

The Annual Meeting of Holt Parish Council was held on Thursday 23rd March 2017 at the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Becky Stevens, Cllr Andrew Pearce, Cllr Marsha Nicholson, Cllr Halma Hughes, Cllr Robin Paice, Cllr Philip Game

Apologies: Cllr Bob Mizen, Cllr Steve Siddall, Cllr Richard Goodman, Cllr Ian Bolden, Cllr David Cullop, Mrs Jennie Beale (Clerk), PCSO Andrew MacLachlan

In attendance: Cllr Trevor Carbin

Chairman's Report: Cllr Becky Stevens reported on the last year as follows:

This is my fifth annual report as Chairman of Holt Parish Council in a year in which we have experienced some successes, with the fruition of several projects, and some more challenging times.

It was with great sadness that the Council in April 2016 lost the services of Councillor Mervyn Osman who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. Not only was Councillor Osman a much-respected member of this Council but he was also a friend to many. We marked our respect by holding a minute's silence at the April meeting.

The 4th May sees local elections including Parish Councils and we enter this election period with a full complement, following the co-option of Councillor Ian Bolden in July. The Council has undertaken a recruitment campaign in the hope that at least twelve applications are submitted to Wiltshire Council. This will hopefully ensure that an election within the Parish takes place and introduces a new and more diverse representation of the community that we represent.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Wiltshire Councillor Trevor Carbin for all his hard work over the last twelve months. Once again Councillor Carbin has attended our monthly meetings and has represented our interests at County level when required. During this period, there was a Community Governance Review instigated by Trowbridge Town Council who were seeking to move Holt's boundary thereby transferring part of our parish to Trowbridge. Both the Parish Council and Councillor Carbin made representation to Wiltshire

Council and the boundary change request was rejected to the relief of the affected parishioners.

Over the last year, policing in Wiltshire has evolved and whilst we still receive our monthly reports, unfortunately a police presence at our meetings has stopped. I would like to thank PCSO MacLachlan for submitting the reports and look forward to seeing him or a colleague at our meetings in the future.

As a Council, we are committed to supporting the youth of the village. We have continued to help fund the Broughton Gifford and Holt Youthwork Project and as Chairman I have supported the work of the Trustees of the youth club. After considerable research, meetings and having sought advice the Council came to the unfortunate decision that we were unable to agree to the implementation of a skate board park on the playing field. We are now following a similar process with the request for a pump track.

The planning committee has continued the hard work of reviewing each planning application submitted to Wiltshire Council and advising the planning authority of the Parish Council's views on each application. The Tannery development is still ongoing with no end in sight. However, we continue to monitor the situation and are ready to consider the final plan once finalised. Thank you to Councillor Siddall for Chairing this committee through some difficult times, and the committee members for their diligence in ensuring that the Council is fair and consistent in its decision-making process.

The Village Facilities Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the village, including maintenance of the children's Play area, pond and Pavilion. Many hours of work have gone into ensuring that the village is kept clean, tidy and safe. Their hard work was borne out by Holt being awarded second place in the best kept village competition in the large village category. Dawes Pond has seen major works over the last year, with the removal of the island and the installation of a new liner and pump. The planting of grass has been completed and a replanting programme will start in the next few weeks. Once completed Dawes pond will be a wonderful place to enjoy. We have already seen ducks returning to the area. The ongoing cost of maintenance is now included in the precept which will ensure the areas upkeep. The removal of the weir by the pond is under discussion with Wiltshire Council, who has confirmed that its

removal will not affect the flow rate of the stream. The Parish Council was saddened by the theft of the oak bench which has never been recovered.

The Pavilion upgrade has continued and which is now nearing completion. Once again, ongoing maintenance has been accounted for and the Council is committed to ensuring that all its assets are maintained in a timely manner within its tight financial constraints. The schedule to restore the benches in the village is continuing, together with the works due on the trees for which the Council is responsible. Having received professional advice, it was agreed that the American Oak on Ham Green should be removed and this took place recently. The Parish Council is committed to replacing every tree that is felled. The Bowls Club lease was finalised and the Council received a financial donation from Box Steam Brewery for the use of the playing field for Boxfest. The footpath adjacent to the second sports court has been upgraded enhancing the areas vista. Many thanks to the Glove Factory Studios and HSRC for their financial contribution to this scheme. The annual safety inspection of the children's play area was carried out and the works to comply with its findings are nearing completion.

