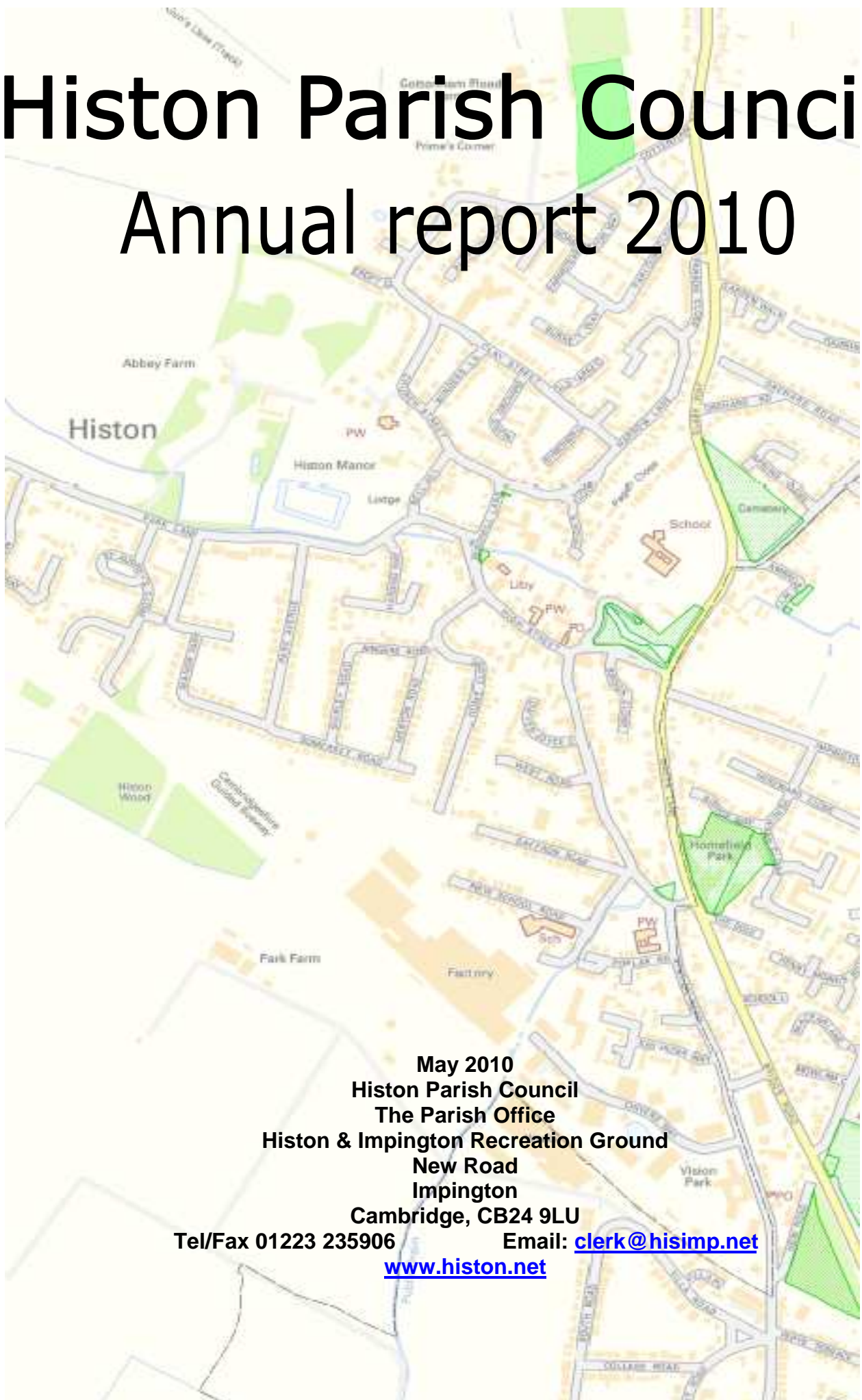


# Histon Parish Council

## Annual report 2010



May 2010  
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## **Histon Parish Council Environment Committee Report**

The Environment sub-committee have been pleased to be able to focus on new initiatives around the village rather than repairing or effectively standing still on others due to various constraints

The Christmas lights project that included trenching across the Green and new lights and cables paid off very handsomely at Christmas 2009. This project continues, albeit somewhat reduced, with plans for an additional item of feature lighting possibly for next Christmas. Working with the Feast Committee with regard to the Christmas tree on the Green was pleasurable and was appreciated by all. Even the level of anti-social behaviour seemed to be reduced over this period as we have maintained close links with the Police (more in the Police liaison report).

