

Winterborne St Martin Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report

April 2021

We have come to the end of a Council year that has been very challenging in so many ways for very many people. The restrictions that the Coronavirus Pandemic placed on us all and the concerns we all had for our own, our families', friends' and neighbours' health and wellbeing outweigh any of the regular Parish Council Business in a normal year and the impact on all of our residents cannot be overestimated.

The very quick response of the community in Martinstown was outstanding, the support provided to those that needed it in so many ways immense and very much appreciated by everyone.

The inability to meet face to face at the start of the pandemic and the emergency introduction of legislation to enable Councils to conduct their business in the virtual and digital world required a huge change and a welcome to the world of Zoom for our Parish Council meetings. This has been well received by Councillors and Members of the public and at some meetings has increased participation in our meetings. We thank everyone for being so accommodating in this matter.

Life for some will not return to what they previously considered as normal, perhaps for some time. Many will still make different decision about how they meet with people in a public format for some time. The Government did not extend the legislation to hold virtual meetings past the 6th May, which is why we have made the decision to bring our Annual Council Meeting forward to the end of April. We are looking into how we might return to face to face meetings and will need a large enough space to be able to do this in a safe way. We appreciate that some people may not be comfortable with this in the early months – but at this stage we are not able to return to wholly virtual meetings.

Our annual meeting of the residents will be postponed until later in the year when we can be more certain of the circumstances surrounding many of us meeting in one location together. We will have much to discuss at that stage.

The Parish Council welcomed two new co-opted Councillors, Andy Daw and Deborah Follett following two resignations.

During the last year the Parish Council discussed and commented on 16 Planning Applications (in 2019/20 the Parish Council discussed and commented on 17 planning applications). Comments are submitted to Dorset Council who is the statutory authority for decisions on planning matters.

The Parish Council, along with our County Councillor Roland Tarr, have continued with their efforts to find a solution to the dangerous parking outside of the McDonalds fast food outlet at Monkey's Jump Roundabout. The area is not within the boundary of the Parish Council and covered by a number of organisations in ownership and responsibility. Therefore negotiations and discussions always include a number of stakeholders.

The Speed Indicator Device installed by the Parish Council in the Mallards Green area continues to provide consistent data to show a large percentage of drivers are unaware of or unwilling to comply with the 30 mph speed limit in that location. Residents in this area of the village still have no safe footpath to walk to the centre of the village and we will continue to work with Dorset Council to do what we can to improve pedestrian safety in this area as well as the rest of the village. The SID serves as a visual reminder to drivers of their speed. We are fortunate to also get visits from the Dorset Police Safety Partnership Camera Van in the area.

The Parish Council receives regular feedback regarding footpaths and bridleways within the village and first attempts to resolve issues with landowners or, if necessary refer any issues to the Dorset Council who are the responsible authority in relation to footpaths and bridleways. There are many comments received about uncollected dog excrement and it is worth reminding dog owners that when walking our field and farm footpaths it is still necessary to pick up after your dogs. Dog faeces are a danger to farm animals and unpleasant for everyone. Please remember to always clear up after your dog, wherever you are walking them.

The Parish Council are communicating with Wessex Water regarding future improvements to the sewer in the village and the impact of groundwater infiltration on the overflowing of sewers and ability to fully flush domestic toilets at these times in some properties.

The Parish Council has had positive engagement with the National Grid VIP Project team while they are working on the replacement of some of the pylons on the Ridgeway with underground cables. We are particularly grateful for their donation of the luxury hamper of Dorset produce which has been raffled today with the proceeds going to the Martinstown Beaver and Scour Group.

During the year a new website has been set up containing most of what you might need or want to know about the Parish Council.

www.winterbornestmartin-pc.gov.uk Along with this is a new e mail for contacting the Parish Council through Michele Harding, our clerk.
clerk@winterbornestmartin-pc.gov.uk

The Parish Council has adopted the telephone kiosk – which will be maintained by a voluntary community group.

The site with four allotments is being well used. There remains one vacant plot, if anyone is interested please contact the clerk to the Parish Council.

During the year two benches were maintained and more are scheduled to be done. One bench was irreparably damaged due to a vehicle accident.

The Parish Council has a small budget for grants to local community groups and also a grants policy. Groups that fit the criteria can make an application to the clerk – the grants criteria and application forms can be found on the Parish Council website. www.winterbornestmartin-pc.gov.uk

Perhaps we can hope for some sort of normality in the forthcoming year and we all hope to still see many of you at our meetings, either in person or via a screen.

Debbie Wiltshire

Winterborne St Martin Parish Council