



Farthinghoe & Steane Parish Council

20/5/2020

Chairman's Summary for the 2019/2020 year

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.

As a Parish we have certainly stood up to be counted and I am so very proud of that. Of particular significance was the establishment of a volunteer group to assist with the shopping and other needs of those designated to be most vulnerable.

There is a billowing atmosphere of Community Spirit everywhere & a tremendous will to help those who need help the most.

It had been intended that the Farthinghoe & Steane Annual Parish Meeting for 2019/2020 would be held in the village hall on Monday April 27.

However the rapidly changing situation with the onset of the Coronavirus resulted in public gatherings being prohibited by the Government and the consequent postponement/cancellation of the APM.

The APM was to have incorporated a Farthinghoe Primary School Presentation and Video of a project prepared by staff and pupils over the course of the 2019/2020 academic year.

Along with the school presentation we had hoped to incorporate a presentation by the Brackley Community Hospital 2020 Trust outlining the progress so far and their aims & needs for the future.

Details of the intended Hospital presentation were published in the May edition of the Farthinghoe Chronicle

It is intended that we revert to these presentations at a convenient & safer time in the future.

During this year there has been a change within the Parish Council with Mary Amos resigning in June from her role as the Farthinghoe and Steane Parish Clerk. We are indebted to Mary for her considerable efforts whilst working with the Parish Council and for staying on in the post until such time as her replacement could be found and indeed helping us greatly in the ensuing search & procedures.

In October 2019 Dave Weston was welcomed as our new Parish Clerk. Dave is a retired Police Inspector from the Northants Constabulary hailing from Pattishall, near Towcester

Dave has immediately immersed himself in contributing to the village needs and events.

The responsibilities of a Parish Clerk have considerably increased in their complexities recently, encompassing many added tasks and legalities. Keeping up to date with and implementing these changes has resulted in the working hours needing to be doubled in the last 18 months. We have also been warned that we need to prepare for more responsibilities once the Unitary Council become operational. At this stage we have received no indicators of what those responsibilities might entail, but we must try to be ready.

Road Safety and the Bypass have majored again during this year.

Despite several setbacks in 2019 sufficient funding has now been committed jointly by SNC and NCC to enable the Farthinghoe Bypass Project to be progressed & designed to the point of full Planning Approval being obtained.

We would like to thank Cllr Rebecca Breese, our County and District Councillor, for her diligent and patient endeavours in helping to broker this joint County & District Council initiative.

This is a big step forward as it will enable all parties involved, including our MP Andrea Leadsom, SNC, NCC, and SEMLEP, to push hard with various Government Departments to seek and obtain further funding sources for the actual building phase of the road. Andrea Leadsom has planned a meeting with all parties during June to progress this subject, a meeting which John Grant and I will be attending.

A report of this meeting, be it actual or virtual, will be circulated as soon as it is available

In the interim period we have been awarded a £95,000.00 Road Safety grant by HS2 which will be used to improve the safety of the school crossing traffic lights along with the road on the approaches to the lights. This work was originally planned for May, but has now been fixed to begin on August 24th.

We have been waiting for a long time for NCC and HS2 to combine to provide us with data concerning the potential migration of traffic from the Welsh Lane to the A422 once HS2 construction begins and continually promises made are not being kept. Herein hides another important additional reason why we need a bypass in place at the earliest possible juncture.

It is also the intention of the Parish Council to lobby SNC and NCC to seriously investigate schemes to address the continued use of Queen Street as a rush hour rat run. This will be followed up as soon as daily life returns to some normality.

The Parish Council has responsibility for the two village bus shelters to ensure that they are in good condition and are fit for purpose, allowing us to meet the obligations of our Public Liability insurance and to provide adequate protection to bus users, both from the weather & from the wind & spray generated by the ever increasing passing traffic. It is now clear that both of the shelters are in need of considerable repair & updating. Quotations have been received for such repairs, but with more Government Grants becoming available (some of which may need a parish Council contribution) it is now apparent that a better course of action may be to research the supply and installation of new and more protective shelters. A application has now been submitted to SNC under their recently introduced Community Grant scheme and we should learn more in July,

For some considerable time now, several years in fact, there have been serious problems with sewers and drains, particularly on the Main Road and in Chapel Lane. It has not been easy to identify the responsible authority and then to get them exercise that responsibility. However, we believe that this problem is now solved, but we will still be keeping a close eye on the situation throughout next winter to verify this.

Farthinghoe Village Hall started the 2019/2020 year in rude shape, but thanks to the continued fine efforts of the Village Hall Committee & the Events Committee it has become even "ruder". This year it has acquired a lovely wooden floor made from bamboo, along with which a new skirting board heating system has been installed, as has wi-fi. More improvements are planned including the introduction of water heating & Solar Panel electricity generation.

Our thanks to all who have been involved,

Again we have Ollie, Rosemary, Vivienne & Jenny to thank for the monthly preparation & distribution of the Farthinghoe Chronicle along with Ellie & Alice

The Playpark is again looking in fine fettle with thanks to Jon for his sterling efforts

The Precept for next year has been increased to take care of some considerable additional needs this year which include

Increasing the working hours of the Parish Clerk considerably to meet additional responsibilities

To contribute to the replacement of the bus shelters if needed

To prepare for future repairs or replacement of IT equipment

N.Calc had advised us that as a Parish Council we were under prepared for possible future responsibilities following the switch to a Unitary Council but as mentioned earlier we have to second guess these needs at the moment.

I would like add that I feel so privileged to call this village our home

Yours Sincerely

Mick Morris

Chairman