

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COLEBROOKE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

MARCH 2019

1. I must start on a sad note by recording the death in January of Cllr Pearl Hockridge and acknowledging the service she gave as a councillor for almost 30 years. Her place will be filled following the upcoming elections, but we were pleased that Steve Smith has been able to join us to fill the vacancy caused by the death last year of Martin Wood.
2. **Planning:** Planning applications have required a significant amount of attention from the council during the year. Two councillors attended the MDDC Planning Committee meeting to share concerns regarding the slurry lagoon at Brocks Cross. The council's Planning Committee also undertook site visits together with the Planning Officers in order to assess applications for a Wind Turbine at Coombe Lodge, for a new poultry unit at Butsford Farm, and for additional HGV parking spaces at Manor Croft. As a result of these activities, the Planning Committee has been able to improve its practices in order to be more effective, including, where possible, endeavouring to make residents affected by proposed developments aware of the applications, in order that they can have an opportunity to respond.
3. **Coleford Playground:** This time last year we were anticipating that we might need to take over financial responsibility for the Coleford Playground from MDDC, and raised the precept in anticipation of the likely costs of this. Councillors met with the representative from MDDC who confirmed that MDDC would continue to maintain the playground during the current year. No decision has yet been communicated as to whether this will continue beyond April this year. Cllr Graham is currently seeking to establish a Task & Finish Group from within the parish to advise the council on options for refurbishing, improving and maintaining the playground, on the assumption that we will become responsible. We have been able to confirm that MDDC is holding some s.106 money for use on this project.
4. **Roads:** The condition of roads within the parish continues to be a major concern. As reported last year, reduced resources available to DCC Highways Dept makes it increasingly difficult for them to keep up with the need for ever more repairs. Parishioners are however still encouraged to make use of the DCC online reporting system for potholes and other problems. We have recently purchased an additional grit bin for Ford Hill,

although have experienced frustrating delays in obtaining confirmation from DCC that they will maintain this. We are grateful to Cllr Hodder for her work in monitoring the levels of salt/grit in all the parish's grit bins, and to DCC Cllr Nick Way for his support and assistance in communicating with the Highways Dept.

5. **Legislation:** A considerable amount of work has been required, mainly from the clerk, to ensure that the council complies with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). One important consequence of the GDPR is that it restricts the council's ability to share communications from parishioners without explicit written consent.
6. **Communications:** we continue to endeavour to improve communications with the parish. In addition to maintaining the council website, and placing reports in the Colebrooke Bell, during the year the council has purchased two additional council noticeboards in order that there can be one each for Colebrooke, Coleford and Penstone. One of the parish council's key functions is liaison and communication between the parish and the district and county council. Cllr Way has continued to provide a valuable link between ourselves and DCC.
7. As always I would want to thank the clerk for her hard work, dependable information and support to the council. I am also grateful for the additional work that councillors on committees – particularly Planning, Human Resources and Asset Management – have undertaken, and to all councillors for their commitment and their thoughtful and constructive contributions.

Graham Shepherd
Chairman
March 2019