

## Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015

I was honoured to accept Chairmanship of Yaxley Parish Council this year, my second term in office, and will say I'm beginning to understand the ropes. We have had a very busy but interesting year and have continued with existing programs and more importantly taken on new projects which will be evident in this report.

Last year I stated we were to review the committees to help reduce Councillors time, while we have indeed reduced the committees the time given by councillors has remained about the same as we get to grips with long overdue issues for each committee. However I personally believe we have enjoyed a more joined up approach for the council and speeded up delivery changes and improvements within the council and village.

**Full Council** – Chairman Myself and Vice Chair Ann Rees.

First I would like to again thank all of our Parish Councillors who have given freely of the time and knowledge, working to deliver improvements within the village. Each councillor brings something different to the table to ensure a balanced view of subjects to be discussed. Thank you to all Yaxley councillors.

In May we supported the Yaxley Festival, not only with sponsorship of the stage and the venues, our workforce helped with preparation and clear up through the weekend festival. Again it was great to see Yaxley people enjoying the range of activities throughout the weekend of the event, our thanks go to the organisers and we were pleased to play a small part in their success.

I am pleased to say that Cllr Roger Lucas representing the parish was successful his presentation to Cambridgeshire Highways in winning our application for a safe pedestrian crossing point at the start of Broadway.

**Personnel** – Chairman Andrew Wood.

After the departure of our clerk and assistant clerk early last year we were very fortunate to gain Helen Taylor within our ranks as full time clerk. Her experience and insight have proved invaluable in changes within the office and council, thank you Helen.

Another addition has been Bev Porter a Bookkeeper, if you have seen our web site you will clearly see the improvements to our financial reporting. Well Done Bev.

You may also have noted 2 new faces on our workforce John Bingham and Ray Allen. They are part of the ground maintenance team comprising of Graham Hill, Mark Maltby Peter North & Jason Thorne. Sue Marchant manages our bookings and the facilities team, these being Beryl Maltby & Olive Lenaghan.

Our workforce continue to rise to all challenges in helping reduce costs and benefit the community more recently undertaking new training adding more skills.

My personal appreciation therefore goes out to our workforce whose motivation and dedication in helping with the changes that are required to bring improvements to the Parish of Yaxley are a must.

It was sad to report that Tony Maltby, one of our experienced ground maintenance team passed away during this year he was a valued member of our workforce and is still missed by all and is a sad loss for Yaxley Parish Council.

**Community Amenity** - Chairman Graham Bellamy.

The installation of new and refurbishment of existing bus shelters, bins and benches continue, the latest additional bus shelter being in Church Street.

I'm sure many of you will have seen the upgrade of the footpath around the Church. This work was completed by a parishioner with a passion for the Church and Yaxley. He also led a group of volunteers comprising parishioners, councillors and the church. Who working with the council have helped to develop the Spinney off Pound Lane from an inaccessible area into an area that is open for the public to contemplate and enjoy. Additional work carried out in this area has been to the linking through the two car parks and moving the exit further along Church Street, aiding visibility and therefore improving safety when exiting the area.

This helps prove what a few dedicated villagers can achieve, more recently this group have expanded to improving footpaths and bridleways routes for people to enjoy. My personal thanks to all that have had a hand in making these improvements happen, especially Des Watt. Whose passion not only for the church but for Yaxley and its people, his leadership and foresight have made these changes happen.

Tree maintenance has been a great factor this year and with the onset of Ash die back we are to commence a program of re planting in public areas.

This committee are also responsible for the cemeteries, play areas, equipment and allotments so as you can see a very busy committee.

**Property** - Chairman Rodney Butcher.

Energy surveys and safety inspections have highlighted areas for improvement and cost saving in all buildings. This work has commenced and will be ongoing into next year.

Structural surveys have highlighted areas for maintenance to buildings in need of repair this work will be ongoing again into next year.

We have renewed various machines and tools, the main being purchase of a new Kubota mower and tools to allow some maintenance work to be taken in house again reducing expenditure.

Work continues through the year decorating our facilities to the benefit of users.

**Planning** - Chairman Clive Thorne.

Our planning committee continue to strive to ensure plans are in keeping with the needs of the village aspects. This committee meeting every 2 weeks and attends District meetings when required therefore can be a very busy team of councillors.

## **Going forward -**

Having seen what a few volunteers in the village can do for the village I would like to extend this into the coming years, where we can have teams working with the council to develop plans for areas for the masses to enjoy. So if you have time and are looking for a project or have an idea for a local scheme you think would help others within the community, please come along to any of the council meetings or forward a letter to the clerk with your ideas. While we may not be able to do all, some may be low cost and easy to implement.

Yaxley Parish Council will continue to support the Norman Cross Action Group to get the best for our communities from the Great Haddon project. They are currently looking to get alterations to the Great Haddon Loop which will affect all A15 commuters if the Great Haddon's plans come to fruition.

We are continuing to work to ensure Yaxley has a direct access into The Great Fen as we believe this will bring commercial, leisure and educational benefits into Yaxley's community.

The council working are alongside Fenland Trust to develop schemes within Yaxley, more recently a pre feasibility study commissioned by the Fenland Trust for the Festival Park development is being carefully considered by the council, in line with the needs of the village and to ensure sustainability of the project while maintaining viability of existing venues within the village.

Finally this year is an election year. Anyone that has the village at heart and able to offer their ideas and services for the benefit of the parish giving freely of their time at least one Tuesday a month please put yourself up as a candidate to support and shape your parish.

Thank you.

Kevin Gulson

Chairman

Yaxley Parish Council