

Ipsden Parish Council Annual Summary

2018/19 has been another busy year for your Parish Council. We have met formally in The Village Hall for six public meetings, and informally innumerable times to deal with enquiries and communications from village residents, and the consequent actions required. We have also dealt with many communications to and from both SODC and OCC. Complying with the ever increasing Government and Local authority rules has taken many hours of paperwork and form filling.

This year has been an election year for local and parish councils in our area, but despite public advertisements on both our website and on the village shop notice board, we did not receive any new prospective candidate applications. Your four existing councillors therefore agreed to stand again as their seats were uncontested. We are pleased to report that Nick Miller (Chair), John Jeffery, Wendy Clark and Heather Llewellyn will continue to carry out their voluntary unpaid roles and hard work on villagers' behalf to ensure the smooth running of matters within their power. It should be pointed out however, that the powers of parish councils are limited, and that many of the enquiries that we receive are district or county matters. We are nevertheless always pleased to advise accordingly, and to recommend the appropriate course of action.

Following on from the uncontested election, SODC advised us that we should not continue with only four councillors as in previous years because our statute specified up to five councillors. They advised that we should make further efforts to fill the vacancy or they may be obliged to insert a member of their own. We therefore advertised again. We received two applications and after tough discussions we decided to accept and co-opt David Coldwell as the fifth member. Mr Coldwell had already become familiar with the work of the parish council by attending all of our public meetings over the past year, and by kindly carrying out a number of maintenance jobs on the playground, signage, the telephone kiosk as well as other works.

The redundant telephone kiosk outside the village shop which BT kindly offered to the council as a village heritage item for the princely sum of £1, and which has now been beautifully refurbished and painted by David Coldwell, is now available as an information kiosk. Local groups and businesses are welcome to advertise there using the display units provided.

Ipsden Parish Council has dealt with 10 planning matters during the year and is pleased to advise that SODC have generally accepted our views and recommendations.

The everyday responsibilities of dealing with enquiries and correspondence, managing expenditure and the accounts, and maintaining the village website are managed by our Parish Clerk, Amanda McCrea. We are also grateful to Mr Vernon, Mr Hemming, Mr Coldwell, Mr Jackson and Mr McRobbie for the village maintenance work that they have undertaken for the parish council.

Once again, a large amount of time and effort has been focussed on working with Oxfordshire County Council on trying to encourage them to improve safety on the Ipsden stretch of the A4074. Rules, regulations and financial restrictions have not enabled them to place double white lines to prevent overtaking at the junctions, or to apply speed limits, but they have agreed to the installation of a further junction speed warning device as well as white gates on the verges. However, this was only agreed if we could raise the necessary funding. Happily, this has been achieved via grant applications. The necessary £10,500 is now in place with only £900 having been needed from our reserves. We are grateful to our County Councillor, Mr Mark Gray for his unending support via lobbying for us at county level, for attending many of our meetings, and for organising site meetings between parish councillors and OCC traffic officers. OCC are now preparing to schedule the work, but they have a large number of county "hot spot" projects, so dates for the work are not yet available. We will continue to apply such pressure as is reasonable to ensure that the work goes ahead as soon as possible.

Should residents wish to see more detail regarding parish council activities, minutes of meetings are published on the village website and on the noticeboard at the village shop. All villagers are also invited to join the village group email list in order to receive notices regarding county, district and parish council information; please email -ipsdenpc@gmail.com stating Village Group Email in the subject line if you wish to be included. All addresses are held in confidence by the clerk, and outgoing mails will not show any other addresses.

Finally, whilst potholes are a big problem, the parish council is forbidden from dealing with them. Only the OCC roads contractors are allowed to attend to them. Please use the following link to have potholes attended www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk . It generally works within ten working days.

Do remember that all villagers are welcome at parish council meetings. If you have a matter that you wish to raise, but are unable to attend, please go to the website where you will find links to raise any relevant matter for councillors' consideration at the next meeting.

Ipsden Parish Councillors thank all in the village for their support.

Nick Miller, John Jeffery, Heather Llewellyn, Wendy Clark, David Coldwell