

Chairman's Report to Thornborough Parish Council 2018

The major highlight for this year has, without doubt, been the refurbishment of the Nash Road playground, which was undertaken by Kompan during the summer months and opened in October. The refurbishment was prioritised as there were concerns that the old, delapidated equipment had become unsafe and the playground was becoming a bit of an eye-sore. We were able to fund the works due to our successful application for a WREN grant. Although this was a very painful process, both for us and for Kompan, the superb results speak for themselves. The village now benefits from having a safe play area, which is full of exciting equipment designed to appeal to a wider age range. It is a pleasure to see the younger villagers, (and sometimes not so young members of the community), enjoying the revitalised playground. The equipment and ground covering is designed remain in good condition for many years to come and it is clearly a valuable asset to the parish. Many thanks to Cllr Taylor and her energetic support team for making all of this possible and for pushing the project through to a successful conclusion.

Having completed the redevelopment of the Nash Road playground, the next major project for the Council is likely to be to examine the future of the Sports Pavilion on the Sir Harry Moore playing field. This building was constructed by the local community to serve as an amenity for the Thornborough Football Club (which has sadly now folded) and Thornborough Cricket Club (which we are pleased to see continues to be a key part of parish life). Recently, Thornborough Parish Council agreed to allow Thornborough Pre-School to relocate to the sports pavilion. This arrangement has required the pre-school and cricket club to share the pavilion, and we are pleased that "handovers" have been conducted smoothly during the cricket season. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the pre-school for packing away their play equipment so quickly and thoroughly each weekend. We would also like to thank the cricket club for being accommodating.

Since the building has been used on a more regular basis, several issues have emerged. As the pavilion was never designed for long-term use during the winter months, it lacks the insulation and heating suitable for the needs of the pre-school. Resolving this problem will require significant investment. In addition, new legislation and forthcoming changes to requirements from both users may necessitate a significant upgrade of the fabric of the building and associated facilities. Such investment will require careful consideration and planning. Thornborough Parish Council is pleased to support the pre-school and Thornborough Cricket Club, for example by remaining flexible on payment of upkeep on the sports field and by maintaining the pavilion to help meet current best practice standards.

As parishioners are aware, Thornborough Parish Council is a consultee in local planning applications. We have seen around 40 planning applications come in front of the Parish Council this year. In general, Thornborough Parish Council supports sympathetic development in the parish and is mindful of the need for additional high quality and affordable accommodation for existing residents and those wishing to come to the parish. Our aim is to consistently follow guidance on applications from AVDC. We will continue to oppose development on the Brookfield "green tongue", which we view as a significant part of the character of the village, and any other proposals which seek to push beyond the village curtilage and extend into the fields surrounding it. Any parishioner who has submitted a planning application is warmly invited to come to the relevant parish council meeting to respond to any questions the council might have about their plans.

Thornborough News is funded by Thornborough Parish Council and continues to inform the residents of the parish about local events and information. Thornborough News is printed by Phillips Print in Buckingham, supporting a local business. Distribution is by Sue Percival's

team and we are very grateful to Sue and her delivery team for this invaluable service. Keeping it in the family, the editorship has recently transferred to Nick Percival, who I am sure will continue to produce a high-quality publication which is an essential part of village life. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to Thornborough News and to Maggie Beach for acting as editor all year.

The Village Hall goes from strength to strength, with regular bookings including the Post Office and incredibly popular Community Café. I am pleased that guaranteed annual funding from Thornborough Parish Council has given the Trust the confidence they need to plan for the future. We are indebted to the Village Hall Trust for continuing to maintain this building for all of us to use.

Meanwhile, other regular parish council responsibilities continue to be managed well: street lighting continues to be improved and has been switched to lower energy use; the other assets we look after, (dog waste bins, allotments etc.), are all in hand.

Sadly, after many years of service, we are about to lose our dedicated, hard-working and talented Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: Maggie Beach. Maggie has a long history with Thornborough Parish Council as councillor, Chair and now departing Clerk. Her wealth of knowledge about the history of the village, coupled with her passion to keep Thornborough a wonderful place to live, has led to her to making a huge contribution to the parish. As Chair, I have found her to be an invaluable right hand (and sometimes left hand too!). She will be sorely missed by the Council. We are very fortunate that two parishioners and two candidates from outside the village responded to our urgent pleas for help and Carol Vaughan has been selected as the new Parish Clerk.

Finally, this will be the last annual Chairman's report that I deliver. I am happy that I am leaving Thornborough Parish Council as a vibrant and active council at the end of another year. I would like to thank all the councillors for their support over the last few, especially Andy Spurr for stepping in when required as Vice-Chair and Melanie Staff for taking over responsibility as temporary Chairman. I will continue to support the council by managing the website, domains and Facebook account for as long as the council wants me to and look forward to attending as many meetings as I can as an interested parishioner.

Stuart Mitchell