

Chairman's Report for the Year 2018 – 2019

Welcome everybody. Thank you all for coming tonight.

This is my sixteenth annual report.

Your Parish Councillors this year have been Pam Esom, John Newman, Jill Saunders, Diane Wass and myself. Jack Debnam has continued to be the Responsible Financial Officer and has also remained Acting Clerk and we are very grateful that Diane has supported the Clerk's role by sharing the work with Jack. In November we were delighted that Jo Weil agreed to act as advisor to the PC.

This current PC year, from the last annual meetings on 18th May the PC has held 6 meetings, 7 including this one and organised a very well attended village meeting to enable villagers and other interested parties to discuss the sale of the Green Dragon.

Each Parish Councillor has an area of responsibility, for which they work diligently during the year.

John Newman-Highways

Pam Esom-Planning

Jill Saunders-the Environment

Diane Wass-the Community

- **For Highways**, John continues to liaise with Herts Highways to try and get resolutions to the many highways problems. The same old issues continue to be potholes, speeding traffic, verge erosion.

Thank you John for liaising with Richard Roberts, our Herts County Councillor regarding SID, the Speed Indicator Device and for persuading him to give the PC a grant of £500 from his Locality Budget in November to move SID (£275) to and from its 2 location points, by the Village Hall and along Hogpits and to download its data another (£275).

John also toured the village last October with Richard agreeing highways priorities, including the need for street cleaning and the renewal of the white lining at the Bricklayers Junction. Thank you both for that.

Some other jobs that John has been involved in this year are:

Checking the 2 salt bins are full for the winter and ordering new salt if required.

He reported impending road closures for gas works in Venus Hill that would be starting last October and would continue for 18 months, for electricity works in Hogpits and for UK Power works for Bag End.

John was also busy with liaising with Richard about the dangerous gravel build up on the road at the bottom of Flaunden Hill opposite the quarry entrance and the problem of overhanging trees that were also dangerous. Both problems were quickly investigated and resolved where needed.

John we appreciate your hard work and perseverance in dealing with all the Highways issues and for liaising with Richard and Herts Highways. Thank you John.

- **For Planning**, This year there have been 16 planning applications and 2 appeals which are all digital on the Dacorum planning website. For every planning application that comes in Pam liaises with the appropriate Dacorum Planning Officers, sometimes meeting with them. Pam then prepares background information to help the PC with the decision making process. These applications are then discussed at our PC meetings and Pam then prepares the response that goes to Dacorum.

Pam also liaises with Dacorum on appeals and enforcement issues around the village.

Most planning applications are relatively uncomplicated, especially now that there are more Permitted Development Rights. So for some applications we can only make comments. But some are complex and problematic and take a long time to be decided. For these I thank Pam for liaising with our Dacorum Councillors, Stewart Riddick and Gbola Adeleke and often the Enforcement team as well as the Planning Department. And I thank our Dacorum Borough Councillors for their support during the year.

The planning role is a particularly time consuming one. We thank you Pam for all your diligence and expertise with the digital plans, for

keeping us all up to date with new planning regulations and for all your hard work throughout the year. Thank you Pam.

For the Environment, Jill reports to Dacorum any problems with our network of footpaths & bridleways, such as broken kissing gates, overgrown greenery and blocked paths.

Some of the jobs Jill has done this year are:

- In September Jill explained proposals by the Chilterns Conservation Board to move powerlines underground in the Chess Valley and Latimer area and responded back.
- She reviewed the Fixed Assets of the PC.
- In the Autumn Jill organised hedge cutting where the land owners were not available.
- Some footpaths were reported as seriously overgrown, so Jill liaised with Colin, our village warden to cut back the vegetation.
- In January Jill applied to Dacorum for the £1000 Parish Paths Partnership grant (known as PPP). This grant is given “to improve, promote and/or enhance public rights of way”. Through the grant the bottom part of F14 through Plantation Wood was improved this year as well as parts of F1 and we want to use the next grant for further repairs to F14 through Plantation Wood.
- She organised the repair of the broken latch on the gate to F13 as well as the wobbly gate post.
- She also reported a damaged waste bin opposite F13, in Hogpits and we thank Gbola Adeleke for arranging a replacement bin through Dacorum’s Clean, Safe & Green team.
- On 16th March Jill organised the ever popular and very necessary annual Litter Blitz to clear rubbish from the lanes into and around Flaunden. 19 people took part and wore the Flaunden PC high visibility jackets and collected 15 sacks of rubbish & 9 bags of recycling.

Once again all Flaunden Hill and Chenies Hill were cleared, including again lots of vodka bottles! Afterwards we were all provided with the now “traditional” & very welcome winter warmers at the Bricklayers Arms. A big thank you once again to Alvin Michaels and his staff.

Thanks also to Dacorum’s Clean Safe & Green Team for providing litter pickers, bags & gloves and quickly taking away all the rubbish we collected.

- In May Jill took her loppers to trim the hedges along the bottom part of F11 where the horses had been pulling and nibbling the blackthorn branches!

