

Breamore Parish Council – Chairman’s Report 2017/2018

Introduction

Good evening everyone. I send my apologies and I'm really sorry that I'm not here in person. First of all, I would like to introduce myself for those who don't know me. My name is Lynne Aggas and I've been serving as a parish councillor to Breamore for the past eleven years. I was elected as the Chairman of the council this time last year after Peter Turner, our previous chairman of ten years, retired from the position. Although he is still serving on the council, I would like to take this opportunity to record our thanks and gratitude for all his hard work as chairman over that time. I would like to thank the rest of the councillors: Hilary Bowen, Simon Cain, Paul Harling and Michael Hulse for all their hard work and dedication over the last year, particularly in representing Breamore Parish Council at local meetings (e.g. Hulse Hall, Police Liaison, Cranborne Chase AONB, NFALC, Quadrant Meetings and New Forest Consultative Panel). Also, I'd like to thank Stefanie Lynne Heyck for her contribution as parish councillor and vice chairman prior to her resignation in December. Last but not least I would like to thank Vicky Eden, who took on the position as clerk after Brian Dixon retired last August, for all her hard work with starting to implement all the necessary changes needed to keep us up to date with all the new regulatory requirements. She really has been my rock.

I would also like to welcome Anthony Swift who has just recently been co-opted onto the council. I know he will be a valuable member and with his background experience, an asset to the team.

Thanks to Speakers

On behalf of Breamore Parish Council I would like to thank you all for coming this evening. I would also like to thank our guest speaker, Lynn Nunn, from the ANOB for accepting our invitation to speak to us tonight on the subject of 'Cranborne Chase – What It Means To You'. Finally a thank you to all the representatives from local organisations: Hampshire Police, Hulse Hall, Avon Valley Partnership, Breamore Primary School and Rook, Dodington and Johnson Charities who will be giving us their reports detailing their activities over the last year. Also included tonight are reports from NFDC and Hampshire County Councillor Edward Heron and Paul Hammond, Flood Warden, which will be read out on their behalf. I would like to thank all present for their dedication to local needs and ongoing support for Breamore Parish.

Past Year Events

Death of Former Parish Clerk

Firstly I start with the sad news of the death of the former parish clerk, Brian Dixon, earlier this year. The Parish Council very much appreciated his 20 years of service to the parish.

Meetings held

There have been 9 meetings of Breamore Parish Council held in 2017-2018 (7 full parish council meetings and 2 special meetings held to discuss planning applications received). Minutes of these meetings can be found online via <http://www.breamore.gov.uk>

Planning

Throughout 2017-2018, the members have considered 4 full planning applications, 1 listed building consent application and 1 enforcement case, with the parish council being represented at the committee stage at NFDC for a planning application submitted in 2016-2017. 8 treeworks applications have also been considered. Please note that the Planning Department at NFDC encourages people to get in contact prior to undertaking any work – contact details can be found via <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/planning>

Should villagers feel that a breach of planning has occurred in the parish, they can report their concerns online via <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/13705/Enforcement>. This website is always recorded on the minutes.

Tree marking the Queens 90th birthday

A black poplar tree was planted in March 2017 to mark the Queen's 90th birthday and signage has now been purchased. It is hoped that the parish lengthsmen will be able to install this signage in the near future.

Highways and Footpaths

Long serving Hampshire Highways contact, Bob Brown, retired in March 2018 and the members forwarded their thanks to Hampshire County Council for his support and hard work over many years. Unfortunately, such a contact will not be replaced. The County Council is encouraging members of the public to report all concerns relating to highway and footpath online – the website addresses will be reflected on the minutes of parish council meetings and are as follows:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway>

A new contractor, Skanska, is now in place at Hampshire County Council. This contractor is currently working through a backlog of reported potholes although, as recent weather conditions have been extraordinary, the contractor has had to work on urgent concerns rather than just clearing the backlog. Potholes and overgrown vegetation continue to be problematic and online reporting is very much encouraged. Breamore Mill Bridge has been reported several times, particularly when the post has been knocked, and a request for better warning signage for HGVs will be considered in Hampshire County Council's 2018-2019 programme of works. Following the bad weather, further salt bins have been requested for the village. The Parish Council would also like to remind residents not to place any obstructions on highways.

