



Farthinghoe & Steane Parish Council

14/04/2022

Chairman's Report for the 2021/2022 year

The start of my annual reports for April 2020 and April 2021 began as follows,

“This has been a most unusual year, the kind of year that few of us have ever experienced before, nor want to experience again. It has been a year in which most communities have had to react with considerable discipline and fortitude.”

The situation at those times resulted in our meetings being either cancelled or in the case of 2021 we organised a zoom meeting.

Most unsatisfactory, but I am glad to say the 2022 will see a reversion to tradition with a meeting to be held in the village hall at which we can all meet in person.

A more satisfactory way whilst still being mindful of the lessons learned.

Medical developments with the goodwill and common sense of people worldwide have enabled us to create a good base to move forward post pandemic.

Unfortunately, as one problem recedes another raises its ugly head and our thoughts, prayers and help must be directed to the poor people of Ukraine whose lives have been and are still being turned upside down.

Farthinghoe has made a good start for which we must thank our school and particularly Daisy and we appreciate their guidance. The £1255.94 I am sure has also been much appreciated.

With your support we would like to make a charitable donation from the Parish Council funds to a Ukrainian support charity of choice and I am open to suggestions.

This year has been tinged with sadness with the loss of our friends Cyril, Ian, Geoff & Mary.

All four have been stalwart members of our society and have contributed greatly to the benefit of our Parish in their own personal & individualistic ways, for which we truly thank them.

Their memories will always be in our hearts

Our love & prayers go out to their families to help them to cope with their losses.

Moving on to catching up with the specific subjects raised in the 2021 report.

1 Farthinghoe Primary School;

Repeating my report of last year because it is equally relevant this year, I quote

“Our school is also an asset that we can all be really proud of. Added to providing an excellent education and social skills for the children who attend, I also understand that they have been immensely helpful, during these difficult times, to the children of key workers from other areas. Our thanks to the staff and to all of those involved in the running of the school for creating this superb reputation and for ensuring that it is maintained.

However, there are a couple important additions.

After eight years of her sterling input we have sadly lost Wendy Whitehouse as Head of the school.

Wendy has contributed greatly to the development and reputation of the school, along with enhancing its relationship with all other aspects of the Parish.

We wish Wendy all the best in her future with Hornton Primary School and are sure that they will already be feeling the benefits.

Wendy was a great help to us in the fight for our A422 bypass and she will be reminded of us every day as she crosses the self-same A422, albeit it in a more peaceful situation, on her daily commute to Hornton.

Simultaneously we must congratulate Sharon Turner on her promotion to being the Head of the school and also wish her well for the future.

Sharon has already invested a considerable five years of her life and skills into the development of our school having worked closely with Wendy in that period.

Included below are two quotes from Sharon with which I completely concur, sentiments which are a very good indicator that the school remains in good safe hands with a continued bright future.

“I am in the fortunate position to be able to say that I have taught every child in the school and I know them and their families very well”

“Our whole school community live by our school ethos”

Bypass;

During the course of the year we have tried our best to keep everyone updated concerning the progress of the bypass although meaningful information has sometimes been hard to come by.

We hope that communication will begin to improve soon.

A separate report has been prepared by John Grant concerning the bypass along with added details concerning possible interim measures which might be considered to ease our situation whilst we await a bypass.

We have always been aware that once HS2 work begins in earnest at Greatworth, regular traffic will migrate from the Welsh Lane to the A422 thus increasing our woes. NCC Highways have always been aware of this threat but have never deemed it important enough to have meaningful dialogue with HS2.

Despite a promise from the HS2 Minister that the A422 in Farthinghoe would not be used for HS2 Construction traffic it became apparent at the turn of the year that a very significant and growing number of 20 tonne tipper trucks were breaking this promise. Fortunately, we were able to enlist early intervention by the Minister to rectify this situation.

It is clear from the above that HS2 is not in complete control of its contractors and thus we must all remain vigilant. If you become aware of any unusual traffic patterns developing locally then please let me know.

At risk of being accused of continually repeating myself we really do need to improve the ability of the Parish Council to communicate quickly and easily with every household. It would be good to have at least one member of every household registered on the Parish Council email database.

