

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL



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Clerks to the Council: Mrs J Bissmire

Chairman's Report 2022

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Gathering of the Parish Council, I hope you are all well.

This past year will undoubtedly be remembered by everyone once again as the time of the Covid19 virus and lockdowns.

As with the previous year, many of the events in the village have been postponed for safety reasons and we have all been affected by the epidemic in different ways.

As we start to emerge from these restrictions, it is perhaps appropriate to look back upon the year to remember that many day-to-day activities for the Parish Council have continued. All councillors continued with meetings and duties.

All staff have worked from home, as and when the Government advised, calling in to the office to check the post, voicemails and to ensure all was okay.

Our meetings were held virtually which we all found helpful, but it is no longer possible for us to hold virtual meetings as decisions made by Parish Councillors has to be face to face to ensure any decisions are legal.

It is possible to include virtual meetings for members of the public and officers to attend, so we are looking into the possibility of this.

As many of you know we have now taken ownership of the path leading to Peggy's Field, (Village Green) thanks to the kindness of the Tomblin family.

We have approached many contractors and specialists to advise on the best way forward to ensure the path is safe and accessible for wheelchair, buggy user, pedestrians and animals. Fortunately, we recently contacted a company who have looked at the path and are in the process of advising how this may be designed.

We will also take advice from RoSPA Playground Equipment to ensure the path follows all health and safety regulations.

The initial process will be to resurface the path with some form of safety barrier at the pavement edge but also essential we have access for emergency vehicles and grass cutting.

As soon as quotations are received, and approved work will start.

Last year some trees at the new cemetery became dangerous and unfortunately had to be removed.

The company selected were not able to process the trees in an eco-friendly way as they had originally intended, as there were elements of metal in the branches.

Unfortunately, this led to a few problems, but the company did speak individually with all residents affected, which was appreciated.

This then left a gap in the trees, and we were successful in obtaining a grant from the Green Community Grant through Dacorum Borough Council.

We received a grant for £500.

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We were advised to use Red Robin trees as they have foliage all year, red in spring turning to a deep green during the year. This will ensure all year privacy at the new cemetery.

The grant scheme is specifically designed to support projects in our community that benefit the environment, as well as Dacorum's residents.

The day for planting will be a community event and we will have more information soon.

The second stage of works to the new cemetery will start in May,

The soil will be completely removed and dressed. The area will be laid to lawn and maintained until the design is agreed and alterations made ready for opening as a cemetery

It has been difficult to secure the works of specialists due to covid and the backlog of work, so we appreciate your patience that we may not have done all we had wished to, but grateful for the works we have secured.

Both our internal audit in May and external audit in June this financial year were passed without incident.

During these audits all documents and accounts are examined thoroughly and are publicly available for viewing, on notice boards and our website.

We have just completed works to the Village Clock, changing the mechanism to electric. This will avoid time loss and the requirement to access the clock periodically.

The original mechanical works and pendulum will be mounted and placed in the village hall.

We are continuing with our refurbishment of the Village Hall; electrical and plumbing work is ongoing.

Our Halls are full to capacity recently which is good but does involve wear and tear so works are always on going.

My thanks to Cllr Richard Peterson, our vice chairman and Chairman to the Halls Committee for all his hard work on this and many other jobs in the village.

Richard also sits on four committees, Aley Green, Markyate Cemetery, Staffing and Budget & Finance.

My thanks to Cllr Sheila Pilkinton, our Chairman to the Budget & Finance Committee for her continuous hard work in preparing reports, researching documents and for composing our responses to various consultations, and for giving us a kick when needed to complete documents. Sheila also sits on three committees, Markyate Cemetery, Staffing and Budget & Finance.

My thanks to Borough Councillor Bert Chapman who works tirelessly on our behalf with Dacorum Borough Council. Attending meetings at Dacorum and the Parish Council.

Bert also sits on the Aley Green and Markyate Cemetery Committees.

Celestine Ononye supports us in many ways, liaising with the school on different projects, IT support and many other projects.

I would say a thank you to Cllr Pat Styles for her continued support, although not always able to join in with meetings for various reasons, she continually makes helpful and useful comments.

David Kao joins us as and when he can due to business commitments.

We have just been joined by Angela Sheelan and Selma Hakki, we hope they enjoy their time as Parish Councillors and hopefully may join a committee or two!

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Our thanks also to C/Cllr Terry Douris who attends our meetings when he can, his input is always invaluable.

We now include our full list of finances with our monthly Minutes so you can see at a glance how and when we spend your money.

My thanks go to Jenny and Debbie for all their work during very difficult circumstances and Dave Clark our Village Warden for all his hard work in ensuring everything works as it should. Our thanks also to Dee who left us earlier this year, we wish her well in the future.

PC Brian Evans left Hertfordshire Police after serving us for many years for which we thank him and we welcomed PC Jonathan Onyon who attends meetings when possible and provides monthly crime reports.

I think we can say we are almost as near to 'normal' as we will ever be, and as we ease restrictions we will remain cautious and aware Covid is still with us. We are following government guidance, although not mandatory, to use wall hand sanitiser dispensers and face masks and safe distancing.

My thanks go to Denise and Tina for their part in keeping the Halls clean and safe and greeting hirers on their return to the Halls.

I close by wishing you a happy and safe summer and thank you for joining us this evening.

Cllr Bunyan
Chairman