

## **Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Each year at this time the Chair of the Council has to read through the previous year's minutes and prepare a report on the actions of the Parish Council over the previous year. This has been an odd year because we haven't met face to face in 12 months. All our meetings were held over Zoom and it has allowed us to see a little bit of each other's private lives, whether councillors have been in Market Lavington or in France.

The Old School has been closed for a year and the cleaner has been on furlough. During this time the area around the back has continued as a popular venue for small meetings, and the CCTV cameras provided evidence that ensured that repair costs were borne by the families of the people causing the damage.

In April the new website was in place, and councillors had council e-mail addresses, to ensure that council, personal and magazine e-mails were kept formally separate. A new Facebook page was set up to disseminate information passed to the Council.

Following a video comment on Youtube from a villager about the problems he had knowing when the Elisha Field would be closing, the council changed the closing time from dusk to sunset. The local sunset times for each month are printed in the parish magazine.

This time last year we started looking for a site for allotments and a community orchard. We still do not have a site, but discussions with landowners have been held and we continue to look for land to buy.

Everything else of note was to do with public highways, and rights-of-way. We now have a speed indicator device on Spin Hill. Most drivers are sensible and while it has been there, the proportion of drivers passing it at legal speeds has increased, though we also know that someone passed it at 86mph last Saturday morning between 8.30 and 9am. Information about speeds and times are passed to Wiltshire Police, so that they can choose the best times to park a police car with a camera and ANPR at the top of the hill.

We have had reports about footpaths blocked by fences, overgrown paths, and flooded paths. The land owner who fenced off a path has been visited by Wiltshire Council which is providing a stile, the landowner who flooded a path is being contacted by Easterton Parish Council and our handyman and our contractor has kept other paths clear. The latest footpath news is a request for an archaeological dig on a footpath. Lights have been fitted on 2 paths to make them safer at night. The railings along the Muddle are going to be replaced, and we are looking at options before putting the work out to tender. A tender has been accepted for repairs to the fence by the village green car park, but work has yet to start.

Wiltshire Council paid for repairs to the Broadwell Car Park due to a blocked drain lifting the tarmac, and after years of complaining, the footpath on the south side of Church street has been repaired. We continue to lobby to get Church Street repaired, and now The Spring has been added to the list of roads that have dangerous potholes. The latest message from Wiltshire Council is that the potholes on these roads do not meet the criteria for repair.

We have joined with other local councils to lobby for works to be done to Black Dog Crossroads to make it safer. In the last few weeks a report was produced for Wiltshire Council, with proposals for improvements. The representatives of local parish councils will meet together in June to jointly decide on a preferred solution.

We have given our support to plans for a railway station in Urchfont, but we have failed to get tipping and burning stopped at the top of Spin Hill, and a footpath on Ledge Hill. These are things that the new council will have to consider.

**Thanks to councillors**