

Liddington Parish Council Chairman's Report for 2019 -2020

Due to the lockdown, this is being made public on the Liddington.org website and in the Lyden Magazine.

The green at Spinney Close has been leased by the Parish Council to ensure that its future as a green space for the village is secure and to prevent the possibility of it being built upon.

A Defibrillator has been placed by the front entrance to the Village Hall. Around thirty people attended a presentation about its use which indicates there is support for the installation. It is intended to place a second one in the disused telephone box subject to the cost of electricity connection not being prohibitive.

The Parish Council approached Swindon Borough Council with suggested measures for traffic calming on the main road. Firstly, we requested moving the pedestrian crossing point fifty yards down the hill to improve visibility for both pedestrians and motorists. After several silent months, this was rejected. Secondly, we asked for a pedestrian designated area along the edge of the main road beginning where the pavement to Hillside Cottages ends continuing on to the pavement's re-emergence. This would have been facilitated by removing the cross hatching in the middle of the road, thus allowing houses on the south side of the road a little more protection and encouraging motorists to keep to the speed limit. This too Swindon Borough Council rejected.

Thirdly, after many months Swindon Borough Council granted us permission to use our own funds to install a flashing speed sign which now operates at the western approach to the village. It will be rotated around three other positions along the main road and one on Medbourne Lane, as it is noted that familiarity breeds contempt amongst motorists. Data can be collected so that the selfless work of the Community Speedwatch team can be augmented.

The Parish Council is spending almost £1,000 a year cleaning the pavement along the south side of the main road from Hillside Cottages eastwards to Spinney Close access gate. This is because Swindon Borough Council is failing in its duty to cut back overgrown vegetation. The Parish Council incurs this annual expense, which it is not legally obliged to under the Transfer of Services Deed of 28th June 2017, because there would otherwise be grave risk to pedestrians. It is a highly unsatisfactory arrangement about which the Parish Council must continue to challenge Swindon Borough Council.

During the year the Vicar, The Rev Bill O'Connell, addressed the Parish Council about the relationship between Church and Village. The suggestion was made that the building might appear more welcoming and feel more a part of the village life if it was open to the public during daylight hours. This was rejected on the grounds of the risk of vandalism. Is there not a danger that fear now dictates opening hours in a way not witnessed before during the centuries of worship in our village church? "Use it or lose it" the saying goes. But it helps if it is not locked,

At the second attempt an oak was planted on the south side of the playing field to commemorate The Centenary of Armistice Day which is marked by a brass plaque. It seems especially important with Covid-19 cancelling the 75th Anniversary celebrations that the 75th Anniversary is marked in some other way to remind ourselves how invoking the spirit of coming together as in WW2 is helping us now. Any ideas?

In response to the outbreak of Covid-19, the Parish Council instigated the setting up of the Liddington Support Group. I would like to thank Tessa Lanstein for improving it with the creation of a

WhatsApp group and chat forum. The Parish Council has also opened a page on Facebook which I encourage you to use.

I would like to thank Adams & Watt for all their hard work in grass cutting and maintenance. The attractive feel and look of the village owes much to their efforts. I urge residents to keep their boundary vegetation from overhanging public pavements and footpaths as it creates obstruction and moss growth.

Finally I would like to thank my Parish Council colleagues for giving so much of their time on behalf of the Community with especial thanks to our very diligent clerk, Val Curtis, who has afforded this rookie patient wise and candid support.

Keep Safe in the coming weeks

David Lomax,
Chairman, Liddington Parish Council