Colin, our Village Warden, does a brilliant job throughout the year, picking up rubbish from inside the Village gates, but the litter blitz also enables us to clear all the lanes leading into the village. Thank you Colin & everyone who joined the litter blitz this year.

Thank you also to Colin & all the villagers who pick up rubbish as they walk round the village. Every one of you makes a difference.

Continuing thanks go to Clayton Rae, who is based at Dacorum and manages the local DBC footpaths and bridleways and is always ready & willing to give support and advice if it is needed.

Thank you Jill for your hard work, for sharing your knowledge about the environment with us and your diligence in organising hedge cutting, footpath clearing, gate and stile mending, fallen tree clearance, cutting down nettles and hedge branches which have been nibbled by horses! etc. We are all very grateful to you. Thank you Jill.

For the Community, Diane Wass has taken over the management of Flaunden Care, she checks the crime rates and reports on community events.

She administers the email noticeboard and the Village website. The Parish Council section includes dates of forthcoming meetings, copies of meeting Agenda, Finances, Minutes and also the chairman's annual report! There is also a section with links to local planning applications.

Diane is also supporting the clerk role by dealing with all PC emails, monitoring the inbox and forwarding to councillors as required, along with updates on any new regulations.

- In September Diane informed us that all parish councils had to register under the Data Protection Act and explained the new Data Protection Policy and procedures.

- Following notification that The Green Dragon may be sold, Diane took on the challenge of understanding the legal aspects of registering the Green Dragon as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and meeting with a group of villagers to discuss the way forward.
- Following the sale of the Green Dragon, she keeps up to date with what is happening.
- Diane is monitoring the development of the NHS long-term plan for Health and Wellbeing.

We all greatly appreciate your enthusiastic and expert involvement in all aspects of the Community. Thank you also for supporting Jack so proficiently in clerking the PC and for reliably and regularly updating us all. Thank you Diane.

I thank Jack for being so diligent and knowledgeable in looking after the parish council's finances this year and for providing us with and explaining the accounts so clearly. And we are so grateful that you are continuing as our very competent Acting Clerk and for being so kind to us all. We all greatly appreciate what you are doing. Thank you Jack.

- On 7th September one of our villagers, Madge Stevenson, had her 100th birthday. The PC, with Jackie Redding and Madge's family organised a lovely birthday party for her in the Village Hall. We were very grateful to the Village Hall Committee for waiving the Hall fee for this momentous village event.
- The PC again sponsored a craft table at the annual Christmas Craft Fayre last December for 15+ children who had an enjoyable time making Christmas table decorations. Thanks to everyone who helped.
- The Flaunden Flyer is now seventeen years old and has produced 63 issues. Thank you everyone who contributes articles to the Flyer, whether on a regular basis or as a one off. It's lovely to see articles written and illustrated by the young and the old. Continued congratulations to the Flyer team for providing all villagers & friends of the village with an ever more superbly presented magazine. Thank you Flyer Team, very well done.

- This year the annual family Easter egg treasure hunt was held on 20th April, a lovely warm and sunny Easter Saturday. The theme was “Es” and this year 53 children & 38 adults took part. As usual all the children received a free chocolate egg. Thanks to Ken Lousvet for continuing to be responsible for decorating the hall so beautifully and to Daph and her volunteers in the kitchen for providing and serving the lovely refreshments.
- We continue to use the Village Email Noticeboard to update residents with information from the Parish Council. If you are not already included on the email distribution list, please contact the Clerk.
- As ever we are extremely grateful to our Village Warden, Colin Gurney. He continues to deliver an excellent job keeping the Village looking good, He can be seen regularly going round the village litter picking, cleaning road signs, removing debris and fallen trees or branches, clearing the areas around the village gates and digging out the grips which run into the ditches. To name just a few of his jobs! This year Colin did a great job of cleaning and varnishing or painting all the benches and litter bins in the village.
- Colin, we all really appreciate and value your efforts and support. Thank you.

We really welcome villagers to our meetings. Members of the public are entitled to come to all our meetings. Indeed we want to let you know what is happening and also we want to hear your concerns or of course your gratitude! So please do come.

I thank Herts County Councillor Richard Roberts & our 2 Dacorum Councillors, Gbola Adeleke and Stewart Riddick who are always an enormous support throughout the year. It will be good to meet the newly elected Dacorum Councillor Graham Barrett.

I give all the parish councillors great thanks and much appreciation for all their many contributions this year towards the welfare of the village. And I also give Jack and Diane great thanks and much appreciation for all their hard work during the year, behind and in front of the scenes, keeping us councillors informed, directed, legal and many other things too. We are a great team. Thank you all.

Flaunden is very lucky to have so many talented, kind, caring people who give their time willingly for the benefit of us all, including Brent Rogers, the worthy recipient of the Peter Scribens Silver Salver last year for his outstanding contribution in supporting the Village Hall in all the fund raising activities. Each year we are grateful for the ease with which we are able to choose the next worthy recipient.

Thank you to everyone in Flaunden who helps to make our village the special place that it is.

Thank you.