The Green and Brook working party fell foul of the weather in January and it is hoped to work with other environmental groups around our village to make this an annual event with more experienced workers thereby reducing any safety risks by working with machinery near water and with rats present. The rat problem is being managed again although it is very unlikely that we shall ever be totally rid of these resilient rodents. The pump housing was repaired but has suffered some minor damage due to the new wood deforming due to the cold and wet

The floods in the early spring were reminiscent of years gone by when the Brook rose to be level with the footbridge but all passed off with little, if any, damage. The drain near the willow tree on the road leading to the Junior School needed some attention and work has been carried out on that. The Parish Council is aware that the culverts leading into the Brook are very silted up but again this did not appear to have any (perhaps luckily) significant consequences this time. It should be noted that the Parish Council still has to replace and repair seats and litter bins, not only on the Green, but all over the village on a fairly regular basis and not always due to the activities of the antisocial. The bollards near the Green to stop parking or encroachment have been knocked over fairly steadily but without these there would, no doubt, be some who thought that the Green was just right for them to park on

The Environment Committee has co-opted a member of HICCA to advise on more global environmental thinking and to join with us to consider how we can include the villages in some of these programmes. The major A14 roadworks scheme, and possibly Northstowe, starting again may bring air quality and traffic implications that we may have to consider under the environment banner. House building and new estates around the villages may have drainage issues that need to be brought to the attention of District and County councillors and we work closely with SCDC on drainage issues affecting the villages

The children's play area near the Green has been regularly inspected and maintained and it is planned to install some springy animals relocated from the main recreation ground onto this site. In addition we have been talking to HJS

with regard to joined up working on provision of further play equipment linking the school and CPA as a longer term plan. Again it is pleasing to note that the level of damage and litter is much reduced on this site. A three year plan for the CPA is in the process of being developed

The Parish Council grass cutting contract around the village was considered to be good and is being renewed for the near future. The only poor village entrance now is the very untidy, litter strewn road from Girton/Oakington and work is ongoing to try and resolve that issue. Staff have attended seminars on allotments, tree works and issues surrounding war memorials so we are far more clued up than this time last year. Tree works still proves to be a problem as SCDC are under no obligation to let us know at all and only do so out of conscience as the tree felling near the Histon football club has proven for our sister council. Mind you SCDC didn't know about that either. Overhanging hedges have proved to be a bit of a 'thorn' in our side on occasions with letters having to be sent out by the County Council to residents asking them to keep their bushes under control and not encroach on paths or roads.

Allotments are extremely popular with all the plots (20) being taken although some people's ideas of working a plot leaves a lot to be desired. However it is great to be down there and watching everyone enjoying themselves one way or another. As a plot holder of many years standing it is lovely to see the families there growing things and bringing on another generation of gardeners. Research is being undertaken to explore possibilities for a water pump down here and any 'sources' of funding we could 'tap' into

Footpaths continue to be walked by a stalwart band of councillors, dog walkers and others who very quickly let us know of any issues that we may need to address

*Councillor John Emmines, Chairman Environment Committee*

## **Histon Planning Committee**

Planning committee meetings are scheduled to be held if necessary every 2 weeks with the occasional emergency meeting in between. The committee is open to all members of the council although it does tend to be manned by a core of members who have an interest in planning. Members of the public as well as developers are encouraged to attend to air their views

The committee has merely an advisory role over planning matters within and affecting the parish. However it is a role through which the committee tries to ensure that the character and history of the parish is maintained. The main work throughout the year has been in connection with developments affecting either the modification of an existing property or one development on one site and the occasional tree works request. Broader issues have also been considered throughout the year- Cambridge Guided Bus Issues, North West Cambridge Plans and the long term development of the A14

Consultation advice on other larger developments – notably the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan and the former Unwins Site in Impington Lane- has also been given. The sub-group of the committee formed to draft a design brief for the former Histon station and the land surrounding it has continued to meet. It is yet to meet in 2010; a brief should be completed and submitted by the end of 2010

*Councillor David Thurman, Chairman Planning Committee*

## **Highways Traffic & Transport Committee**

### **Parking issues:**

The HGV over-night parking ban in Cambridge Road and surrounding areas agreed with CCC and implemented during the previous year, appears to be largely successful in its objective

On road parking of Vans by Enterprise Car Hire is on going. During the year Max Parish and Cedric Foster met their manager to voice our concerns and received assurances of their co-operation. Sadly recent events have made it necessary to write to them again.

