



Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting – 20 May 2019

Thank you everyone for coming along this evening – if you don't know me, I am David Walker and I'm the Chair of the Parish Council.

Today's meeting is important for the Parish Council as it allows us to meet and discuss with parishioners the work of the Parish Council and to celebrate our lives in Holcot. In the next few minutes I will outline what has happened in Holcot since the last Annual Parish Meeting (in May 2018) our successes and challenges, as well as provide a summary of what else has happened in Holcot that is outside the Parish Council's direct control but contributes to the quality of life that we hopefully all enjoy.

I will also endeavour to dust down my crystal ball again and suggest what I expect to be the top challenges over the next 12 months. There is a written report which will be available on the parish website, so I will talk to the main points rather than read verbatim.

At this point I would like to introduce the Parish Councillors to the meeting;

Councillor	Sector responsibility
Vacancy	Main St/Farm Close/Walgarth Ct
David Walker	Back Lane/Brittens View
Jackie Fountain	Moulton Rd/Tithe Close
Kathryn Buckle	Sywell Rd/Ivy Farm/Sunny Bank
Ralph Hawkins	All outlying properties
Phil Scordellis	Rectory Lane/Beelhook/Walgrave Rd
Martin Wilson	Brixworth Rd/Glebe Close
Nick Middleton	Poplars Lane/Winsland Court

Each of the Councillors has a "sector responsibility" for part of the Parish, with the Councillor for your sector being your principal point of contact. As far as possible the sectors are aligned to the Councillor's own home. Councillors also have a portfolio responsibility for a number of subjects – for instance Phil is responsible for road safety, Kathryn for Police Matters, Martin for streetlighting and so on. The full list of portfolio responsibilities is on the Parish Council page on the website.

Whilst thanking all of the Councillors on behalf of the Parish, I would like to draw particular attention to Roger Gunnett who has recently retired from the Parish Council after over 30 years of service. We expect to co-opt a new councillor in this evening's Parish Council meeting.

The last person to mention in relation to the Parish Council is our Parish Clerk, Lisa Callan. Lisa's job is to manage the activities of the Parish Council on a day-to-day basis. It is a role that is far beyond that of an employee as I am sure that you appreciate. Thank you Lisa for your service over the last year.

When we look at the activities over the last year, I will draw a distinction between the activities of the Parish Council itself and of the Parish as a whole. I haven't listed everything, but here goes.

Parish Council

Some particular projects – as always, a real variety

- ***The Walgrave Road footpath*** – the footpath up the left hand-side of Walgrave Road to the Mere is now fully open.
- ***Northampton North Orbital Route, Northampton North SUE (Overstone Leys/Overstone Green) and Moulton Heights*** –The work on Northampton North SUE has started, with a small development. Eventually it will be 3500 houses stretching to the Holcot roundabout. The A43 works that have commenced are associated with this, with a long-term objective of dualling from Round Spinney to the A14. This will rely on funding.

Moulton Heights to the north of Moulton has gone quiet again. As soon as we hear anything we will let Parishioners know via the website.

- ***Playing Field Development*** – “The Friends of Holcot Playing Field Group” has continued to make great progress on organising funding for the modernisation of the playing field equipment. The adventure path was installed last June, and further equipment is due to be installed in June this year.

Sincere thanks on behalf of the Parish to everyone involved. I know the Group would love further involvement from Parishioners – please contact Lisa if you would like to get involved, have funding ideas etc

- ***Neighbourhood Planning approach*** – Our approach is to develop a Parish Design Statement, more commonly known as a Village Design Statement or VDS. This is still work in progress.
- ***Road safety*** - last year's Annual Parish Meeting proposed that we should put into abeyance our desire to extend the 30 mph zone and make the village itself a 20 mph zone, until the local government structures are resolved. We will pick this up again at the appropriate juncture.

Last June and July, Parishioners undertook the Community Speedwatch programme – once again we proved that people routinely drive at excessive speeds through the village. Community Speedwatch is intended to be an educational rather than punitive programme.

You will have seen the VASID is now available – depending upon time the intention is to move the kit around the village regularly. Even when the sign is not lit it is recording information, which we will analyse once we have a reliable volume.

Our thanks go to the Cllr Scordellis who continues to lead on road safety matters.

