especially with respect to safety and the environment.

The new housing development off Balsom Close has been completed and the car park and nature area will soon be handed over to the council by the developer. Our Council has taken expert advice to provide a planting scheme that will provide the village with a green and pleasant land.

We rose to the top of the waiting list for the road improvement scheme requested by the council a few years ago. This was combined with an initiative for improving road safety outside schools. After much debate a 20mph limit at school drop off and pick up times is to be introduced along with improved signage, road markings and (possibly) lighting.

Following the flooding last year the council has worked with highways to identify improvements to the drainage within Winsham. Church Steet is to be jetted over the summer and the frequency of drain clearance is under review. Not everything can be solved as the village was here before tarmac roads and so we are looking at emergency plans for when we next have exceptional rainfall.

The continuous upkeep of our assets has seen a new fence in Pooles Lane, replacement bins for those stolen and, with the kind assistance of Paul Anderson, the refurbishment of several of the seats and benches in the Parish along with new picnic tables for the upper and lower rec. We have added the BT telephone box which Steve beautifully restored as a mini library and Judith maintains.

The newly established gardening group have been improving many areas around the village including the new nature area, Ebben corner and the footpath between Western Way and Pooles Lane. Judith and Simon Hill spent a few long but fruitful days laying the allotment hedges and the accumulated grass cuttings have been cleared from the cemetery after several years.

Enough of what has happened. Let's look forward to The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations that are almost finalised and the Great British spring clean will be back this year after catching Covid last year.