

## Chairman's Report to Thornborough Parish Council 2019

It has been a very demanding year for the Parish Council

We unfortunately had resignations from 2 councillors during the year, firstly our hardworking previous chairman, Stuart Mitchell resigned after the last annual meeting. He nevertheless continues to help us with all our IT support (thank you, Stuart). Later in the year we lost our then vice chairman, Andy Spurr, who had been a very active and helpful councillor for many years. (thank you, Andy)

We co-opted 2 replacement councillors, both of whom had been regular attendees at meetings as members of the public. Firstly, Steve Tribe, who has a special interest in the Coombs area of the parish, and then Estelle Graham. When the second vacancy was advertised at the end of last year, several parishioners had asked for an election to be held. This was, however, not possible due to the (at the time) pending May elections.

Elections for the full council will be now held next May (2020), and it is to be hoped that some younger members of the parish will stand as candidates. It would also be rewarding if they came to some of our meetings during the next year, to see what goes on!

Our long-serving and dedicated parish clerk, finally left the job at the end of February and we thank her for all her hard work. We have been unable to find anyone from the village to take her place. We have currently a temporary Parish Clerk helping us; Ruth is clerk for 5 other parishes in the area, and we will be interviewing both her and another applicant in May with a view to appointing a permanent Clerk.

A resident reported a problem with rats in the vicinity of the allotments, and a great deal of time has been spent during the year on sorting this out. We are now as a precaution, employing a rat expert who will inspect the area twice a year and advise on any actions needed. The Environmental Health Officer at AVDC and the agents for the owners of the land (BCC) have also been heavily involved in this issue.

We have looked at 31 planning applications during the year. The most contentious application was for up to 5 dwellings on land at Brevitts Farm, Back Street. The meeting held to discuss this was attended by 36 members of the public – possibly a record for TPC! Many objections were subsequently lodged with AVDC, including 1 from the TPC. At the time of writing, no decision had been posted by AVDC planning.

We applied for funding from BCC for gates on the verges on the way into the Coombs from the A421, which we hope will help slow down the traffic. They agreed to funding and the gates are to be erected during 2019.

We arranged for clearance of reeds etc around the village pond, and made safe various trees that were fallen or damaged during the year. We continue to ensure all the TPC-owned green areas in the village (including the sports field) are regularly mown.

We have continued to give financial support to the Village Hall, Parish Church, and the Thornborough news, as well as minor works at the refurbished playground. We have also continued to assist both the Pre-school and the Cricket Club in their use of the pavilion, and are hoping to do some major improvements to this building in the coming year. We have been working with the cricket club to obtain grants for improved practise facilities etc to ensure continuation of the cricket teams in the village.

We have agreed to take part in discussions on the Buckingham Neighbourhood plan, being co-ordinated by Buckingham Town Council. Unfortunately, these cannot start until the VALP has been agreed, and this is currently being debated.

There is going to be more emphasis placed on neighbourhood plans under the new Unitary Authority, and although we have had a village plan for some years, it is not a 'made' Neighbourhood plan. We need to

seriously consider this, as without one we could be open to much more unwanted development in future years. It will, however, require substantial commitment from members of the community, not just from the TPC.

I would like to express my thanks to the rest of the councillors, and particularly to Steve Tribe, who took over as Vice- Chairman after Andy left and has been a great support.

I have now left the Council after our April meeting, having served on it for over 9 years, and been Chairman for the past year. Fresh ideas and energy are always welcome and needed, and I would urge any villager who feels that they could make a valuable contribution to put their name forward to be a Councillor.

Melanie Staff

We thank Melanie for guiding us through this difficult year.

Also Debbie Hosein resigned and we thank her for her support.

Steve Tribe