

PARISH ASSEMBLY 2021

As a result of the Covid pandemic, this is the first Parish Assembly since 2019 and, in accordance with current legislation, it is being held via Zoom rather than in person.

The following Councillors have served during the past two years:

Jeremy Spring (Chairman)

Nick Barnes (Vice-Chairman)

Michael Robertson

Laura Coyle

Martin Jubb

Pete Cox (until September 2019)

Aslog Malmberg (until December 2019)

Joanne Ashmore (co-opted in January 2020)

Colin Smith (co-opted in November 2020)

Hazel Preston-Barnes (Clerk)

The outbreak of the Covid pandemic and the resulting lockdown meant that there have been no public Parish Council meetings since March 2020, and all subsequent meetings have taken place via Zoom. Despite the inconvenience of holding meetings in this way, the Parish Council has continued its regular monthly programme of meetings; the majority of regular agenda items have been discussed, although those items which could not be progressed during the lockdown have been left in abeyance for the time being.

At the outbreak of the Covid pandemic in March 2020, the Parish Council took the lead in setting up the Streatley Emergency Response Group (SERG). The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were joined in the group by the District Councillor, Alan Law, and local volunteers Nikki Swan, Karen Morton and Paul Evans, plus Melanie Meads from Q1 Foundation with Hazel Preston-Barnes, Clerk to the Council, as Secretary. This group met weekly via Zoom for several weeks and then held frequent meetings throughout much of 2020 and early 2021. A huge vote of thanks is due to all of the above, but in particular to Nikki, Karen, Melanie and Paul for their unstinting efforts, plus Hazel who worked many more hours than she would expect to as Clerk to the Parish Council. The

support that was provided to local residents in a variety of ways was greatly appreciated, as was the help given by a range of local residents who are too numerous to mention. SERG continues to operate, although it is gradually being scaled back as we (hopefully) near the end of lockdown.

Regular Parish Council business has continued in as normal a way as possible, dealing with planning applications, maintenance of the Rec and playground, traffic issues, etc.

During the last two years Parish Council activities in the village have included:

Planning: in 2019/20 Councillors reviewed 32 planning applications (objecting to 3 of these) and in 2020/21 Councillors reviewed 31 applications (6 objections).

Rec: refurbishment of the astroturf; installation of gym equipment specifically for children (part funded by a grant from WBC); additional trees planted; repairs to playground equipment; installation of posts and a metal gate to prevent unauthorised vehicles from gaining access.

Traffic: the Parish Council continues to express its concern to WBC about the number of accidents at the traffic lights, often leading to damage to The Bull and Elm Lodge; speeding is a constant concern and a Speed Indicator Device (SID) was installed for a few weeks recently by WBC at the junction of Rectory Road and Wantage Road; overweight lorries are also an issue and we were pleased to note that one driver was recently convicted and fined for transgressing the weight limit in Wallingford Road; a traffic survey in High Street has been carried out by WBC although the results are not yet available.

Elsewhere: refurbishment of the noticeboard in the bus shelter; Jeremy Spencer kindly sponsored the replacement tree which has been planted beside the bus shelter; start of the process to apply for Asset of Community Value status for The Bull Inn; hosting a public meeting to discuss the possible sale of the Youth Hostel, followed by support of the proposal for a feasibility study to be carried out; for the first time since the Emergency Flooding plans were put in place a few years ago, the sandbags stored in the church were filled in early 2021 with sand provided by the Parish Council; the annual litter picks in 2020 and 2021 have not taken place but a number of local volunteers have been picking up litter, including two youngsters as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award; the Parish Council has been registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

We also represent Streatley Parish Council on external bodies such as the Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust, Friends of Streatley Rec, Friends of St. Mary's, the Allotments Society and the Neighbourhood Action Group.

Our annual precept in 2019/20 was just over £29,000 and in 2020/21 was just under £31,000. The regular and ongoing costs include the Clerk's salary and associated costs (£7k), the loan repayment for the "Gladedale" land (£10k), insurances (£750), audits (£500), street lighting, maintenance and replacement (£2.5k), grass cutting (£1,100), Rec equipment and maintenance (£3k). In the past year unexpected expenditure on SERG (helpline, DBS checks, Zoom, database etc) has led us to dip into our reserves.

We also support local organisations by giving donations to the Morrell Room, St Mary's Church, Streatley Pre-School, MIGGS and the Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust. These amount to a further £2k so that leaves very little for unanticipated costs which might arise.

In 2021/22, we anticipate that from mid-summer we will be able to resume face to face meetings in the Morrell Room.

Minutes of all Parish Council meetings are published on our website and a summary appears each month in the GGN. Meeting agendas are displayed on the noticeboard outside the Meadows.

The ongoing and largely insoluble issue in the village is the volume of traffic, leading to problems with parking and congestion. Streatley is an ancient village with relatively narrow streets which were not designed for modern living where many households have multiple cars and people commute to work by car. As a result, there is a limited amount that we (and WBC) can do to reduce congestion, but we will continue the dialogue with WBC in an attempt to mitigate these problems as much as possible.

Finally, a reminder that all Parish Council work is voluntary and unpaid (apart from the Clerk), so I would like to record my thanks to all the Councillors for their commitment to the local community.

Jeremy Spring

Chairman, Streatley Parish Council

April 2021