



Chair's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting – 17 May 2022

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, some of 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
Trudi Townsend	Main St/Farm Close/Walgarth Ct
David Walker	Back Lane/Brittens View
Caroline Ferguson	Moulton Rd/Tithe Close
Chris Bailey	Sywell Rd/Ivy Farm/Sunny Bank
Kathryn Bournier	All outlying properties
Phil Scordellis	Rectory Lane/Beelhook/Walgrave Rd
Peter Matthews	Brixworth Rd/Glebe Close
James Bonsor	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. Contact details for Councillors are on the Parish Council page on the website.

Councillors also have a portfolio responsibility for taking the lead on a number of subjects – for instance Phil is responsible for road safety, Kathryn for Police Matters, Caroline for playing field and so on. The full list of portfolio responsibilities is on the [Parish Council page](#) on the website.

Chris and Pete have been co-opted to the Council since the last Annual Parish Meeting. I would like to thank Sian Stone and Martin Baldwin for their service to the Parish, and of course all Councillors for everything they do.

The last person to mention in relation to the Parish Council is our Parish Clerk, Ruby Cole. Ruby'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, Ruby, 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.

Some particular projects – as always, a real variety

- ***Northampton North Orbital Route, Northampton North SUE (Overstone Leys/Overstone Green) and Moulton Heights*** – The work on Northampton North SUE has commenced as you know. It is still planned that there will be c3500 houses.

The Northampton North Orbital Route is not expected to be built anytime soon, and we have to continue to work to help protect Holcot from the impacts of traffic on the Brixworth Road/Sywell Road route through the Parish, as it is the *de facto* northern bypass to Northampton. There are no easy solutions as you will appreciate.

If there is good news, we believe that the developers of Overstone Leys will provide Holcot with £100k of "s106 money" to help us with further road safety spending. We'll let you know when contracts between the planners and developers are in place.

- ***Road safety*** – road safety is a continual focus of the Parish Council. Cllr Phil Scordellis leads on this activity, and I am hugely grateful for his diligence and the massive effort that I know this takes.

I reported last year that we are investing s106 monies received from housing developers in features to support road safety – the recent signage improvements, second VASID, and chicane on Sywell Road in particular. Whilst the installation has taken much longer than expected, the first two of these are now in place. The chicane is nearing the end of its (very long) design phase – we know that the costs have increased massively because of the passage of time, but we will see what the final outcome is.

To give an indication of the scale of the speeding problem we use the VASIDs. They record data as vehicles approach (and the message is displayed) but also as vehicles travel away from the display. Here is the summary of the most recent results at each location.

Overview - VASID results						
Road	Location, facing	Direction	Dates	V85	Speed violations%	Max speed
Brixworth Road	Opposite Glebe Close, facing crossroads	Arriving	7-24/1/20	31	15	64
		Departing		31	17	85
		Arriving	24/1-6/2/20	30	14	68
		Departing		31	17	59
Brixworth Road	Opposite Glebe Close, facing causeway	Arriving	26-28/4/22	35	34	75
		Departing		41	85	67
		Arriving		0	0	0
		Departing		0	0	0
Main Street	Outside Church Room, facing crossroads	Arriving	13/9-3/10/19	24	1	44
		Departing		25	1	42
		Arriving	16/10-21/11/19	24	1	53
		Departing		25	1	47
Moulton Road	Next to footpath, facing MOULTON	Arriving	15/12/18-8/1/19	29	11	60
		Departing		31	17	63
		Arriving	6-19/6/19	29	10	62
		Departing		34	28	78
Moulton Road	Next to footpath, facing CROSSROADS	Arriving	6/2-9/3/20	28	4	48
		Departing		27	4	55
		Arriving	31/5/21-26/8/21	28	5	57
		Departing		28	5	59
Moulton Road (new VASID)	Opposite allotments facing Moulton	Arriving	26-28/4/22	42	60	73
		Departing		0	0	0
		Arriving		0	0	0
		Departing		0	0	0
Sywell Road	Opposite Back Lane, facing Sywell	Arriving	18/3/22-15/4/22	32	21	56
		Departing		35	51	73
		Arriving	9/2/22-18/3/22	31	19	57
		Departing		35	50	67
Walgrave Road	Half-way along on northern side, facing Walgrave	Arriving	23/3-1/5/19	26	1	43
		Departing		25	1	46
		Arriving	29/5-5/6/19	25	0	40
		Departing		25	0	41
V85 = 85% of traffic is travelling under/at this speed						
Arriving = heading toward front of VASID						
Departing = heading away from VASID						

You will notice that there are some roads where there are severe speed violations, and these are borne out by the Police's survey data. This information is a major contributor to the focus of our speed-related decisions.

