

HELINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report – April 2022

This is my Fourth Annual Report as Chair of the Parish Council. Throughout this year the Parish Council has been two short of a full complement of Councillors. Despite publicity including a house-to-house leaflet drop we have been unable to find Parishioners who would be willing to be co-opted on the Council. That is, until recently as we welcome John Seddon back on the Council after serving previously as a very effective Chairman. We hope that we can find another candidate soon to bring us to full strength.

In July, Jane Saunders, our Parish Clerk, left us at short notice. Jane had been a very efficient and hardworking Clerk and her sudden escape to the South Coast added further disruption as we attempted to restore the PC to normal agendas as we came out of Covid restrictions. However, we were lucky in being able to welcome Martin Curry as our New Parish Clerk. Martin is an experienced Parish Clerk and hit the ground running and I thank him for his support over the last Six Months. My thanks also go to my 4 Parish Council colleagues for their work and support throughout the year.

We have again been supported by Jim Bland as County Councillor, and Kevin Holmes as District Councillor during the year for which we thank them but sadly the Boundary changes within SLDC which come into effect following the forthcoming elections will lead us to losing Jim after many years of assistance to Helington Parish Council. We will miss Jim, I thank him and wish him well with his new patch.

The business of the year was dominated by several issues worthy of mention within my report:

- The Bridge to the Toll Bar Road remains closed after a structural report and it is hoped that funding and design will be agreed to allow reopening in the Autumn
- A tree safety report commissioned earlier the year highlighted several cases of Ash-Dieback on Parish Council land and money has been set aside and works have commenced to fell affected trees. The currently programmed work will be completed in Autumn although we can expect more tree removal work being necessary in the near future. Kevin Holmes, District Councillor, has kindly supported the funding of this work with a contribution of £500.00 towards the cost.
- Potholes and poor road surfaces continue to be an issue within the Parish, and we look forward to some progress in this area, particularly on the urgent requirement to resurface Whetstones Lane.
- The SLVMA have decided to disband which will mean that we will not have access to road gritting which had been organised by them. We will need to explore whether any workable alternative will be available in the future
- Storm Arwen reaped havoc in November and whilst the community pulled together to help each other, the event showed the shortfalls within the Parish Council's Emergency Planning. The

updating of the Community Led Plan is now an urgent task for next year and It will be important to engage with and utilise the resources of the Village Hall Wheatsheaf Pub and Community generally in order to produce an Emergency Plan which the Parish Council has long identified as a need but we can now be more focused on requirements using the Lessons Learnt.

- The desire for a permanent Speed Indicator Device on Brigsteer Brow was agreed in previous years and I am happy to report that much progress has been made in obtaining funding for this. Thanks to Jane Cooper for all her work on this project and to Jim Bland for assistance in providing funding to supplement contributions direct from the County Council
- The Wheatsheaf Pub has for several years performed as a Community Hub. Nicki & Tom Roberts are now moving on and I thank them for all their past efforts in liaising with the Parish Council and Village Hall in the organisation of Gala Dinners, Beacons, celebrations, golf days, significant birthdays events ,Dog Shows etc,etc. Looking to the future, We can only hope that the new owners of the Pub will come to recognise their roles and responsibilities within the Community and fill the large gap left by Nicki & Tom Roberts.

I look forward to my 11th year on the Helsington Parish Council and to the continuation of vibrant support from the Community.

Steve Carman

Chairman

5th April 2022