

Downton Parish Council Chairperson's Report 2020

I am pleased to report on Downton Parish Council's activities over the last year.

Chairperson

Following Councillor Mace's tenure as Chair of the Parish Council, the Council has operated on a rotating chair, electing a Councillor each meeting to be Chair for that month.

Facebook Page

The Parish Council established a Facebook page to help with communication within the Parish. The page has 213 followers and with page sharing posts has reached up to 1789 people.

Downton Memorial Centre

The Memorial Centre extension is being put to good use within the Community. The Parish Council funded New Stage Curtains and enabled the Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Evaluation Reports to be completed and any necessary works to be made. A new roof was put onto the original part of the Memorial Hall.

Brian Whitehead Sports Centre Association

The Parish Council agreed to fund 75% of the cost of repairs to the tennis court roof at the Downton Leisure Centre, with an agreement that a working party was created to ensure the future of the Association was sound. This work is on going.

Staffing

With the increase in workload within the Parish, the Council agreed to recruit an Administration Officer to assist the Parish Clerk. This recruitment campaign was successful and the Officer commences on 1st April 2020

Community Safety Day

The Clerk organised the event, which was held at the Downton Memorial Centre. Organisations that attended included:

- Dorset & Wilts Fire & Rescue
- South West Ambulance
- Environment Agency
- Wiltshire Police
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust.

Those members of the Community that attended found the event to be very informative and worthwhile.

Amenities

Moot Lane Recreation ground – repairs have been made to the area around the roundabout to make it safer; a replacement baby swing has been fitted and a new fire engine has now replaced the motorbike rocker. At the other end of the ground the new adult exercise equipment has been fitted and, despite the winter weather, is being well used; there is also now a basketball hoop fitted and the Council will consider resurfacing the concrete base of the old pavilion in the summer if users feel this is necessary. A fire resistant waste bin has been installed to enable disposable barbeques to be safely used.

The Cemetery has new gates and signage is about to be added so that it can be more easily seen from Barford Lane.

Following the closure of the Headlands Post office, a Post Office van is now visiting the village on Fridays as arranged by the Parish Council's working group who are also continuing to work on an eventual replacement post office service.

The cycle path along the A338 has been cleared at the instigation of the Parish Council.

The project to build a bridge over the river connect the Moot Lane area to the centre of the village is always likely to take a long time but there has been some progress. The Parish Council commissioned a design survey and has met with a planning officer to establish what actions are needed to apply for planning permission. We are meeting to gain a better understanding of what other surveys are needed before we can make more progress.

The Parish Council has been working with the Downton Society to create a slide show with information about all the clubs and organisations in Downton, which is being shown in the GP surgery, and it is hoped that this will reduce social isolation (once we are able to visit such clubs again!). Work is also taking place with the Downton Society to support the Downton in Bloom project, although it is not yet clear whether judging will go ahead if virus lock down rules are still in place.

A new gate has been fitted outside the toilets at the Memorial Park to reduce the inappropriate use of the area around the toilet doors.

We are awaiting a quote to repair the light around the village cross.

We are working with another local Parish Council to contract work on repairing the bus shelters and have also purchased a speed indicator device together with Redlynch Parish Council, which will be fitted on a rota basis to

three areas within the village as soon as contractors are able to begin work again.

The Parish Council has more than 18 litterbins and work is planned to replace 12 of these and upgrade the remaining bins over the next few weeks

There will be work undertaken to paint the bridges and work is also planned to re-kerb the Borough green near the Bull.

The Parish Council is currently working on a number of plans including the Parish emergency plan, a tree planting scheme and working with Downton Green Group to support the Plastic Free Community proposals.

Business as Usual

During the last year the Parish Council, on behalf of the local community, gave its views on 70 local planning applications and responded to 2 public consultations conducted by Wiltshire Council and other bodies.

We also made and are continuing to make extensive representations on behalf of the community on local matters of concern and have representatives on the following Committees

Brian Whitehead Sports and Social Club Association
Carver Trust
Downton Cuckoo Fair
Downton Link
Downton Moot Preservation Trust
Downton Memorial Centre
Millennium Green Trust
Stockman and Woodlands Trust
Allotments Association
South Wiltshire Area Board
South Wiltshire Area Board – Community Area Transport Group
Downton Band
Chalk Pitt Management Committee

Thanks

I would like to thank our street cleaners, Nick Saxby, Tom Matthewman, Alexandra Hastie and Eleanor Philp for keeping our streets and recreation areas so tidy, Mr. Bob Tanner who voluntarily collects litter around The Borough area, Mr. Rick Ladds for his weekly voluntary, but mandatory, inspections of the defibrillator in the centre of Downton and to Mr. Paul Cornish for maintaining the Parish Council's website and IT equipment. My thanks also go to Paul Prince, Dene Gentle, Geoff Ricketts, Dave Cordell, Keith Sutcliffe and Ellie Mount- Kingett who stood down as a parish councillors this year. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my

fellow councillors, and to our Parish Clerk, Mrs. Bev Cornish, for all their hard work and dedication over the last year.

Becky Cornell

Councillor, Downton Parish Council

April 2020