

Binton Parish Council Assembly Tuesday 10th May 2022

Annual Chair's report - Agenda Item 4

It's been another interesting and at the same time alarming year with COVID and events in Ukraine. Hopefully things are now returning to a semblance of normal in the UK as we learn to live with COVID, and we can only hope that there is some resolution for the people of Ukraine. The Village Hall was a collection point for aid for Ukraine on March 3rd 2022 and was overwhelmed by the local response.

Parish council meetings are now again in person. The Binton WhatsApp group and the Binton Life Facebook page also seem to be quite active and running well. Many events have taken place in the last year which I can say, without doubt, has been the most active 12 months for the council during my time as Chair. The Heart of England Forest charity who acquired 300 acres of land in the village at the beginning of 2021 have now almost completed the planting of the forest areas and have also, incidentally, planted their 2 millionth tree, an event which the parish council vice Chair was involved. It will be a while before we see the fruits of their labour taking substance, but the parish looks forward to it with a deal of anticipation. We have continued to maintain the Village Green as well as possible and the Council supports our local church and Village Hall with small maintenance grants.

A new Village Hall Committee was established in November 2021 and has to date very successfully revitalised the hall with a considerable number of initiatives. The accounts and the Committee's more detailed report on the Village Hall activities follows this report. I would wish to minute my thanks again to Denise Day for her work up to May 2021 and then to Cllr Martin (as manager from June to November 21) and Cllr Bishop (from June and then November 2021 on as manager) for their input to management and support of the hall. The new committee, chaired by Cllr Bishop, must be congratulated by the Parish Council on their remarkable efforts to reinvigorate and improve the hall and for their invaluable work and efforts in such a short time. Key improvements to the Village Hall in the past year include:

- Redecoration carried out by volunteers and the installation of new window blinds (funded through WCC by our local county councillor Piers Daniell).
- The installation of a Public Access Defibrillator, 50% funded by Avon Homes, which is a major improvement in facilities for the village.
- In March 2022 the parish council also funded the installation of new hot water supplies for the Village Hall at a cost of £902.

On the subject of speeding and traffic volumes, the Parish Council acquired a second speed warning sign in November 2021 at a cost of £2,485 excluding recoverable VAT. In February we were informed that our county councillor had funding available to install Village Approach Gates at the North and South

Village entrances. The Speedwatch group has agreed the positioning and specification for the gates, and these will be installed around May or June this year. The group will monitor speeds through our signs before and after installation to try to gauge the effectiveness as a pilot for other villages. In addition, work started in February on the Shottery Relief Road with completion in spring 2023. The impact of this alternative route between the A46 and the B439 will be watched with considerable interest. Courtesy of WCC we have had our surface road signs repainted this year which is an improvement.

The parish council, in setting the increased precept for 2022/23, set aside a budget of £2,500 for unspecified village improvements. The cost of the hot water installation for the Village Hall was subsequently funded as the first part of this initiative, leaving £1,600 to be identified for project(s) this year. This will be discussed as part of the following meeting agenda and a flyer issued by me to the village to set out our finances and to begin identifying on what we would best spend our project fund.

All in all, a very busy year and my personal thanks to those residents who attended our meetings, the Parish Clerk, my Parish Council colleagues, past and present, and our local County and District councillors.

Mike Flaxman
Chair
Binton Parish Council