

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021 – RECITED AT EVERY VILLAGE MEETING.

Welcome to all whether, it is your first time at an annual village meeting, or you are a regular attender. What a difficult year it has been for all and how swiftly life can change. The Parish Council has had to adapt rapidly in response to COVID pandemic with undertaking its business via virtual zoom meetings. Initially, there were a few concerns amongst our Councillors in respect of technical abilities, but all have managed well unlike some other Parish Councils, you may have seen Handforth Parish Council in action – showing how not to hold a Parish Council meeting.

We are hoping that now that vaccinations are becoming more available, we will soon once again be able to hold physical meetings in our Parish Hall.

For those of you who have not attended an Annual Parish meeting previously, I will just explain about this meeting and format of our Parish Council meetings and for those of you that have heard this before, I apologise.

Local councils 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 and take matters forward to the full Parish Council to be discussed further and if required these matters will be acted upon. Items must be placed as an item on the agenda of the monthly Parish Council meeting in order that they can be discussed. 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. These are available on village notice boards, from the Parish Clerk, or on the parish council website (www.comptondando-parishcouncil.org.uk) and a précised version in the Parish News United Benefice of Publow with Pensford Magazine. 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. COVID restriction permitting we arrange site visits to see for ourselves the proposed development 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. In the past year, the Parish Council has considered 9 planning applications. We also looked at 6 tree notifications.

One of the planning applications considered was withdrawn. All but one of the Parish Council decisions agreed with the final decision made by BANES.

There are several planning enforcements matters that are still being investigated by Bath and North East Somerset Council.

2. The Parish Council has reported to the BANES Council (through Council Fix My Street B&NES) local issues such as potholes, fly tipping, flooding, water leaks, blocked drains & gulleys, damage to verges and damaged road signage. The Parish Clerk monitors the action or progress of these reported matters. Members of the Parish may also report problems via Fix My Street B&NES. They can also check that matters have been reported and follow the progress of a reported problem via this platform.
3. The Parish Hall has had to remain closed for the majority of 2020 up until now which has had a financial impact due to loss of income as a result of no lettings, but they were lucky enough to receive a funding support grant to cover the deficit. As Trustees of the Parish Hall the Councillors attend regular meetings with members of the Parish Hall Committee to ensure all that is well.
4. Our Parish Precept is used by the Parish Council to pay for local services including:-

Streetlighting, grass cutting, maintenance and running of the Parish Council website and the services of a Parish Clerk.

We have also used some of the Precept for essential training for Councillors.

This year, the Parish Council voted to increase the precept from £12,641 to £13,290.72, (2%). This increase was felt necessary due to increases in our costs and to assist with the maintenance of the Parish assets.

The Parish Council has, with external funding now completed the restoration of all the finger posts in the Parish and these are looking very smart. A contribution was made towards the installation of a new traffic island at the top of Chewton Road. The installation of this island has been in place for several months now and is preventing lorries using this route and getting stuck on the bridge near Chewton Place and to protect cottages and property in this area from damage.

A shortfall in coronavirus funding has caused a sudden £53 m hole in the budget for B&NES Council.

B&NES Council budget 2021/22 was considered at their February meeting.

- ❖ A 1.99% general Council Tax rise and a 3% rise in the Adult Social Care precept (tax)

The Parish Council will be considering s137 grants that are to be submitted during the next few months.

Some of the issues that the Parish Council have dealt with include: -

1. Installation of bins including dog waste bin. A second dog waste bin is to be installed in Chewton Keynsham shortly and this will be emptied free of charge by Keynsham Town Council grounds maintenance staff.
2. Footbridge and footpath maintenance. Culvert clearance, Grass and sapling cutting.
3. Discussions are still being undertaken in respect of improvements of traffic problems in Queen Charlton.
4. The Parish Council is supporting the PCAA in legal challenge against Bristol Airports appeal to expand.
5. The Parish Council is part of a collective of other local Parish Councils looking at rural transport issues.
6. The Parish Council continues to support Zero Carbon Compton in respect of their Climate Change Emergency initiatives including the installation of a public electric vehicle charging point in Compton Dando.
7. In the past year, the Parish Council have produced new and reviewed existing policies in order to keep compliant with regulations.
8. The Parish Council has responded to numerous consultations including the B&NES Partial Review of the Local Plan, The Government Future of the Planning System consultation, the (West of England Combined Authority) WECA survey on the Future of the West of England and more recently a consultation in respect of the new recycling facility at Pixash Lane.
9. Finally, the Parish Council would like to thank Sue for her service as Clerk to the Parish Council.

Thank you for your time and for listening to this Parish Council report and we would welcome any questions that you may have.