



# HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL



## HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Welcome to the Annual Meeting of Heath and Reach Parish Council.

Since the last report, we have welcomed Sarah Smith as Parish Councillor. Sarah is the owner of the Duke's, and her experience and entrepreneurial flair is breathing new life into this longstanding local pub. We look forward to Sarah's same can-do spirit in the Parish Council!

As the current administration comes to an end Cllrs Paul Green and Roger Owers are standing down. I would like to thank them for their work over the past four years, especially on planning matters – we may have affectionately dubbed him 'pedantic Paul', but that forensic eye for detail was invaluable. Similarly, we will miss Roger's knowledge on the quarries – I'm not sure if there's a term for quarry expert, but Roger has certainly earned that mantle. The departure of experienced councillors means we have gaps in the ranks to fill. If anyone would like to join the parish council, please contact the Clerk for nomination papers, or talk to any of us about what the role involves.

### Key highlights of 2019

**Community plan:** The Parish Council is close to submitting its community plan to CBC. This is the document which sets out how the village would manage in the event of a major incident – for example flood, destruction of property, severe weather etc. This is the kind of document we hopefully won't have to use, but it's prudent to ensure both the Parish Council and CBC have continuity plans in place.

**Website:** The Parish Council has invested in a new website which is user friendly, interactive, and contains a wealth of information about the village as well as those necessary statutory documents. Feedback on it has been good, and I think you'll agree the layout and design make it easier to navigate.

**Cemetery:** The Community Payback team continues its great work in the Cemetery and the results are evident. 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:** The existing building at Bryants Lane is coming to the end of its useful life. LB Silica Sands has offered to provide a new pavilion building via a section 106 contribution. The courts and fields are well used and bring in a useful income. There have been some rentals of the car park for filming crews – notably the quarry doubled as Golgotha for the Sky drama Britannia complete with Roman centurions, tents and a real-life camel called Abdul who works for carrots (much like many of us).

The summer evenings should see increased use of the trim trail, which the Parish Council has had repaired. Otherwise it's a case of business as usual with the grounds being used regularly by Woburn and Wavendon FC, Heath and Reach Football club, rugby players using the posts and a growing mix of personal trainers. For those who like their sports more sedate, the Heath and Reach bowls club has begun another season.

**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:** The parking situation at Thrift Road remains a problem and we continue to talk to both Central Beds Highways and Greensand Trust on measures to ease congestion. There is no quick fix solution to this, but we **are** working on potential solutions.

We can now harvest data from the three speed indicator devices in the village – a valuable asset as we now have a detailed evidence base to support our requests for more funding from CBC for traffic calming measures.

Alongside speed, we are also monitoring traffic levels. With more housing being built near the village and a raft of planning applications in the pipeline, it is critical to have the hard data which demonstrates the effect this is having on Heath and Reach.

**Village Maintenance.** As ever, this continues on a rolling programme. If there are particular jobs that need attention, please could you let the clerk know so that they can be added to Tony Markland's list.



# HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL



**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.

There was a very successful village party in June. The weather was kind, local talent entertained us and as the cost was underwritten by the Parish Council the money raised, more than £1,000, went straight to Parkinson's UK and the Keech and Willen Hospices.

Finally, thanks to my fellow councillors and staff for their efforts over the last twelve months. Your time and sometimes unsung efforts really do make this a village people want to live in.

Richard Thyer  
Chairman