

## BRIGHTWALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting Held Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.30pm in Brightwalton Village Hall

**Present**

Tim Wyatt	Chair	Faye Bates	Clerk
Christine Delahunty	Councillor	Katherine Moore Village Coordinator 19:30-20:00	
Mike Cooper	Councillor	<b>Apologies:</b>	
Sue Sayers	Councillor	Damien Goatley	Councillor
Annie Agnew	Councillor	Clive Hooker	Downland Ward Councillor

<b>Chairman's Report</b>	Action
<p><b>2023 – 2024 Parish Council Chairmans Report</b></p> <p>This past year has been a year of change. I took over the chairmanship of the Parish Council this time last year as we thanked Shaun Orpen for his tenure and he retired from the position. As Shaun left and I was voted into position by the council we had a seat open. It was extremely satisfying that a number of villagers threw their hat into the ring to volunteer. This was the first time we had needed to run a selection process led by the councilor's, and somewhat of a baptism of fire for me. However, as ever my council colleagues rose to the occasion, and with the able support of our clerk, Sarah, we were able to run the process fairly and efficiently. The outcome was that we were pleased to be able to invite Damien Goatley to the council. This was an important appointment as Damien's family have deep roots in the village and this is the first time we've had someone from the Butts Furlong and Dunmore Meadow part of the village on the council, an area that is under-represented. Damien has done a sterling job in his first year representing that area and the village as a whole.</p> <p>It was with sadness that I accepted the resignation of our Parish Clerk, Sarah Youldon in December 2023. Sarah had worked as our clerk for many, many years and was widely recognised as one of the most experienced clerks in our area. She was often called on to stand in or support new clerks in West Berkshire villages. Our West Berkshire councillor Clive Hooker was present at Sarah's last meeting and expressed his gratitude for all the work she had done to support this and other communities. We extend a massive thank you to Sarah for everything she has done over the years.</p> <p>We eventually found Faye Bates who accepted our offer. It's always difficult to step into the shoes of someone who has been in a role for many years. Faye has picked this up admirably and has provided continuity for us as we have adjusted to working without Sarah. Welcome Faye, thank you and well done for all your hard work so far and getting up to speed quickly. We look forward to many years working with you.</p> <p>I would also like to say thank you and well done to Katherine Moore who has been working as our village coordinator for a while. Katherine has been a force of nature, going from strength to strength organising events for the village. She comes to each council meeting with four or five new ideas. The youth club is a stand out example of the work she does. It is also worth noting that her position was funded with the help of grant money, Katherine has been so successful that we still have most of that budget left! Highlights from the year are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Youthclub had a record number of 42 participants in September.</li> <li>● Planned and ran a joint school concert at the church, bringing together children from Brightwalton, Great Shefford, and Chaddleworth</li> <li>● The Cantemus concert, raising £352 for the Downland Volunteer Group</li> <li>● Quiz night, which raised £355 for village sports equipment</li> <li>● Carols around the tree at Christmas, supported by the Peasemore Ukulele Group</li> <li>● Working with Brightwalton School to build a rain garden</li> </ul> <p>There are already quite a few things planned for this year, mentioned in Katherines report. The budget has been well managed as usual, with a starting budget of £9910.87, and closing at £8607. We did not quite hit our budget target the goalposts we purchased to complement the existing one ended up being paid after the financial year. The precept had to rise this year to accommodate the clerks salary as well as increasing costs for mowing. As always we try to keep this as low as we possibly can, but the council felt strongly about ensuring our clerk is paid according to the civil service pay scales. We were also able to backdate the outgoing clerk's pay as it was significantly under the</p>	

<p>suggested payscale.</p> <p>The council itself is represented by unpaid volunteers. As ever they have all worked hard towards keeping our village looking good. It's not just a meeting every couple of months. There is often business to attend to outside of general meetings or work to do around the village. The team give their time generously and the work they do often goes unnoticed as village life moves on. We don't expect praise for this work, but it is disheartening when, as we have experienced in the past year or so, there is vandalism in the village. This year, a bench in the park was badly damaged, and the notice board on the wall of the Hall has all but been ripped off. These aren't victimless incidents. All the repairs needed for these acts must come from the Parish's precept, our budget for the year. Any money we have to spend on repairing vandalism is money we cannot spend on improvements in the village. Our budget is not generous and much of it goes on mowing the playing field, or dealing with fallen trees.</p> <p>Every year we run the village cleanup, in time to ensure our war memorial looks good for Remembrance Day. We had a great turnout resulting in a great bonfire pile. The war memorial looked fantastic, and I had the honour of representing the council for the Remembrance service where children from the school sang hymns around the memorial. As ever, Remembrance is a sobering occasion.</p> <p>We had expected to have consultations with West Berkshire Council on their house building plans. We had invited their project lead to give a talk to the village on this. Unfortunately that person left their post and we haven't been able to get their replacement in. It is an important matter to the village and us so we will keep on top of this and rearrange this year when appropriate.</p> <p>As ever there is plenty to do, the council does its best and we appreciate all the help that other villagers give us, as well as the other committees looking after the church, village hall, and organising the annual fete. Without you all the village would not be the place it is.</p>	
<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p><b>Community Coordinator:</b> Katherine reported that everything is going well in the role of Community coordinator and there are lots of plans in the future. The Chairman thanked Katherine for all her work.</p> <p><b>Village Hall Update</b> No update.</p>	<p>SY</p>

**Meeting Closed 7.40pm**

*Signed: F Bates 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024*