Residents at 82 to 92 Station Road, requested support for the introduction of Resident Parking Order. Parish Council have written to all business in and around Vision Park for their co-operation, and the affected residents are monitoring and recording offending vehicles

Parking in Station Road has been the subject of much debate, but finally Double Yellow Lines will be placed at certain agreed points.

It has been proposed by the Parish Council for approval, the replacing of one of the two parking spaces opposite the Toy Shop, be made into a Disabled space. Also the end space opposite the Co-op be removed for safety reasons allowing Goods vehicles reversing from the Co-Op

Agreement is being finalised regarding the transfer of the High Street Village Car Park Asset from SCDC to Histon Parish Council

### **Safety Issues ( pedestrians and cyclists )**

The Crossing proposal from the Build-out from the Co-op foot-path across to the Cambridge Building Society is on-going, and it is hoped a decision will be made during 2010

During the latter part of 2009 / early 2010 we saw the completion of the two Pedestrian Crossing points along the B1049. This is part and first stage of the Cycle Improvement Scheme, that hopefully will run between Cottenham, through Histon/ Impington and onto Orchard Park.

At a meeting held with representatives from CCC / SCDC/ Impington PC and Histon PC, several options of Tunnels, fly-over and traffic lights were discussed regarding the safe route over the A14. All had their merits, but it was considered for expedience and cost, that the TOUCAN option would be the one to go for. This is also the preference from Cycling groups.

### **Roads, Footpaths and Dropped Kerbs**

We have put forward areas in the Village we would like dropped kerbs installed, following the offer from SCDC of possible available funding for a limited amount for this purpose

During this past worst winter for decades, our roads have suffered with the resulting pot-holes. Most on key roads have been repaired, but many others in side roads remain outstanding.

In the Autumn of 2009 David Thurman and Cedric Foster met with CCC for the annual Walk-about of all our Streets, when defects were recorded. David Thurman produced a report, pointing out issues that were out-standing from the 2008 walk about together with new defects. Some have been addressed, but many remain outstanding

### **Transport ( Public and Commercial):**

During 2009 a meeting took place with Andy Campbell the MD of Stagecoach and our District Councillors and members of Histon PC and Impington PC., to voice our concerns over the proposed cutting out of the Citi7 service through Station Road and Cambridge Road. A compromise was offered to keep this route during off-peak times only. These changes would be effective from when the Guided Bus-Way opened!

Also at the above meeting, concerns were raised regarding the position of the bus Stop outside John Lewis and Andy Campbell promised to consult with CCC to see if this could be re-sited. This matter is on-going at the time of this report

The Guided Bus-Way delays are well documented. Suffice to say it is hoped the opening will be during this summer of 2010, almost 18 months late of the original completion date

There has been an HGV ADVISORY FREIGHT MAP published, where our combined Parish Councils have responded with their observations.

*Councillor Cedric Foster, Chairman Highways Traffic & Transport Committee*

## Histon & Impington Youth Committee

Twelve months ago, when the committee was setting its budget for the year 2009-2010, our stated aims were to increase the participation of young people in the decisions that affect them and to try make some progress on finding a permanent dedicated space for youth work. Some small progress has been made against both of these aims, although not quite as we had imagined

Over the past year our senior youth worker has put together an interesting and varied number of projects for our young people to take part in, ranging from the very practical First Aid and Baby Sitting courses to the creative Arts Award (Bronze) run jointly with The Junction. All of these courses have increased the participation of the young people and expanded their areas of involvement and interest. Four students attending the Tuesday night youth club based at the Ideal Centre at IVC have started writing for the H&I Courier and have also spent some time talking to members of the committee. It is hoped that this involvement will extend to being part of our committee over the next year so that our effort is put into those areas that are most important to the young people and so that we can start to promote the many positive images of young people that are often overlooked

