

Evenley Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman's Report

Good evening and thank you all for coming out tonight, to our lovely freshly decorated hall.

Firstly, thanks to Cathy for arranging this evening and for being the engine behind the parish council we have today, we'd be in a pickle without her!

We have had a busy year! As you hopefully know, Evenley won ACRE's newcomers' best village competition for its community activity and was runner up in the small village category. We're not entering this year, but are planning to in 2019, hopefully again with the help of ERA. Our prize for this was £250 which we spent on a new planter and plants placed at the front of the village hall.

The council also achieved its local community award scheme foundation award which means we are working to a good standard. In this vein, we've continued training with Jeff and I attending chairmanship training, Jean and Cathy, emergency planning, Charles has attended 'off to a flying start' training and Sue, our new councillor will be attending in August. Charles and Sue replace Lisa Proffitt and Nic Hamblin who we thank for all their help, fun and continued support. Cathy has also attended lots of courses to ensure we comply with the new data protection rules as well as lots of other rules and regulations.

To the important stuff: we have received lots of positive comments about the daffodils, thank you. We added to them this year and despite attacks from traffic incidents and Gigaclear installation, they are looking good and hopefully, if we have a successful fete again in September, we can keep adding. Whilst we were at it, we cleaned away lots of undergrowth from the village entrances, and at our successful litter picking session, removed tons of rubbish. Following on from the popularity of the picnic bench, we bought another with help from the Cricket Club and Evenley Matters. Five street lights have been replaced with Victorian style lights around the village. So apart from the state of the verges, the village is looking good! Following consultation with villagers, Spencer has just sent in the forms for the funding to update and replace all the lights in the village and Charles has also hit the road running with tidying up the allotments.

In other news, Gigaclear has nearly finished installing high speed broadband in the village which will be good. On the downside, under the Community Governance review, we lost the battle to prevent a boundary change. From May 2019, the boundary will follow the A43 instead of taking in Tesco car park and Mercedes. It was however recommended that when the next review is carried out, the boundary between Brackley and Hinton-in-the-Hedges is reviewed to our benefit to continue the consistency of using a major road as a boundary.

After some nonsense with solicitor costs, we are nearly there with obtaining the Green and verges in School Lane from South Northants Homes.

Making use of Gigaclear highways inspectors in the village daily, I've written to the head of Highways England with a list of suggestions to improve the safety of the A43 roundabout, which I know concerns many of us and Mrs Leadsom, our MP is taking a very close interest which is helping. I have just received a reply which you are welcome to read after the meeting. That brings me to the biggest issue we are working on. As you know HS2 construction starts in Spring 2019, with the compound at Westbury being the biggest in the country. The next nearest in Mixbury, so we are bang slap in the middle. With the help of Northants Highways, we are applying to HS2 for funding to put speed reducing measures (chicanes) on Broad Lane and kerbing around the Green to protect it from further erosion. The recent road closures and ridiculous traffic reroutes through the village

have been a taster of what may come with traffic problems created by HS2 work in the future and we feel it is critical to get measures in place before construction begins. Unfortunately, the application for funding is being run by NCC with means everything is moving at a snails' pace. We are trying our best to wade through this and push it along so will keep you updated on progress. Obviously, verges are an issue but we have a plan and we will advise of this shortly.

Warden news: Denise Stevens resigned from her post as flag warden and Josceline Heblethwaite has taken on the role.

Carrie O'Regan has resigned as the footpath warden and Kevin O'Regan has resigned as Evenley Arts co-ordinator. We are looking for volunteers to come forward for both these positions, both of which you can make your own.

Sadly, we still have a vacant position for village correspondent. However, the Facebook page (Evenley Residents Association & EVENLEY MATTERS), the village website (www.evenleypc.org.uk) and the village email circulation list offers a good source of information. I hope you are finding our communications better; I know many of you have signed up to receive emails but if you haven't and you'd like to, please email Cathy the parish clerk (clerk@evenleypc.org.uk)

Finally, and obviously thank you all for your continued support. There are a group of residents who don't necessarily want to be weighed down with the bother of Parish Council life, but regularly attend meetings, act as wardens and helpers and offer very welcome advice, support and constructive criticism. Than you all.

Of course, thank you to the other councillors and Cathy. We have a good strong team here, representing a cross section of village life. We don't always agree, which is healthy, but work together well with one aim, to protect and improve our great village.

Thank you,

Cathy Ellis.