

Chairman's Report for Annual Parish Meeting

Hinton Blewett Parish Council, 22nd April 2015

This report is for the final year of our four year term of office which ends with the elections next month. It is very apparent not just from writing this report that a considerable of the Council's time is spent in responding to planning applications and attendance at meetings relevant to planning matters.

As a planning consultee, the Council has considered 12 planning applications during the year including a second Rees-Mogg application for 8 houses on Lower Road which was also refused.

The Parish Council was delighted that as a result of its endeavours the Conservation Area Parish Appraisal was adopted by B&NES last July. The adoption of the appraisal will be further evidence to help to prevent inappropriate development in the village in the future.

The Parish's Placemaking Plan has continued to focus during the year with B&NES implementing their Stage 2 Options consultation which featured two of the six sites previously put forward for potential development; the other four sites being too remote from the Housing Development Boundary. In addition two out of the three sites identified as Locally Important Green Spaces, plus the Playing Field, have also been put forward for designation.

Hinton Blewett joined forces with six other parishes to form the Chew Valley Neighbourhood Plan last year. Since the formation of a steering group, public consultations have been held with drop-in sessions, questionnaires and household surveys. The results together with other evidence are now being analysed in order to produce policy options for consultation in the summer, which will then be followed by the drafting of policies leading to further public consultation later in the year, before submission of the draft Neighbourhood Plan early next year.

Each year reference is made to the less than satisfactory service from Enforcement at B&NES and it was disappointing to be advised after repeated attempts by the Parish Council to seek resolution to unauthorised occupation of land in the AONB that, due to officer error, the site had become lawful by default. There is now a planning application for a residential log cabin on the land.

The Council was successful with its Awards-for-All grant and was able to install a basket swing, bench, log weaver and goal posts at the Playing Field last year. It was confirmed yesterday that funds not spent on a shelter could, with further donations received since, be redirected to purchase a set of swings instead.

BT has been laying optic fibre cabling in the parish and it is anticipated that superfast broadband will be installed by the autumn, if not before

The Parish Council held a very successful litter picking day back in January for the second year running. The village is not on a through route and sadly it seems that much of the litter dropped is probably by those who live here.

It should be recorded that the Highways inspector manages to keep our lanes mostly patched together although the quality of the work seems to be of a poor quality.

Our Clerk has been in post for almost a year and has very ably picked up the role and I would like to thank her for her diligence and hard work during the year. Finally I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their input during the year and specifically thank Alan, Brian and Chris who are stepping down. Six residents have put forward nominations including two who will be new to the Council and we look forward to welcoming them to our Annual Meeting of the Parish Council next month.

April 2015