

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2022/23

The biggest project the Parish Council has ever undertaken to date has been our involvement in Sustainability. Climate change is impacting on us all and by making a few practical changes we can all make a difference. Our Green Guide, which was delivered to every home in the parish, is full of tips and advice on how this can be done.

At the beginning of the project residents were consulted and a working group formed which came up with the information in our green guide.

We have just held a week-long Sustainability Festival which was well attended and very successful. Sir Jonathan Porritt, who for many years has been a huge voice regarding climate change, launched the festival and throughout the week other speakers gave residents excellent practical tips and advice on how small changes can make a difference. I'd like to thank all the members of the working group led by Councillor Stevens and the speakers at the festival for the tremendous contribution they have made in giving their time and expertise freely. I would also like to thank Hucclecote Accounting & Taxation Services for their donation enabling us to print the guide and Benefact Group for hosting the launch in their offices on The Business Park.

The festival is just the beginning of the journey we will be taking to encourage all of our residents, as well as other councils, to do as much as possible to make a difference in areas having an impact on Climate Change. With this in mind the parish council has created a number of wildflower beds to attract more pollinating insects and reduce the amount of grass mowing required. We appreciate that at certain times of the year these beds can look messier than grassed areas but the attractive display during the summer months and the benefit to wildlife is a small price to pay. Our sustainability activities have attracted wide attention and we have been invited to apply for the Star Councils awards.

It is with great frustration that I have to once again report that, due to exceedingly slow progress by Tewkesbury Borough Council the Sports Facilities and other Public Open Spaces on the Coopers Edge development in our parish have neither been adopted or an organisation commissioned to operate the facilities. Despite numerous meetings and promises by Tewkesbury it is looking very unlikely that the process will be completed and the facilities open for use in the near future. Hucclecote Parish Council is continuing to put pressure on Tewkesbury Council to speed up the process and we are currently taking our concerns to the press.

On a more positive note, our planning application for outdoor fitness equipment along the Wotton Brook corridor has been approved. The fitness trail has been funded by a grant we secured from the County Council.

Noise from major roads that run through our parish continues to be a concern to us. We continue to have discussions with National Highways about improving noise barriers on the section of the M5 which runs through the parish. More recently we have made Kier, the contractors for the A417 improvement works, aware that the

inevitable increase in traffic and noise after the work is completed will have a negative impact on our residents.

Throughout the year we have held a number of coffee mornings, guided walks, film screenings and yoga taster sessions for our retired residents. The coffee mornings were particularly popular and we are hoping that the residents who volunteered to help will manage to arrange more in the future. We were able to offer these activities without charge due to external funding we successfully applied for. Some of this funding is also supporting a Youth Club held at the Village Hall.

Throughout the year the parish council has been liaising with Bovis to improve the area behind the Bowls Club where there is a mound of builder's rubbish that should have been removed after they constructed Cranham Gate. We are keen to see it transformed into a mini park with a walk across and around it, a community orchard, a tiny forest and allotments. Their reaction has been positive and further negotiations are planned.

We are also liaising with Tewkesbury Borough Council with regards to using S106 money for a Public Art initiative on Coopers Edge. This is likely to take the form of a guided walk around Coopers Edge, utilising the existing cycle paths as much as possible and populated with strategically placed interpretation boards in each of the three parish council areas, these will signpost the route and also explain the history of the aircraft factory and the development of the jet engine in the area.

The parish hall continues to be well used by groups and residents in a wide variety of ways. We are continually looking at how we can improve and maintain the facilities to best benefit the needs of our residents. The recent appointment of a caretaker / handyman has already had a beneficial impact on the cleanliness and general tidy appearance of the Village Hall. I would also like to express my thanks to the Council Clerk and her assistant in the efficiency and effective running of the council office.

In May this year Brian Edge and Maria Clutterbuck stood down as Hucclecote Parish Councillors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their contribution to the council over the last few years. It is with great pleasure that I welcome Councillor Paul Smith, who has been to many of our meetings as a Borough Councillor but has now joined us as a Parish Councillor.

I commend this report to the parish.