During the year, all Councillors completed a village inspection report with the findings being reported to either the village caretaker or the Parish Steward, a role which was reinstated by Wiltshire Council in April. Councillor Hughes agreed to research the installation of a defibrillator. Having secured funding from local businesses and parishioners a defibrillator and box has been purchased and this will be installed on the Village Hall wall by the shop very soon. The defibrillator will be connected to the emergency services. A second box for the defibrillator located in the Pavilion is also being purchased, to ensure easy access to everyone using the playing field. A huge thank you to everyone who made a financial contribution and the Village Hall committee for agreeing to its installation and electricity supply. Thank you to Councillor Mizen who once again chaired this committee and his committee members for all their hard work over the last twelve months.

Garry Aland has continued to work as a grass cutter contractor and village caretaker. The role of caretaker is changing and Garry will be replaced by Bob Prior from April. I would like to thank Garry for his commitment to the village

and look forward to seeing him continuing as the grass cutter contractor for the next twelve months.

Councillor Pearce has continued to chair the Highways and Streetscene committee. The long awaited double yellow lines have been installed. The length of the lines from Beckerley Lane onto The Common were queried as they seem too short. This is ongoing with Wiltshire Council at the present time. This committee conducted a traffic count. There was little difference in the number of vehicles travelling through the village, some 10,000, but the number of HGV's had gone down. Councillor Nicholson has continued to monitor the footpaths within the parish and the re-routing of Footpath 31 is ongoing. The annual walk by Councillors on all footpaths within the Parish were completed with the findings being reported to Wiltshire Council. The Council received a request from a new resident of the Elms for a dropped kerb. BCATG has agreed to finance 50% of the cost and there is a proposal from Highways and Streetscene to full Council for the remaining half. This will be discussed later this evening. (Post meeting note – agreed). Thank you to Councillor Pearce for his hard work on behalf of this committee and to its members.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan came to fruition recently when Wiltshire Council confirmed its agreement to the final draft. This culminated in a referendum in November. There was a 33% turnout with 93% of those in favour. Following on from this result the Neighbourhood Plan is now endorsed in Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy and must be considered when planning applications are submitted. This is a huge step forward for the village and I cannot overstate the amount of effort it has taken the steering committee over the last five years to get us to this point. The last year has been particularly difficult agreeing the final touches to the plan and a big thank you must go to Heather Morris and Andrew Pearce. Without their input Holt would not be in the fortunate position of having a neighbourhood plan.

The plan includes proposals that the parishioners would like to see implemented in the village, including traffic calming measures. A committee

has been created to oversee these proposals and the Highways and Streetscene committee are considering the traffic calming proposals. I would like to re-assure everyone that the Neighbourhood Plan will not be shelved to gather dust, but will become part of the Parish Council's remit over the coming years. Some of the projects are difficult and costly and will take time but we will do our best to implement the improvements where possible.

We were advised by Wiltshire Council that the funds we receive for the precept will be reduced for 2017/18 to nil. As a Parish Council, we are of the opinion that we could not reduce our expenditure without there being a real impact on the services we offer. It was therefore agreed to increase our precept by 4%. This is an increase of £ 1.12 per annum on a band D property. The funds we will receive from April will ensure that we can continue to deliver a tidy and safe village for all of us who live here. Thank you to Councillor Goodman for ensuring that our finances are kept in order and to his committee members for their hard work.

Minutes of Parish Council meetings and lots of other information are uploaded onto the Council's website on a regular basis and is a good source of information. If you have internet access, please look at our site. We are always open to suggestions for improvement. Thank you to Councillors' Siddall and Nicholson for their input during the last year.

Councillor Pearce has been my Vice Chair, together with our representative on the Bradford Area Board. Thank you for your continued support and for stepping into support the Clerk over the last few weeks. Your support has proved invaluable. Also to Jennie Beale the Clerk for all the work she has done over the last twelve months, especially at a very difficult time. Once again your support has helped me in my role as Chair.

Being a Parish Councillor is not always easy and I would like to thank all ten Councillors for their commitment to the Council, their continued hard work and for giving up their free time for the benefit of the village. Many other parishioners give up their free time for other projects not associated with the Council and I would like to thank them for their hard work too. Volunteers help to create a wonderful place to live and we would all be poorer without them.