

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015 – RECITED AT EVERY VILLAGE MEETING.

Each local council must hold an Annual Parish Meeting between March and June (May in Compton Dando). The Parish Meeting is a meeting of the parishioners (anyone on the electoral register of the Parish). Because our parish includes several villages, which may have differences in their points of interest, we also hold meetings in each of the five villages in March to collect their opinions. A summary of these will be added to the minutes recorded for the Annual Meeting of the Parish in May. The Parish Council will take note of the Parishioners' wishes expressed in these meetings, though for the Parish Council to discuss or act upon a specific matter, it must be placed as an item on the agenda of the monthly Parish Council meeting. Any parishioner can come along to a Parish Council meeting, and they can speak for 3 minutes before the meeting opens, on whatever they wish to bring to our notice. Minutes of the Parish Council meetings are available to all parishioners who would like to see what is discussed and what decisions are reached, on village notice boards, from the Parish Clerk, or on the parish council website (www.comptondando-parishcouncil.org.uk). Meetings may also now be filmed or recorded in line with the protocol on the website.

Throughout the year we have several standing items which we oversee. These include:

1. Planning matters (applications, appeals, enforcements): planning applications are considered by the Parish Council before they are decided by BANES. We arrange site visits to see for ourselves the proposed changes before we discuss our recommendation (we can support, object, or make comments). The recommendations are based on our understanding of the local environment and planning policies, not on personal preferences.
2. We report to the council (through Council Connect) local issues such as potholes, fly tipping, flooding, blocked drains, damage to ancient monuments etc which we want BANES to take action on, and the Parish Clerk monitors action or progress on these.
3. We are trustees for the Parish Hall in Compton Dando.
4. We pay for local services such as street lights, grass cutting, a website, and a parish clerk from the parish precept.

We appointed a new clerk, Sue Smith, in December 2014, after our previous clerk resigned for personal reasons. We also co-opted a new councillor, Dawn Drury, to fill the place left empty when Tony Vest died.

After last year's 3.5% increase in our precept, following two years when the precept was frozen, this year we again decided to freeze. Because of increases in our costs, especially electricity and lighting, we will still need to take some funds from reserves, but we still have sufficient. We had two applications for s137 grants this year, and allocated 150 pounds towards the Compton Dando Youth Group.

Some of the bigger issues we have dealt with this year are

1. Continuing work on the future of the Parish Hall in Compton Dando, after two major flooding incidents in 14 years. We were unsuccessful in getting grants from the Big Lottery Fund to rebuild the hall, and instead have refurbished the hall and improved flood resilience measures.
2. BANES Core Strategy was adopted after the completion of inspector hearings. We submitted objections and evidence against proposed new housing development in South West Keynsham. Land for approximately 200 houses has been taken out of the Green Belt, but the bigger threat of 1000 houses has receded for now. We have also submitted a character summary for the BANES Placemaking Plan, and Green Space applications.

3. We asked for 20mph for all our villages. 2 were assessed and surveyed, and Burnett will have a 20mph limit. Compton Dando is on the waiting list and the other villages can be resubmitted when the consultation is reopened.