School Crossing;

The crossing revision is now complete and we are pleased with the outcome which brings greater safety with reduced inconvenience to the traffic.

Queen Street Rat Run;

Mentioned in John's separate report.

We are also taking a closer look at the revised Northants Police Community Speed Watch scheme which might benefit Queen Street and Cockley Road.

Read more about this in the May Issue of the Chronicle.

New Bus Shelters

Now fully operational and have received a good reception.

The extra notice boards specified with each are also receiving good comment.

Drains;

Not a good story as Highways seem to be unable to come up with a lasting solution and we are waiting in hope.

Manhole covers on the A422 at the junction of Chapel Lane are again starting to rattle despite promises made by Thames Water and overseen by KierWsp. The repairs have only lasted 8 months this time.

Could it be that the A422 road is not fit for the traffic that travels on it.

I wonder!!

The road surface covering the new drain pipe installed between London Barn and the Limes Farm entrance has broken up after 8 months with the repairers suggesting that this will need doing again and again at the same frequency.

In addition to drains we have a dangerous footpath adjacent to the Main Road which has been on "fixmystreet" since November 2020 and despite a multitude of follow ups it remains untouched with no indication of when it might be rectified.

Fortunately after much pestering the footpath on the Cockley Road adjacent to the school fence has finally been repaired

It would also appear that the problems causing flooding on the "S" bend on the airfield road have finally been addressed

Farthinghoe Village Hall;

This will be covered by a separate report.

We thank everyone involved with the running of the Hall and its events for another successful year.

A great asset to the village

Farthinghoe Chronicle;

During the year we have had a change of Editor and we thank Ollie for his tremendous efforts in keeping us all informed during his period as Editor especially as a lengthy part of this time was in very trying times.

Welcome to Nick Hunt who has kindly volunteered to take on the responsibility and we look forward to working with Nick.

A big thank you also to Rosemary and Vivienne for ensuring that it comes through our door reliably through hell and high water. Latterly also some thanks to Nick, Anna, Max and Monty.

The Dashwood playpark:

A more detailed report is also available produced by John.

Thanks again to Jon for reliably keeping the park looking spick and span along with other areas of green throughout the village. It is truly appreciated.

I add a couple of points

We will need to find additional finance soon to ensure that the equipment can meet the required safety standards

No Dogs Allowed really does mean NO DOGS ALLOWED (unless of course they are Assistance dogs)

Playpark equipment is expensive to keep maintained and the manufacturer states that 12 is maximum user age

NO ADULTS PLEASE

Playing on the roof of the structures is particularly dangerous for children or adults and I am amazed that adults, whoever you are, have been seen on top of these structures

Parish Council

A separate financial report has been prepared for this meeting by our clerk Dave Weston.

We are indebted to Dave for his tremendous efforts throughout the year to keep things moving.

Recently we, unfortunately; received the resignation of Pippa Clayton from the Council.

This will leave us one Councillor short and during the latter part of the month we will begin the process to find a new Councillor

It will be advertised on the notice boards and in the Farthinghoe Chronicle, as well as being circulated on the Parish Council database.

Anyone who is interested and would like to know more should contact Dave Weston

In the report last year mention was made of “Things to look out for”

Solar Farm Greatworth/Farthinghoe Borders

The Solar Farm Planning Application did appear but was cynically withdrawn a couple of days before the Planning Officer was due to announce his recommendations in December 2021

However, it was re-presented at the end of February in a revised format as a new Planning Application, the same power output as before but with very little change.

For full details you can look at West Northants Council Planning Application Number WNS/2022/0557/EIA where you will find many objections already submitted.

If we want to retain this beautiful food producing valley with all its inclusive social benefits then we all have to support it by having our own individual say on the Planning Portal.

If anyone needs help on how the portal works then I am pleased to assist.

On the new application all planning costs have to be met by us, West Northants Tax payers according to Planning Law-A legal injustice if I can use the oxymoron

The 700 homes development west of Brackley is still held in abeyance, but we have been assured that it does not fall within the Council’s local plan.

Wishing everyone well and please continue to take care.

Yours Faithfully

Mick Morris

Chairman