

Liddington Parish Council Chairman's 2021 Annual Report.

Thank you for attending what we all hope will be the first and last Zoom Annual Parish Assembly.

You may not have noticed that our community has expanded by around eighty households since eighty new homes in Badbury Park lie within parish boundaries. So, on behalf of our community I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new parishioners. The PC has written to each household pointing out the facilities in the village notably the pub, Village Hall activities, the playing field, extensive public footpaths, the phoenix like allotments and our ancient church.

I would like to welcome to the Parish Council Pippa Workman and Lauren Hyatt who with their varied skills and interests, and as representatives of a younger generation, have already made an invigorating contribution to our Council.

Covid and multiple lockdowns have changed the way the Parish Council met in Zoom space. But we only missed one meeting when the public meetings were banned before that genie Zoom's quantum appearance. Our first task was setting up the Liddington Support Group which was then handed over to the indefatigable Tessa Lanstein. Thank you, Tessa, and for your great contribution to Liddington life over the years. We wish Kevin and Tessa all the best in pastures new.

One of the noticeable effects of Covid is the increased use of the playing field. While this is to be welcomed, there have been issues over the amounts of dog fouling and litter. The dog fouling is a particular concern as this is in an area where children, especially small children, must be able to play safely. I removed two dozen glass bottles from around the play area recently. Please take picnic waste home. There have too, been complaints of dog fouling in Church grounds. The gate between the Playing field and the Church yard is available for use only with the agreement of the Church - misbehaving dogs do not help the cause of open access.

A speed monitor has been installed. This has been rotated around five locations but is placed predominately at the western approach to the village. Gordon Wilson has kindly downloaded the collected data showing around 75 percent of traffic well in excess of the 30MPH limit, which was apparently a great surprise to SBC, while the police (to whom we also regularly pass on the data) expressed dismay that one car was clocked at over 100mph and have consequently advised us they plan to up the frequency of speed checks.

SBC has acknowledged that due to tree cover the Speed Sign just up the hill from the Church Road turning only works intermittently. We have proposed to SBC that it be repositioned by Hillside Cottages to encourage braking down the hill, and that a new Speed Monitor that records the speed and volume of traffic take its old place. SBC has agreed that it is desirable to have data from west as well as east bound traffic, to enhance its understanding of the speeding issues Liddington experiences.

A second defibrillator has been ordered to be placed in the Telephone Box by the old Post Office. A number of Councillors worked on this and thanks go to Clive Bunney for tidying up the ends. On behalf of the village, I thank the Pierces for generously agreeing to this placement. It is hoped that the new function for the kiosk will prove less contentious than the library of racy literature put in another former phone box. We are looking for volunteers to help repaint ours. The Village Hall Committee confirmed its original agreement with the Parish Council concerning the location of the defibrillator on the front of the Village Hall.

The management of the Allotments has ossified in recent years. Liddington community spaces where people meet in public have diminished. Gone is the village shop and post office. The church that has stood open and welcome through centuries to both believer and non-believer alike, is

locked at all times save for actual services, apparently out of fear of vandalism. This Parish Council is keen that the Allotments should be rescued from neglect by gaining community control by obtaining a fifteen-year lease from the Diocese. Negotiations began in July. That such a relatively simple agreement remains to be completed is frustrating with the growing season upon us. However, anticipating its completion, Sarah Hill and Lauren Hyatt have led work starting a clear-up notably by pegging out the boundaries of a minimum of ten allotments, cutting back two huge bramble patches, and beginning the restoration of fruit trees near the greenhouses. We need more helpers and invite you to take up allotment spaces.

May I thank my colleagues for the time they have given during the past year. I would like to thank in particular Adrian Moore who is stepping down after thirty years as a bastion of the PC (between May 1984 and now). While on sabbatical, he still chaired the Parish Plan from 2009 to 2011. As Vice Chairman, he has generously lent me the benefit of his wide experience. Of the many services he has rendered our community, I would like to draw your attention to, as it were, unseen contributions which safeguard community facilities, notably securing the green open space at Spinney Close, drawing up the contract and constitution for our Hall, and negotiating with the Diocese a lease for community control of the allotments. These are surely lasting legacies. Thank you so much, Adrian: you are now free to attend Wednesday day-nighters at Lords and Taunton.

I am also sad to report that Val has decided to retire after over five years as our Clerk. She has always been quick to respond to residents' concerns by placing them before the PC, and where appropriate bringing them to the attention of SBC. She has always given this council back-up and advice over options so that our decision making is informed and considered. She has been courteous but persistent in promoting Liddington's concerns at borough council level. She has been quite remarkably patient with me, and, at all times, cheerful to work with. Thank you very much, Val. We all wish you a wonderful retirement.

Apart from the excellent order Val leaves the Clerk's Office in, she has been good enough to recommend to us that Laura Evans, who clerks at Covingham and Ashbury, might step into her shoes. I am delighted to report that, following interviews, Laura has accepted our offer, and begins taking over from Val on the 26th of this month. Next month she will clerk our first meeting in the hall for over a year. We very much look forward to working with her.

David Lomax.