The youth committee and the youth service jointly wrote a proposal for the use of the gatekeepers house (IVC Lodge) for youth work, should it be retained by IVC. This proposal helped IVC to make the case for retaining the Lodge under college management and Cambridgeshire County Council have agreed to offer it to IVC on a long lease. We hope that youth work will be delivered from a base in this building during the coming year. Our wider goal of finding a larger, permanent dedicated building for youth work is still a *work in progress*

During the past year, our regular clubs and activities have taken place at either IVC or the Recreation Ground. In the long summer holiday special trips and courses were organised and some of the older young people gained a level 1 qualification in youth work, enabling them to help run some activities in the future. During the summer term we engaged the services of the Connections Bus which started to visit on Fridays at IVC; this provision has continued throughout the year with an increasing membership. Over the year we have had youth activities of various sorts happening every day of the week:

Monday:	Baby Sitting Course; Junior Youth Club
Tuesday:	Senior Club; Arts Award group
Wednesday:	Transitions group; Support for Rayz (at St Andrews)
Thursday:	Sports Youth Club
Friday:	Connections Bus

In addition to this there are lunch time youth clubs, drop-in sessions and 1-1 support provided by the youth service to students within IVC

The youth committee has supported various youth focussed projects within the villages; in particular, the H&I Play Area project at the Recreation Ground with

funding for the Sail over the seating area which we hope will provide a safe, sheltered meeting place for our young people

The formation of Orchard Park Community Council in June 2009 meant that we relinquished responsibility for youth work taking place there. However we await with interest and anticipation the completion of the skate bowl at Orchard Park. The current forecast for the opening of this and other facilities adjacent to it is May 2010

The Youth Committee could not deliver any of these activities without the support and partnership of the Cambridge City North Locality team. We are lucky to have this dedicated and enthusiastic team working with our young people

We are grateful to the two parish councils for their continued support, both in recognising the need to provide for our young people and their financial backing; and also to IVC for generously making their facilities available to us so that the young people have somewhere to meet

*(Impington) Councillor Hooda Abdullah, Youth Committee member*

## **Histon & Impington Mobile Warden Scheme**

This scheme which is run for us by Age Concern is designed to help elderly people continue to live at home for as long as possible. During the course of this year a new Warden has been appointed. Mrs Gillian Berry, who has the advantage of living in the village, is really enjoying the work and feels she has made good relations with her clients

At the moment she is looking after 16 people, 5 men and 11 women. Of these 5 are from Impington and 11 from Histon. There are 2 people on the waiting list. During the cold weather she found her work load was increased as several of her clients found it difficult to go out but she was able to ensure that they were all able to receive the help they needed. At Christmas the Link Committee provided the funds for her to buy a small present for each of them

Lynne Byrne, the Age Concern Co-ordinator, who has been administering the scheme for us, is taking up another post with Age Concern, later this year. We shall miss her very much as she has been in this post for 12 years and run our scheme since the beginning. At our next meeting in September she will be present to introduce her successor

Until now the scheme has been funded by grants from the County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, both Parish Councils and donations from The Feast Committee. SCDC, however, have given notice that from April 2011 their grant will cease. Age Concern have made strong representations to them, indicating how important this grant is to all the Mobile Warden Schemes in the area and how counter-productive removing such help from the vulnerable elderly will be. The District Council has retracted its decision to withdraw wardens from sheltered housing schemes so there is some hope that the decision could be reversed in this case but the dire shortage of funds may prevent this

The Link Committee is made up of a representative from each of the Parish Councils, a resident of Histon, the Mobile Warden and the Age Concern Co-ordinator. We would also like to have a resident from Impington on the committee but so far no-one has volunteered in answer to our request put in the IPC Newsletter and on the Parish website. A further request will be made via the HI Courier. We meet twice a year to receive reports from the Warden and the Co-ordinator

*Councillor Marian Cleaver*

## **Police Liaison Group**

There are meetings about every three months alternating between Cottenham Village College and Impington V.C. These are well run with everyone getting to have their say if necessary although occasionally the Police have to remind people of resources limitations and the wide area they are expected to patrol (10 villages). Most parish councils for those ten villages send representatives so it is good to hear what is going on around us as well as being able to put our points across and occasionally we can get together for a joint response such as issues around speeding and traffic. Minutes and notes from these meetings are kept in the Parish Council Offices

