



HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Welcome to the Annual Meeting of Heath and Reach Parish Council

Since the last report, we have welcomed Ian Chivers as Parish Councillor. Ian is an established villager and brings a wealth of experience to the finance and planning committees.

Key highlights of 2018

Cemetery: The Community Payback team continues its great work in the Cemetery and I hope results are obvious. The grounds are looking well-kept with a maintenance schedule that is now running smoothly. The cemetery is a real asset to the village and something we can all be proud of.

Sports and Recreation: Bryants Lane facilities are really coming into their own with a variety of sports on offer. Headlines are:

- The arrangement with Woburn and Wavendon FC maintaining the ground is working well and with their support, there is now a Heath and Reach football club for the lower schoolchildren.
- For the young at heart – if not in years – there is also the Heath and Reach Veterans football club. Teams from outside the village are using Bryants Lane and the fees they pay are a useful source of income for Heath and Reach.
- There has been the addition of a set of rugby posts for the budding Owen Farrells of the village
- If you fancy a contact sport of another sort, the Heath and Reach bowls club has just begun another season.
- We have installed a new swing seat at Thrift Road and replaced the nearly fence
- The trim trail and tennis courts are there for all the villagers to use free of charge

There are more plans in the pipeline. As users of the area will have spotted, the existing pavilion is now showing its age (it was only ever intended as a temporary building but has lasted more than 20 years!). The Parish Council is considering a new pavilion along with extensions to the courts. We are exploring what grants and funding might be available to help with this. Rest assured, the village will be consulted as plans take shape and there will be plenty of opportunities to have your say.

Quarries: The Parish Council continues to work with quarry operators along with our standing role of ensuring - alongside Central Bedfordshire Council - that operators keep to their planning schedules. This is a watching brief for the Parish Council, and we will keep attending liaison/operator meetings and monitoring any variations in planning conditions.

Highways: You will have noticed the smiley roadside faces greeting you as you come into the village – if you are keeping to 30mph or under, that is! Anecdotal evidence suggests the smart signs are having an impact on reducing speed, but we will soon have some traffic data to prove it scientifically. Incidentally, there is one further sign to go up on Linslade Road.

Chairman's Initials.....



New homes being built around the area will inevitably mean more traffic, and that is a growing concern. The Parish Council has already strongly objected to the proposed new link road onto Shenley Hill Road on the grounds it will put a lot more traffic through the village. As a precaution, the Parish Council is building up a reserve fund for traffic calming measures should the weight of traffic increase in the future. The Parish Council continues to monitor the plans for development in Leighton Buzzard to ensure the village maintains its separate identity and does not become a rat run for the A5.

More locally, we are liaising with Central Beds Highways about the parking situation at Thrift Road (which remains a congestion hot spot) as well as talking to the Greensand Trust about their plans for the British Legion car park.

Village Maintenance. As ever, this continues on a rolling programme. Two things to mention are:

- Refurbished village benches, which have been given some TLC by our resident handyman Tony Markland.
- Our contractor Reynolds Landscaping has taken over the care of the Millennium Garden. Previously this was carried out by a group of volunteers, but the task has in recent times become too onerous. However, I'd like to log our thanks to Terry Ellis and his green-fingered gang for outstanding efforts in years gone by – the garden is a huge credit to you.
- Just in front of the clock tower, you will see a new permanent flagpole. Nigel Strofton has provided us all with a marvellous array of changing flags, from Saints' days to the Bedfordshire County colours and Commonwealth Day. Cry God for Nigel, England, and Saint George!

If there are particular jobs that need attention, please could you let the clerk know so that they can be added to Tony's list. The indefatigable handyman is also the village clock winder...ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for Tony Markland.

Finances: Subject to audit, the Parish Council has again kept within budget and has only had to increase the precept by a nominal 2%. We are always conscious this is villagers' money, and we make every pound work as hard as possible.

Finally, thanks to my fellow councillors and staff for their efforts over the last twelve months. I hope to see as many villagers as possible at the village party on 9th June. With the Beast from the East finally departed, let's hope for a sizzling June day to celebrate our community.

Chairman Richard Thyer.