Some of the routine but important stuff

- Lighting – We continue to control the costs of lighting the village through gradually modernising lights as they fail, and managing the costs associated with electricity metering. If you see a light that has failed, please contact the clerk.
- The website – we continue to promote the use of the website as the best source of information about what is happening in the parish – it is updated regularly so **please** subscribe to the site to receive email notifications of news items, and don't forget to email in your news items or ideas of how the site could be improved or extended.
- The newsletter – Please continue to use it.
- Parish maintenance and the Friends of Holcot – the 'Friends of Holcot' group of parishioners continue to support the parish by doing all of the essential maintenance tasks that helps keep our parish looking in such great condition. Thanks to Roger Gunnett for coordinating, and the whole team for everything you do for us.

Governance and Financial Performance

I can report that the Parish Council have met formally 11 times since the last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2018. Our governance conforms to the statutory requirements, and transparency is achieved through every meeting being a public forum and the website in particular. Recently we also held an informal "drop-in" event in the White Swan that gave Parishioners the opportunity to come and discuss any Parish matters with Councillors.

You may have noticed that we were due to hold Parish Council elections in May this year – these have been delayed until May 2020 to coincide with the elections to the two new unitary authorities for Northamptonshire. The unitary authorities Vesting Day is now May 2021 as the confirmation had been delayed by the Secretary of State, so now the unitary councils will "shadow" the existing councils from May 2020 as services are transformed and put in place.

Lisa has circulated to this meeting a summary of the financial performance of the Council for Financial Year 2018/19. For those that follow the budgetary and reforecast process on the website, you will have noticed that we spent around £7k less than the original budget. This is due to the budget process being one of "best estimates", some savings/non-spends, and timing differences (projects slower than envisaged, expenses occurring in FY2019/20 rather than FY2018/19). Our income and expenditure were both just short of £25k, with income in particular enhanced by £7k of funds from the Playing Field Group as a contribution to the new equipment. I have abbreviated these below and would just like to draw your attention to some of the key numbers. You can monitor financial performance on the website during the year.

Balance brought forward from 31 March 2018 **£26,525**

(rounded £)

Income

Precept £17,500

Other income £7,175

Total Income **£24,675**

Expenditure

Admin and communications (*Website/Newsletter/Audit costs/* £1,461

Memberships/Training/General Admin costs)

Maintenance (*Mowing/Playing Field/General Maintenance*) £3,316

Projects £8,120

Lighting £3,451

Grants & Contributions (*Church/Village Hall/Clock*) £2,570

Other (*Insurance/Allotment/Clerk Salary/VAT*) £5,968

Total Expenditure **£24,886**

Total Balances and reserves at 31 March 2019 **£26,314**

Other Community activity

I promised that I would mention some of the other things that are not within the control of the Parish Council, but have contributed massively to the community over the last year.

- The Village Hall and Church Room are fantastic facilities – we are very lucky, and a huge amount of effort goes into looking after these amenities for the parish;
- The Holcot Hub Monday-evening youth group continues to support our children;
- A group of Parishioners look after the defibrillator;
- The various clubs and societies that use the village hall and church room and local facilities – we are fortunate to have active groups using them. These groups are always looking for new members, so please don't hesitate to get involved;

- We are also fortunate to have the allotments which are used by many parishioners, and the Flower and Vegetable Show organised by the Village Hall committee is an important annual event, maintaining fantastic traditions;
- The Church who organise events through the year, ranging from services to the annual carol singing. It is great to see the return of the Fete this year;
- The annual Christmas dinner for our more senior citizens is another important annual event;
- The White Swan as a social hub, with music, open mics, quiz nights and other events; as well as charity and entertainment events organised by other groups.

Thank you again to everyone that has in any way supported these and of course all of the other activities not mentioned.

Back to the Parish Council - What are some of the likely priorities of Parish Council over the next year or so?

- We will continue to work through road safety issues. The speed limits, A43 works, the NNOR, Moulton Heights and Northampton North SUE will all impact us.
- The Crossroads project – about 2 years ago we asked Parishioners for ideas as to what could be done with the crossroads green to make it more of a feature of the village. We put the project into abeyance to allow the road safety proposed changes to be worked through, and are now waiting for Gigaclear and Cadent to finish their works – we have now agreed an outline design which we expect will start to be implemented this year.
- Continuing to maintain the parish.
- Doing whatever we can to improve the playing field equipment, supported by funding from The Friends of Holcot Playing Field.

There are lots of other things that the Parish Council will have to deal with of course - some we can foresee, but some we can't.

And finally...some last thankyou's

As I've talked I have thanked a lot of people, and there are loads more I probably should have thanked including officers and members at DDC and NCC, the emergency services and community organisations that support the Parish as well as other individuals and organisations. There are too many to mention specifically, and some we probably don't realise how much they do for us!

Thank you everyone for listening.

David Walker

20 May 2019