

Bayston Hill Parish Council Annual Report 2020 -2021

It would be an understatement to say that this year has been a challenge for all of us. So firstly, I would like to extend a thank you to our Parish Staff, for keeping the Parish in good order during the last year and for managing and maintaining the Parish facilities when they have been able to be open for use by the public.

Some of you will also have benefited from the Bayston Hill Community Group formed independently of the Parish Council, with some financial support facilitated by the Council. This group has provided an unbelievably valuable service for food and prescription deliveries and being the platform for Ear for You. Thank you to all concerned.

I would also like to give a personal thank you to Shaun Jones our Locum Clerk who joined us in June 2020. His help has been invaluable in guiding the Parish through this difficult time. Specifically, in helping us to achieve a positive audit for our financial procedures for the year from the external and government approved auditor. This audit is available for inspection by the public on the parish website and will also be available in the Library as and when access to the library is allowed again. One of the financial initiatives has been the move to internet banking with approval of invoices and payments now being completed through a secure online system.

For most of the year, we have been a Council of six active Councillors, this is less than half the full establishment of Fifteen. There should be some new faces joining the Council following the elections in May. However, If, we do not fill our quota of fifteen there is still the opportunity to co-opt residents on to the Council. Please do consider this opportunity, to be productive we need all sorts of skills and we would like the Council to represent all ages and genders in village.

Acknowledging the financial challenges that this pandemic has created for many, the Council has done its utmost to restrict its contribution towards the Council Tax for residents. For a band 'D' resident the increase will equate to 8 pence per week an increase of 4%.

The Council has been looking towards the future and has pledged to be Carbon Neutral by 2035, this will be at the centre of what we do and will need everyone in the Parish to help contribute towards this goal. The Council is currently reviewing where further tree planting could take place within the Parish.

During the lockdown, the Council has looked at delivering on projects that have been long held priorities. This includes supporting the Scout HQ's movement onto Parish land at the Lythwood Site. The development of the proposals for a Sports Hall adjacent to the Pavilion building. The Sensory Garden is a key feature within Bayston Hill and the Parish Council is keen to see what future support can be provided over and above what has already been given in the past. We would love to see an increase in the welcome band of volunteers who help maintain this popular facility and increase the planting of community fruit trees and bushes and provide additional seating within the area.