

MELBURY OSMOND PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021

Following a year of disruption due to Covid we are at last beginning to move step-by-step from a third period of lockdown to a little more normality. I am sure this is due to a combination of adhering to the imposed restrictions and the vaccine roll-out which most of us have already benefitted from. As with my report last year I am sure we continue to stand with all of our professional carers both locally and nationally and would thank them publicly for their continued efforts in providing care and support during this time.

Our own local community also continues to provide help and support within the village, from collecting and distributing shopping and prescriptions to diligently checking in on neighbours. On behalf of the Parish Council many thanks to you all.

This year Parish Council meetings have continued to meet regularly, albeit in the form of 'Zoom' meetings with access made available to residents by registering with the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting. Your Parish Council currently consists of Roger Caesley, Pete Coverdale, Martin Smith, Richard Paley and myself with support from our Parish Clerk, Jodie Carter. We currently have two positions vacant on the Council and if you are interested in joining us please contact Jodie.

We would particularly like to thank our County Councillor, Mary Penfold, for her continued support in regularly attending our Parish Council meetings and keeping us informed of activities at County level.

Minutes of meetings together with Agendas are available for review on the Melbury Osmond website.

<http://www.melburyosmond.co.uk>

During the year Councillors have been available to comment on planning applications and where appropriate have provided support to our local organisations such as the Village Hall and Tennis Club as well as monitoring local footpaths and public rights of way.

Anne Roxburgh, our Home Watch co-ordinator, continues to keep us informed of Police notifications and has also been instrumental in organizing the village response to help with communication during lockdown.

We also thank Barbara Harris our Footpaths Officer, who faithfully raises any issues and Lindsay Reeve who maintains the Village Website and has kept it updated regularly as Covid rules have changed – often before your Chairman has even realised it!!

The Parish Council strives to maintain a good working relationship with Ilchester Estates, and we endeavour to represent the Parish in a positive manner whilst still raising issues and concerns as they present themselves.

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The annual playground inspection was carried out by RoSPA during May 2020 which indicated again that work would be required over the next few years. Some immediate maintenance was carried out this financial year (20/21) with additional play bark and swing seats purchased at just over £800 . Thanks go to Pete Coverdale and Richard Paley for carrying out the work together with Wendy Wheeler who is now helping with routine 'garden' maintenance.

Parish Council finances are currently sound with outgoings that included a donation of £1950 to the Village Hall to help with the cost of works to the entrance as part of our obligation for access to the recreation field.

Again, this year some projected expenses were not fully realised due, in part, to Covid-19. For instance, allowances for the VE Day celebrations are still held over albeit there is already some thought on an appropriate celebration next year for Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

With this in mind it would be remiss not to pay tribute to HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh who, following service in the Royal Navy during the Second World War and immediately after, fulfilled nearly 60 years as Consort to Her Majesty. In addition I am sure we all have members of our own families, or have known friends and their families, who have benefitted from the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme which remains as just one legacy that will continue from over 800 charities that he supported.

The total Parish Council income for 2020/2021 was **£6860**, which was almost exclusively from the Precept. Our annual expenditure over this period was **£6508** and our balance to year-end 31st March stood at **£5081**.

Parish Council outgoings are fully reviewed annually in November prior to the precept submission to Dorset Council and, although financial pressures continue at local level, the precept for 21/22 is a little lower than for last year at £6500. Whilst the income for this year may be augmented by a Caravan Club visit on the Recreation Field in the Autumn this is not certain and is always viewed as an 'extra' to our income from the Precept.

As previously stated in past Chairman's Reports your councillors give their time voluntarily and as residents are therefore only too mindful of keeping the balance of income against expenditure at the right level, as well as maintaining a reserve for unexpected outgoings or support for village organisations if required.

Audited accounts will be made public in due course and will be available on the website.

Paul Wells – May 2021

