

Chairmans report April 2025

The past year has been a very good year for the Parish Council, and in return the Village. As always, the Parish Council remain committed to protecting our Green Belt and will continue to do so for generations to come, with the priority to keep Heath and Reach as the Village it currently is.

The much-needed remedial work to the Pumphouse/ clock tower has been completed and should be good for many years to come. It seems the decision to not light it up at Christmas, so as to protect the new woodwork was unpopular. Rest assured, plans will be put in place for 2025 for the Pumphouse to be lit up once again.

Finances are on budget. The Parish Council has managed to keep the Village contribution from the Council tax the same for 25/26, unlike the 5% increase set by Central Bedfordshire Council. The bank accounts remain healthy, with the bulk of the money currently held, for traffic calming. Another year on, Parish Council continue to bang their head against walls. Central Bedfordshire Council employees who seem to be very willing to help with such issues as traffic calming & Thrift Road congestion are all very positive, before suddenly going very quiet and then sometime later, leaving their position within CBC.

Despite the completion of last year's traffic survey, essential work on Thrift Road remains at a standstill.

Parish Council replaced the SIDs (speed indicator devices) and the figures from the data continue to rise. Downloaded reports are forwarded to all Parish Council members, Cllr. Mark Versallion & local Police. Central Bedfordshire Council, Highways Department were originally included but the contact no longer exists.

Contract renewals for Bryants Lane are almost complete. This has taken so much longer than expected but has been in the hands of Parish Council specialist Solicitors, Wellers Law Group and AWE legal team. The car park groundwork has been resurfaced successfully with money budgeted for, this last year.

Bryants Lane bookings are up, and indeed superceded budget expected by almost 95%. Flooding in the Village was particularly bad this year with many houses that had not previously flooded, now becoming affected. With the help of Central Bedfordshire Council, Parish Council have been able to obtain some much-needed flood help equipment. Details of this will be forwarded within the next few weeks. A new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is being set up, and any member of the Village is welcome to be included especially if they have skills that could be of use such as first aid trained, access to machinery for moving obstacles etc.

I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council and the Clerk for their continued support and the work that is put in, much of which often goes unseen.