

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL



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Clerk to the Council: Mrs V Tilley

Chair's Report 2024

Welcome to the 2024 Annual Gathering of the Parish Council, I hope you are all well.

It has been another very busy year at the Parish Council, with the path to Peggy's Field now completed, and the new Cemetery very close to being able to open.

The new path has enabled much easier access to the village green for everyone, but especially those with buggies or wheelchairs, pedestrians, and allows better access for contractors such as the grass cutters and recently for tree works to be completed.

Dacorum Borough Council has confirmed all planning conditions were met at the new cemetery and groundwater investigations have been completed. The initial results are very positive, we are just awaiting the finalised report before burials can start. As a memorial to Queen Elizabeth II a cherry tree is due to be planted in early May at the end of the cemetery. A central path is still to be installed. The Photinia hedging plants which were planted in November 2022 are doing very well and the turf laid in 2023 is well established.

In November 2023 the Bishop of St Albans, The Right Reverend Doctor Alan Smith visited us to consecrate half of the cemetery. He expressed his happiness at being invited to conduct the consecration ceremony and told those assembled it is a service he rarely gets to undertake, this being only his fifth or sixth consecration. Councillor Chapman spoke of the importance to the people of Markyate of being able to lay their loved ones to rest and to visit them in the place they called home.

Both our internal audit in May and external audit in June for financial year 2022/23 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.

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL

Another two grit salt bins were purchased and installed in the village ensuring good availability of salt to most roads and the new path to Peggy's.

We are continuing with our refurbishment of the Village Hall and Y2K Hall ensuring these meet all health and safety requirements with electrical work completed and plumbing work ongoing.

My thanks to Cllr Richard Peterson, our Vice Chair and Chair to the Halls Committee for all his hard work on this and many other jobs in the village. Richard also sits on three committees, Aley Green, Markyate Cemetery, and Budget & Finance.

My thanks to Cllr Sheila Pilkinton, our Chair to the Budget & Finance Committee for her continuous hard work in researching documents and undertaking quarterly councillor audits of the accounts. Sheila also sits on three other committees, Halls, Markyate Cemetery and Staffing Committee.

My thanks to Cllr Bert Chapman who works tirelessly as the Chair of Markyate Cemetery Committee and still offers his advice and contacts at Dacorum where needed. Bert also sits on the Aley Green Joint Cemetery Committee.

Cllr Selma Hakki has been looking after the parish council's social media and bringing forward the comments of residents to the council for which we are very grateful. Selma also sits on Markyate Cemetery and Staffing Committees.

Cllr Celestine Ononye always offers practical help where needed and brings a business perspective to the council. He sits on the Staffing Committee.

Cllrs Matt McCann and Keith Johnson were co-opted onto the council during this year, and both have brought very helpful insights, contacts and experience to the conversations. Cllr Johnson sits on the Markyate and Aley Green Cemetery Committees and Cllr McCann sits on the Budget and Finance Committee and has been liaising with the village school.

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL

David Kao joins us as and when he can due to business commitments. Borough Councillors Jane Timmis and Ed Barradell are doing good work on our behalf chasing up enquiries with Dacorum Borough Council in challenging circumstances now that the staff aren't usually in the office.

Our thanks also to County Cllr Terry Douris who attends our meetings when he can, his input is always invaluable. He is assisting us with the installation of a safety barrier outside the convenience store to ensure pedestrian safety there.

My thanks go to Vicki and Debbie for all their hard work in the office and to the village wardens, Dave and now Wayne, for all their hard work in ensuring everything works as it should, as well as Jane our halls cleaner.

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

Cllr Bunyan
Chair