

NSPC report for APM 2023

Checking through last year's minutes, and reading my own report from 12 months ago, it is clear that many of the problems and concerns within the parish remain the same - but hopefully some progress has been made in many areas.

The state of the roads remains the topic that seems to be at the top of most people's list of concerns, and takes up time at every Parish Council Meeting.

Our smaller road system was never designed to cope with the type of traffic it gets nowadays, both in terms of the number and size of modern vehicles - not to mention speed. Combine that with the lack of maintenance and investment, you get the state of affairs that we currently enjoy in all rural parishes. Trying to keep the water off the roads by cleaning ditches, gullies and culverts is realistically our only route to helping the situation - that, and repeatedly reporting road defects to the County - but Michael will be dealing with this in the next report, so I will leave that to him.

I think that we have seen a reduction in the amount of litter on our roads recently, and I am sure that this is more due to the fact that many of you are picking it up when you are out and about, rather than the fact that people are dropping less litter. Our regular litter picking days have changed to litter picking weeks, and this change has been successful, proving more workable and encouraging more people to join in.

The bench to replace the one that was stolen from Six Ashes last year is still in the design stage. James Barret and I have a few ideas to make it less attractive to thieves, but we have been struggling a bit with the way that costs of steel and wood have shot up in the last couple of years. I think this is a bullet we need to bite now and get on with it. So I have asked for new quotes for materials in the last couple of weeks.

Meanwhile, we have installed 2 new litter bins by the car park at Six Ashes, in the hope that will help to keep the area a bit tidier. The other litter bin, which was refurbished last year, will be moved down to be next to the bench at the Ford, as the one that is currently there has lost its lid, which leads to litter being blown about by the wind.

The improvements to drainage in the Ford area is one project where little progress has been made in the last 12 months, but Cllr Harris is constantly trying to chase that up for us.

The review of the Community Led Parish Plan which was talked about at last year's meeting has now been formally adopted by the Parish Council and copies sent to all the relevant interested parties. You can see the review on the Parish Council Website, but it basically concluded that the original Plan, made in 2014 was still relevant because most of the aspirations and concerns of parishioners remain the same. Again, thanks go to Julian, Michael, Chris and Mike Hurley for getting this done.

The Parish Council still has funds earmarked for the installation of a large Smart TV screen, here in the Parish Hall. This was originally intended, mainly, to help with complying with Transparency Code Regulation, but the Covid Pandemic made us aware that it could be used to allow people to attend meetings on Zoom, and reduce the amount of paper used, as well as providing a useful resource for future users of the Hall. This project has again been put on temporary hold as it did not seem sensible to put it up before the extension work to the Parish Hall has been carried out.

This has not been a complete summary of the work your Parish Council has been doing over the last year. We have, among other things, considered a number of planning applications, as you would expect. For the details, have a look at the PC website, where all Agendas, Minutes and Financial Documents are published. I have to thank Olwen and Dot for keeping on top of that job.

I will finish by thanking all my fellow councillors, who all put in many hours of work, apart from turning up to "most" of the meetings, "mostly" on time! But, again, I would especially like to thank Dot for all her work over the last 12 months and for deciding to remain as our Clerk despite the increased workload she has taken on with her duties in Cleobury.