We have continued to work on the issue of HGVs flouting the 7.5t regulations. Supported by the monitoring work of Parishioners, we are able to demonstrate that a significant proportion of HGVs passing through Holcot have no right to be here. In order to gather further information we will be undertaking a more formal survey – if you can spare an hour on 9 June (7am-7pm), please contact Cllr Chris Bailey.

- **Lighting improvement** – the Parish Council spent £5.5k last year updating the very old mercury lights to LED. The old lights were failing regularly, and we took an opportunity to replace them all – the running costs for the new lights is around an eighth of the mercury lights, so a significant saving, with a payback period for the project is less than 5 years. With our fixed price electricity until 2025 negotiated last year we hope to continue to minimise our lighting expenditure.

We now only have 9 lamps that are not of the modern LED design, but these are newer than the mercury lamps and fairly cheap to run. Our policy is to replace these as they fail.

- **Playing Field Development** – We undertook minor improvement works last year, including replacing the basketball hoop (funded by a grant from Tesco's) and repairing the gyrospiral. There are no plans to invest further significant sums in the playing field.
- **Asset Mapping Project** – we have recently undertaken work to map the assets across the Parish. Assets in this sense includes tangible things owned by the Parish such as the playing field equipment, but also services that we all rely upon and are of perceived value to Parishioners. There is an expectation that WNC will wish to (be directed to) devolve activities to Parishes in the future, and whilst it is difficult to imagine what could be devolved to Holcot, we contributed data to the project.

Some of the routine but important stuff

- 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 editor@holcotvillage.co.uk your news items or ideas of how the site could be improved or extended.
- The newsletter – Jenny Davis of Glebe Close is Editor - please continue to use it.
- Parish maintenance – 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, and more recently routine development and maintenance of the gardens area. Thanks to Roger Gunnett and Heather Wilson for coordinating, and the whole team for everything you do for us. If you can spare an hour or two at any time, please get in touch.

Governance and Financial Performance

I can report that the Parish Council have met formally 12 times since the last Annual Parish Meeting. Our governance conforms to the statutory requirements, and transparency is achieved through every meeting being a public forum and the website in particular.

Ruby will show to this meeting a summary of the financial performance of the Council for Financial Year 2021/22. For those that follow the budgetary and reforecast process on the website, you will have noticed that we spent around £10k less than the original budget. This is due to the budget process being one of “best estimates”, some savings/non-spends, inclusion of ringfences, and timing differences (expenses occurring in FY2022/23 rather than FY2021/22).

Our income exceeded budget by £4k, due to our claiming VAT quickly on the lighting expenditure to ensure cashflow, and the grant from Tesco’s mentioned previously. Expenditure of £24.7k was accounted for by lighting and mowing as well as the routine items. 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.

Financial year 2021/22

Balance brought forward from 31 March 2021	£18,849
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(rounded £)

Income

Precept	£17,500
Other income	£7,277
Total Income	£24,777

Expenditure

Admin and communications (<i>Website/Newsletter/Audit/ Memberships/Training/General Admin</i>)	£1,929
Maintenance (<i>Mowing/Maintenance</i>)	£6,452
Projects	£1,622
Lighting	£5,930
Grants & Contributions (<i>Church/Village Hall/Clock</i>)	£2,759
Other (<i>Insurance/Allotment/Clerk Salary/VAT</i>)	£6,038
Total Expenditure	(£24,729)
Total Balances and reserves at 31 March 2022	<u>£18,898</u>

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.

- 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;
- 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 also fortunate to have the allotments which are used by many parishioners, and the Flower and Vegetable Show organised by the Village Hall is an important event, maintaining fantastic traditions;
- The Church organises events through the year, ranging from services to the annual carol singing.
- 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?

This is be guided by the Parish as a whole, but I suggest...

- We will continue to work through the various road safety issues. This is perennial.
- Continuing to maintain the parish.
- We will continue to manage planning activities, and the impacts of already approved plans.
- Building working relationships with West Northamptonshire Council and providing our input to their ongoing strategy development. We'll see if anything happens with devolution of services!

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. Parishioners are invited to every Parish Council meeting, so if you have ideas please don't hesitate to come along. It has been great over the last year that more people are attending Parish Council meetings, making use of their '3 minutes' to speak to Councillors and express opinions.

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 West Northamptonshire Council, 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

17 May 2022