

Parish Assembly Chairman's Report – 2019

Good evening and thank you all for attending the Hail Weston Parish Assembly for 2019.

For those of you that do not know us, I would just like to introduce you to the members of the Hail Weston Parish Council. My name is Jill Gooch and I have been Parish Chair since last July. We also have Jane Sugars, Peter Mailer, Jeff Hubble, Nick Farnden and also Philip Martin and Matthew Lobo who can't be here this evening. Phil and Jeff joined in May 2018 after an uncontested Election and Nick joined in August. This means that the Parish Council reached full capacity of seven. Darren Tysoe, our HDC Ward Councillor was also elected in May 2018.

The work of the Hail Weston Parish Council falls into two main areas –

Firstly, representing you on issues affecting the community such as planning applications – we saw 9 applications in the last year (Mar 18-Mar 19) 8 extensions or alterations to existing properties and 1 new detached property in the village.

In May 2018, as you may know, the Parish Council were approached by the St Nicolas Church Restoration Group to make representation at the Development Management Committee meeting at HDC to support the church restoration plans. The case was discussed at the meeting on Tues 29th May and a good number of residents showed their support, by way of Paul Baker's double -decker bus! Outgoing Chairman, Tony Baker, Reverend Nicki Bland and HDC Ward Councillor Darren Tysoe spoke influentially enough to disturb the planning committee's thinking!

Other Consultation Engagement Events have included East West Railway, A1 and Black Cat proposals, Policing, Solar Farm and Local Plan 2036.

Secondly, maintaining our open spaces – the allotments, playing field, the new cemetery and the Garden of Rest.

As you will be aware, the Council strategy has largely been shaped by the Community Plan 2016-2020. A Summary of Actions were adopted by the Parish Council and, all have been completed with the exception of 2. The Community Plan was completed by 77% of village residents and was managed and led by village volunteers with Barry Easom as Chair.

The Parish Council have taken advice from various channels to understand the best way forward in continuing a plan that will continue to meet the needs of Hail Weston's residents. The Parish Council have confidence in the imminent publication of the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan 2036, following several years of consultation. The decision to complete another Community Plan, to run following 2020, or to commence with a Neighbourhood Plan has been much discussed over the last 12 months and is due for Resolving by the Parish Council in the next couple of months. If you have a view, please do share it, either tonight or following this meeting.

Other areas worthy of mentioning are:-

-The Garden of Rest – There is planned planting of plug plants to, hopefully, make the area more colourful to sit in, alongside the maturing fruit trees.

-Highways – The application to reduce the speed on the B645 is finally completed, along with improved signage. The Parish Council submitted another Local Highways Initiative request to CCC in December 2018. This was to reduce the speed limit to 20mph through the village, with the support of moveable flashing signage to reflect drivers' speeds for use both on the B645 and in the village. We have just heard that Hail Weston has been successful with its bid and in light of recent events this weekend, this could prove to be a very useful tool in reminding drivers to check their speeds. Many thanks to Ian Gardener with his help and advice with this process.

In February, we saw the annual litter pick completed, with volunteers collecting 15 bags of rubbish. Thanks to those who enjoyed the sunshine on this morning and also to those other volunteers who clear rubbish regularly as they go around the village.

The precept for 2019/2020 was approved in November, reflecting a small increase of 5%. Advice from both HDC and CCC is consistent with previous years – in that funding remains tight and undoubtedly services will be affected, requiring the Parish Council to do more.

District Councillor Darren Tysoe and County Councillor Ian Gardener do a fab job at keeping Hail Weston Parish Council informed of opportunities to shape consultations and wider county news. I would like to thank them both.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors, and of course our wonderful Parish Clerk who have supported me in my first year as Parish Council Chair. And also, thanks to all the volunteers who continue to help this village to become a more attractive and nicer place to live. There are too many to thank individually but many are here tonight and will have a chance to speak..

Finally, I would like to remind all residents that the Parish Council meet monthly, except in December. The public are always welcome and may address the council on current matters or issues of concern in the Open Forum, which is always at the start of the meeting. Any matters raised for decision would become a future agenda item.

Jill Gooch