

Chairman's Report 2023-24

The main issue this year has been the ongoing situation with The Forge pub. Last year Dave Wilson had the idea of holding an open meeting in the WI Hall to see if there was any interest from the community in raising funds to purchase the pub. I think all of us were amazed at the turnout that night with standing room only. The results of a further survey were very promising and a steering group led by Dave Wilson was formed. After much hard work by all of them the share issue was started, resulting in around 250 shareholders raising £105,000. Later last year the owner indicated that she was willing to sell the pub. After an independent valuation an offer was made, this was rejected. A further higher offer was made but this was also rejected. There has been no further correspondence since then.

The above does not reflect the immense amount of time and effort which Dave and the steering group have put into this; I really can't thank you all enough for your efforts on our behalf.

Last year Kath, our Parish Clerk for over twenty years informed us that she wished to retire. After extensive advertising of the post, we did not receive a single application. It was then that Deb, Councillor Wilson indicated that she would be willing to take on the role of Parish Clerk on the understanding that she would stand down as a councillor when a replacement councillor could be found. Kath agreed to stay on for a further three months as advisor and mentor to Deb and this worked well. Deb is settling into the role admirably and things are running smoothly. I would like to express my thanks to Kath for her excellent time as Parish Clerk; her knowledge of local government procedure has been invaluable to us.

The UVA continues to be a great success with the weekly rendezvous well attended and is appreciated as a way of new residents getting to know people. The monthly film nights, the annual Feast, Firework Display and Duck Race are all a great success. Thanks to Helen Shaw, Helen Dunn and Lynne Scott for their hard work with the UVA.

Thank you to Paula Ellwood who has taken over producing the monthly newsletter, which continues to be a valuable source of information for residents, also thanks to her husband Leigh who continues to maintain the village website.

David Parkin and his group of volunteers have done an excellent job during the past year restoring paths and clearing large areas of scrubland in the Meadows. It is very much appreciated, well done.

The Cricket Club and particularly Colin Tait continues to keep our park and playing field immaculate, again a big thank you.

The Windfarm Benefits group continues to meet twice a year with around £150,000 a year being made available to groups who wish to apply to fund various projects. This year the UVA were successful in their bid to purchase a commemorative seat for the village. This is now installed next to the bus stop in the middle of the village.

After some discussion with NCC over re-siting and replacement of some of the dog waste bins, NCC have now taken over the emptying of the bins which is happening weekly.

Many thanks to everyone who helps with the flower beds, hanging baskets and litter-picking, keeping our village colourful and tidy.

Lastly and definitely not least thanks to all my fellow councillors for all their hard work this year; a lot of this is done behind the scenes and is really appreciated.