The Police and SCDC often speak about government supported initiatives and give us insight into legislative changes that may affect our local villages. In general they are very supportive and encourage us to let them know of our concerns at an early stage and these meetings are a good communication device that works well given its slightly formal approach. Occasionally others from within the SCDC or Police give a short presentation on results or costings or even arrests relevant to the villages

It is pleasing to note that overall the service to our villages seems better than it was and the local PCSO's do a grand job with their fingers on the pulse of ASB activity and they know the little snickets and hidey holes around the villages where others may try to hide. That is not to say that these events don't still occur as they do and we still get the odd event or even a little flurry of problems but with less frequency than before and is often dealt with much better

You can be sure that if there is an issue to raise at these meetings then your attending councillors are not afraid to get out of their chairs and speak forcibly if needed

*Councillor John Emmines, Police Liaison representative*

## Histon Finance & Legal Committee

*This committee is responsible for Finance; including recommending precept levels, investment policies, financial regulations, insurance reviews, VAT and audit. For legal issues; including Health & Safety, Data Protection, Risk assessment; analysis and reviews, bye-laws and standing orders. For recommending policies including those for donations and contractors. For Human Resources including employment contracts. For Administration issues; such as business rates, computers, software, broadband, archiving and office equipment.*

The committee met four times during the year, one of which was to review the required precept for the following year and make recommendations to full Council.

1. The Parish Council is currently negotiating with the District Council with regards to taking a long term full repairing lease on the High Street Car Park. The District Council has agreed to make long overdue repairs to the Car Park before the handover takes place. The estimated annual cost of maintaining the car park is £3,250.
2. The Parish Council has also agreed in principle with the County Council to lease long term the area surrounding the War Memorial, with a view to safeguarding the area from inappropriate parking of vehicles and improving the landscaping. Discussions for this were started in 1997.
3. New donations policy was accepted by full council and implemented.
4. The attempts to try and merge Histon and Impington Parish Councils and the joint Recreation Ground Insurance review and policies to seek synergies and cost savings was again frustrated, although all three now have the same renewal dates. As a result Histon Parish Council has changed insurance Broker to Came & Co. who was recommended by our local association.
5. A new internal auditor was appointed in 2009 after the resignation of the old one for personal reasons. The Parish Council internal and external audits were both passed without adverse comments and our thanks to both Parish Clerks for the high standard achieved.
6. There was only one Health & Safety issue addressed during the year in question, which related to our annual ROSPA report on the playground equipment at the Green. The necessary work was immediately carried out.
7. The Financial regulations under which the Parish Council operates, were reviewed in April this year and, with one minor alteration to invoice signatories, were recommended to the full Council for adoption in May 2010.
8. On the staffing front our part time filing clerk resigned just before Christmas and has not yet been replaced. However, the Clerk has been working together with CPALC to utilise a new government scheme to help unemployed youngsters get work experience and as result we have two new funded temporary employees working with us for six months from April.
9. Our precept review in January was completed in our usual orderly manner and the recommendation to increase the precepted amount to £144,200 for 2010-11 was accepted by full Council. We also revised our target for

general reserves, after input from our Auditors to £60,000. This released reserves to help defray the increase in expenditure to cover amongst other things the increase proportion of joint expenditure with Impington Parish Council that we have to bear under the joint formula arrangements linked to the number of properties in each village.

10. The Parish Council's investments were reviewed, but this year, because of low interest rates, it has been very difficult to make a decent return compared to previous years. The committee continues to look for opportunities to maximise the returns without increasing exposure to risk.

### **Future reviews**

- a. The Committee feels that the Council should be moving towards carrying out a three year review of expenditure in October each year, to enable it to plan further ahead and try and avoid major fluctuations in expenditure and precepted amounts, and is looking to implement this in 2010.
- b. NALC have recently issued a review of model Standing Orders. However we are awaiting input from our county organisation on the relevance of any changes. We would expect this to be completed in 2010.
- c. Our accounting system held jointly with Impington Parish Council is getting old and needs reviewing.
- d. It was agreed we would review the local byelaws that affect areas owned around the two villages. This has yet to be implemented.

I would like to thank members of the committee: Chris Jones, Neil Davies, Rob Plumbly and David Thurman and of course our Clerk; Angela Young for contributing so much to keeping on top of our brief.

*Councillor Max Parish, Chairman Finance & Legal Committee*