

SOUTHAM PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

We started this municipal year with our final virtual meeting and it is good to be meeting in person in the Village Hall again as Covid restrictions have started to ease. The challenges we faced during periods of lockdown have introduced us to new ways of working and hopefully brought the work of the Council to a wider audience than before.

Councillors were pleased to welcome Rebecca Prince onto the Council in September. Rebecca lives in Southam and has detailed knowledge of the local area, having moved here from Cleve Hill where she and her family lived for over 30 years.

The work of the Council this year has included liaising with Tewkesbury Borough Council on behalf of residents on many issues including environmental health and planning enforcement. We continue to liaise with Gloucestershire County Council regarding highways maintenance and this year we have also focused on road safety. Together with members of the Community Speedwatch team we met with our Area Highways Representatives in October to put forward the views of residents which were gathered from the responses to the road safety survey carried out in April 2021. Although there are many legal and financial constraints affecting the implementation of traffic calming measures we hope to continue a dialogue with the GCC Highways Team going forward and we made a small increase in the precept for 2022/23 with a view to building up a fund towards the cost of road safety improvements.

Following requests from residents we have funded several improvements in the parish this year. These include the installation of a new noticeboard on School Road, a long awaited dog/waste bin on the Noverton estate and the replacement of the stile opposite the Ellenborough Park Hotel with a new kissing gate. We are always happy to receive suggestions from residents and we are currently looking into the possibility of installing a small shelter at the bus stop on Old Road.

The Council is a statutory consultee for planning applications and we examined and commented on 46 applications or amended applications this year. We are also committed to working with residents to protect the Green Belt land in the parish and have made representation to the planning authorities on appeals and enforcement issues when deemed necessary.

County Councillor David Gray and Borough Councillor Keja Berliner were elected last May and we thank both of them together with Borough Councillor Mike Dean for their support and for acting as a necessary link to the County and Borough Councils respectively.

I would like to thank Edna Smith, Jamie Walsh, and more recently Bill Motion, together with the team of distributors for their work on the newsletter, which is a valuable source of information for all residents.

Thank you also to Graham Saunders, the Cotswold Warden, for his work in keeping our footpaths in good repair and alerting the GCC Rights of Way Team to any work needed.

I would like to thank the Community Speedwatch team for carrying out speed surveys in the village when permitted within coronavirus restrictions and for gathering data from the Mobile Vehicle Activated Speed Signs on Southam Lane and New Road. The information that the team gathers is invaluable in providing evidence for any discussions with the relevant authorities about the speed of vehicles both in the village and across the wider parish.

I would like to thank David Jones for his work on the website, councillor emails and the Southam information emails which advise the 237 subscribers of local events and other items of local interest. The Village website continues to prove useful in publicising both the role and functions of the Parish Council and the activities of local groups and societies. The Parish Council Facebook page continues to attract new followers and acts as a digital noticeboard in sharing information provided by other local councils and groups.

A final thank you to my fellow councillors and our Parish Clerk, Liz Dowie, for their input and assistance over the past year.

10th May 2022