

Hopton Wafers Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Chairman Cllr Roger Hayward reported on a busy year.

Cllr Hayward thanked all parish and unitary councillors for their help and support over the past year – John Price, Derek Bytheway, Harold Deane, Linda Clayton, Peter Cuthbert, Sue Turner, Barry Buffery; our Lengthsman Chris Bargman for environmental maintenance and for setting up our new website; Mrs Wood for auditing the accounts and the Clerk for Council administration and managing the accounts over the last year. Members and the Clerk have attended various training courses, external council meetings, acted as representatives on community groups and reported back to ensure Council is kept well informed and up-to-date.

Thanks to our community volunteers who look after our three defibrillators located at Hopton Wafers Village Hall, Hopton Bank Garage and Doddington Heights Park Homes. They can easily be identified being in bright yellow cabinets on external walls visible to the public. Mrs Liz Quickenden, Community First Responder has provided refresher training on CPR and use of a defibrillator training. We are pleased to support our Community First Responders and these crucial devices in our rural communities.

Council has considered many varied planning applications for new properties, barn conversions, garages, extensions and holiday accommodation. Generally, we have been more satisfied with the Planning process but we are still mindful that some development is being permitted for properties which do not fit the criteria for local affordable housing to keep our young families here. Whilst we are under pressure to accept development, we do challenge planning and raise concerns when we feel they do not understand the impact of planning matters in our parish.

We have been more involved with our local policing team from Ludlow who are very contactable and have been very supportive with our SmartWater project, Community Speed Watch and general reporting of suspicious activities. We can be included in the Community Messaging Service, WhatsApp messaging group and local crime prevention events. Speeding is an on-going concern through the parish and we currently are in discussion with Shropshire Council highways regarding the possibility of reducing the speed limit along the whole length of the A4117 through the parish. We are also looking at additional road markings, speed indicator flashing signs and safety fencing.

The draft accounts are complete, subject to audit and will be published on our website in due course. We have supported local community groups financially: - Hopton Wafers PCC, Doddington PCC, Hopton Bank Chapel, Cleobury Mens Shed, Hopton Wafers Village Hall and Cleobury Mortimer Community First Responders.

We have been successful in obtaining the Environmental Maintenance Grant again this year which enables us to undertake ditching and drainage work, cleaning and repairing signs, verge maintenance and litter picking. Until this year we were able to use small tubs of instant tarmac to fill small pot holes but this is no longer allowed under the new contract with Shropshire Council. I am sure you will agree that there are difficulties with maintaining our roads to a decent standard but rest assured we do report issues regularly to Shropshire Council.

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Severn Trent are planning the mains drainage system for the Hopton Bank/Doddington area but will not start work for another year or two due to their long-term planning cycle. Works on the water main up New Road to Whatsill has been further delayed but we have raised concerns and asked to be kept informed of progress due to drainage issues from previous works.

We are pleased to hear that Doddington Lodge is re-opening soon and together with the new Care Home in Cleobury offers local choice and valuable employment opportunities.

We represent the parish by making comment on consultations concerning planning, policing, health and postal services. We have good relationships with neighbouring parishes and our unitary councillors and try to support each other with various projects and issues which affect our parishioners. We support shops and services in Clee Hill and Cleobury Mortimer and highlight any concerns which we feel may help everyone such as the lack of accessible disabled parking bays and on-street parking. We report any issues or concerns regarding the Common Land to the Commoners Association, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Midland Quarries.

Going forward into 2019 we are looking to have achieved some speed management improvements in the parish and the provision of a new bus shelter at Doddington – funded from levy money received through new development in the parish. We will continue to support all our volunteer community groups and are very grateful for the work they do.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that the public are always welcome at Parish Council meetings. We usually meet on the second Monday of each month at either Hopton Wafers or Doddington Village Halls. Please see our website www.hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk for more information on the Parish Council. The next meeting is on Monday 10th June, 7pm at Doddington. If anyone has any issues or concerns, please contact your local councillors or the Clerk at any time between meetings.