

STOGURSEY PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018/19

This past year has been a busy one for the Parish Council with numerous meetings with EDF and other authorities. These meetings have been in addition to the normal business of the PC.

The Parish Council has also dealt with planning applications, footpaths, rights of way issues, highway matters, the play area, ongoing issues such as the proposed new burial ground and car parking problems to name but a few.

Rights of Way

On behalf of the Council I wish to say a big thank you to Sarah Littler of Somerset County Council for all her hard work and commitment in making such huge improvements to the public rights of way, installing new kissing gates and Bristol gates. This has made accessing the public footpaths much more accessible. Sarah continues to find ways and means to improve the public rights of way in our parish.

The Lengthsman Scheme

The contract for the lengthsman scheme will start on 1st April until the end of September 2019. His duties will cover grass cutting of the grassed areas and general tidying up of the main areas of the parish. It will be good to see Will back in the community carrying out his work with pride and care.

Burgage Road Play Area

The children in the parish continue to use and enjoy the Burgage Road play area. The extra equipment installed for the younger children has been very much appreciated by the parents. Unfortunately some vandalism took place during last year, however things have improved recently after the culprits were spoken to by the police and were made to carry out community work in the play area.

Planning

The PC has received and responded to a number of planning applications. Most of these required site visits from the councillors. Observations and our comments were sent to West Somerset Council Planning Department. The saga of the Strongvox building site continues to be the main issue as regards to planning applications. We are now in the 11th year of the building programme but this is still not complete – watch this space.

Meetings Attended by Councillors

- Main site forum
- SSG
- West Somerset Flood Group
- Stolford Flood Defence Scheme
- Transport forums
- And many other meetings that arise through the year

Highways

Over the past year a large number of pot holes have been repaired in the parish but our concerns still remain about the constant damage to the grass verges owing to the increase in the number of large vehicles travelling though the parish. We have the same problem on the Hinkley Point main road (C182). This issue lies with Somerset County Highways to resolve. A program of works has been drawn by SCC with regard to the flooding on the highway at Burton and Shurton. It is hoped that the works to alleviate the flooding will take place in this financial year. Somerset County Highways has carried out work to help alleviate the flooding issue on the highway at Dawlea Farm. The council has not resolved the problem as they have more work to carry out in this area. After many years of negotiating with Somerset County Highways, the Parish Council, School Governors and our County Councillor, Hugh Davies requested some form of traffic calming measures to slow down traffic when approaching the school entrance. The installation of the flashing light system and new road signage has made drivers more aware as they approach the school entrance. I trust that the measures taken will keep our school children and parents much safer when crossing the road to school.

New Community Bus Service

EDF has continued to support this service which is very much appreciated by the parishioners. A new bus time table will come into effect from 6th May 2019 giving passengers travelling to Bridgwater and Minehead two hours shopping time.

Stage Coach Car Scheme

On behalf of the Parish Council I wish to congratulate all the volunteers who give up their time in keeping this very successful and much needed service running. Without this scheme residents of our parish would find it very difficult to attend appointments such as hospital and dental etc. Once again a very big thank you to you all. I wish to congratulate the Stage Coach team on receiving the Somerset County Council Chairman's Award in recognition of this service to the community.

Litter Pickers

The other team of volunteers I wish to thank are the litter pickers, who give up their time in helping to keep our parish clean and tidy. Their efforts are still being ignored by drivers coming into the village and throwing their rubbish out of car windows rather than taking it home to dispose of. Come on guys be more considerate and care for the community where you live.

Parish Enhancement

Thanks must go to the team who volunteered to plant up the flower boxes and water the flowers during the summer months. A special thanks to Chris and Jan Ford for all their time they gave keeping the flowers looking beautiful by constantly dead heading and watering. Also a thank you must go to the team of volunteers who put up the Christmas tree and the lighting system on the gravel which brightens up the centre of our village during the festive season.

Other Organisations

Outside of our normal remit the Parish Council supports other organisations within the parish who work on behalf of the community such as the School Governors, the Twinning Association, Parochial Church Council, Village Hall and Youth Club and Stogursey Arts Trust.

Sad News

The Parish Councillors were very saddened by the sudden death of Parish Councillor Geoff Coles. Geoff was well liked and his knowledge of the parish and countryside was second to none. He was always ready to help when help was needed. He will be sadly missed and remembered for many years to come for his voluntary work and commitment to the parish.

The Parish Council thanked James Bereton for his help and support during his time as Parish Councillor. James was very enthusiastic in getting things done, helping and supporting the parish wherever possible. James resigned for personal reasons. The Parish Council certainly missed his input at our Council meetings.

New Councillor

Parish Councillors welcomed Rebecca Calvert who was co-opted onto the Parish Council filling the vacancy by the sad loss of Geoff Coles.

Retirement of Chairman

After serving 32 years as a Parish Councillor and Chairman for the past 16 years I have decided not to stand again for re-election. During those years I have worked with wonderful Parish Councillors, District Councillors, County Councillors and Parish Clerks all working to do their best for the community. We have not always got things right but we have learnt by our mistakes along the way. As the saying goes 'You can please some of the people most of the time but not all of the people all of the time' (now there's a thought).

Other Thanks

I wish to thank our County Councillor Hugh Davies and our District Councillors Chris Morgan and Sue Goss and all the members of the Parish Council, and our Parish Clerk Gillian Orchard for all her hard work and commitment and hope that we can continue working together to improve the quality of life for the people of the Parish. I would also like to thank the Vice Chairman, Councillor Chris Morgan for his help and support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support. Finally I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for supporting me during my time as a Parish Councillor and Chairman.

Allan Searle
Chairman