The issue of dog walkers not clearing up after their pets (either on footpaths or on the Marsh) has also been discussed with notices being displayed on the noticeboard and in the parish magazine. Villagers are encouraged to clean up after their pets either taking their dog waste home or disposing of it in a normal litter bin. The Council will continue to monitor this matter.

Parish Lengthsman

This scheme, funded by Hampshire County Council and overseen by Fordingbridge Town Council, is seen to be working very well. Essentially a lengthsman undertakes routine maintenance works across their allocated parishes. The Parish Lengthsman visited Breamore on four occasions during 2017-2018 and his work has included the clearance of overgrown vegetation on footpaths (particularly outside of Breamore Primary School). Parish Councillors and villagers may suggest suitable tasks for the Parish Lengthsman to the Clerk. Although the parish does not allocate funds for this scheme at the present time, Hampshire County Council may ask parishes to make a financial contribution to this scheme in the future, particularly in light of the cuts that the county council may need to make.

I would also like to record my thanks to Mrs Hammond for volunteering to keep the bus shelter in such good order. This enables the parish lengthsman to focus on other tasks in the village.

Update of IT Arrangements

Vicky has secured a grant of £900 from the Transparency Fund for the Parish Council to purchase a laptop, software and additional working hours to ensure that the Transparency Code requirements (introduced in 2015) are fully met. The parish council website will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with minutes, agendas, regulatory documentation and contact details being regularly updated. Such IT equipment was much needed for a clerk to do her job. Archiving and transferring data to an electronic format will be an ongoing project.

Electronic payroll reporting (in line with HMRC requirements) is now in place and the Clerk is also updating the Pension Regulator online as and when necessary.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

New General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) come into force on 25th May 2018 and the Clerk and I attended training on 29th March 2018. Work is ongoing to ensure that the parish council will meet the new requirements and parish councillors will have @breamore.gov.uk email addresses instead of their personal email addresses in place in the near future. The Clerk's email address is parish.clerk@breamore.gov.uk and all parish council email addresses will be displayed on the parish noticeboard in due course.

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Training

Clerk has attended training to refresh her minute taking skills and to keep with to date with developments in local government via the Society of Local Council Clerks. She will attend Officer Updates throughout 2018-2019. I will also attend training on Planning & Chairmanship, with our new councillor Anthony attending The Knowledge and the Skills training later this year.

Moving Forwards

Staying In Line With Regulations

Staying in line with regulatory requirements will be a key focus moving forwards and the governance of the Parish Council will be considered at the next Parish Council Annual Meeting on 21st May 2018.

As well as keeping up to date with Transparency Code requirements, GDPR changes, and regulatory documentation, the Clerk will also be looking at historic documentation to ensure that governance is clearly documented and understood.

Breamore Stocks

Preliminary work has now begun with the Conservation Officer as to the best way to preserve Breamore Stocks and will be considered at future parish council meetings.

Safety Concerns on the A338

The members of Breamore Parish Council are currently looking at ways to improve safety on the main road through the village and are now in discussion with Breamore Primary School. A crossing may improve safety for the children and may also slow down the traffic travelling through. We are looking at ideas to communicate to those travelling through Breamore that they are entering into a village. We already have the gateways that were secured under Pete Turner's leadership but we are also looking at other ways to slow the traffic down. Suggestions that have been put forward include maintaining the verges within the village so that they have a more manicured look to imply a well maintained rural community; a specially designed sign of some geese on the gateways and extending double white lines into the village to deter overtaking. However, any other ideas would be most welcome from you, the parishioners. Any incidents in relation to safety concerns can also be reported to the Clerk as she is keeping a log of all concerns, to support the parish council in its aim to reduce speed and improve safety on the A338.

Financial Report

Draft end of year accounts have been prepared by the Clerk and will be audited by the new internal auditor in June 2018. At the January 2018 meeting, the members agreed not to increase the precept following a review of the budget. Administration costs have reduced due to the increased use of IT, with the Transparency Code Grant providing the Council with funds to meet new and ongoing regulatory requirements. Existing contingency funds are felt to be adequate and at present, no expensive parish projects have been identified. However it is noted that the district and county councils may be seeking to make cuts in the future – there have been several consultations over the past year and future consultations are expected, so budgetary forecasts will continue to be diligently considered and sufficient contingency funds will continue to be held.