

Annual Parish Meeting 13 May 2019
Combroke Parish Council
2018-19 Annual Report of the Chairman

Meetings and Administration

We held 6 scheduled meetings of the Parish Council in 2017-18. We also called 3 extra-ordinary meetings, 2 of which were to respond to planning consultations on time.

Our meetings are well attended by our Parish Councillors, District and County Councillors. We have been pleased to welcome residents to meetings, to observe, ask questions and make comments. Residents' attendance has been high and especially welcome when the agenda has included planning matters of particular interest. With the publication of the new code of conduct we have used the District Council's training material to undertake a session of 'on the job' training at the beginning of several of our meetings.

We receive really helpful feedback from residents about the displays in the Village Hall which coincide with planning consultations to enable interested residents to find out about matters even if they cannot attend meetings.

Environs

We appreciate the good level of support the village enjoys from the District Teams and County Teams... ..*The Streetscene Team* for the grass cut around the village verges; *the leaf and debris kerb sweepers* -who make a special effort with all the leaf fall at the bottom end of the village; and *the very prompt removal of fly tipping*. Thanks also to the *always helpful teams on the refuse/recycle bin collections*; we know that our parking can be a problem when there is a large refuse/recycle collection truck to be reversed down our narrow lines but they do it with such skill and care.

It was good news to learn that the County Highways Maintenance Teams were ranked joint top in a recent national survey - in our view a well deserved accolade. We feel very well supported by *Patch Byrne and his Teams* who attend to highways maintenance over the year - we've had a number of road drainage issues addressed over this year - as well as the little things that matter - flushing the gullies, ensuring the grit bins are replenished for winter, and keeping the grass verge at the Fosse well trimmed in the summer..

And many thanks to those *behind the scenes teams* whose work involves support to our village.

Thanks must be recorded to our local landowners who keep their paths open, and accessible; and hedges trimmed. We continue to be grateful to Stephen Bates for keeping an eye on our network of paths and bridleways. Huge Thanks to Steve for mowing the paths on the Leys.

This time last year we reported some success with OS Mapping sorting out the road names which had become mixed up on digital mapping . It is nearly correct on OS maps - has yet to file through to other brands..... However we have recently become aware that Google maps seems to have relocated our postcodes in to the fields and woodland s..... were are trying to deal with that watch this space !

Communications

Last year's report mentioned that the BT cabinet had *arrived*. This year it is a delight to recall that high speed Broadband finally got switched on in Combrook in Summer 2018. Now we are so used to it -we may have forgotten how *slow* it was before!

The switch on was not without some early teething problems -when groups of us were told it was not going to be available for our properties- but our long established relationship with the CSW Rural Broadband Project came into play and we were quickly able to convince BT Openreach it did not make sense and it *must* be something simple. And it was. Within two weeks we were all happily downstreaming and uploading. Phew.....

Planning

The Parish Council continues to be regularly engaged with Planning Consultations of one sort or another. The **majority** of residents' planning applications have been *thoughtful and appropriately managed*. However there have been several *other* significant planning / enforcement / building control matters requiring much time and ongoing engagement over the year.

Finance

With prudent management we have kept our spend largely within the expected income. With new property in the village we have decided to raise the precept for 2019-20 (the money allocated from Council Tax) by 3.5 %. Other households might have seen a small downward adjustment in the Combrook element of their council tax.

We have agreed to allocate a sum jointly with the Village Hall Committee to purchase and install a cabinet for a Public Access Defibrillator - we have had the kind offer of a loan defibrillator unit until we can raise funds to purchase a new one for the Village. Many Thanks to the Ettington CFR Team for their help and all the support and encouragement provided.

The Leys - Fostering Our Heritage

Our Local Wildlife Site seems evermore **relevant with the current** agenda to take action on climate and biodiversity. With a brilliant Spring the Leys has been looking particularly lovely. The new Leys Management Group got started last year - and very quickly the new paths appeared. And a little later we tried the wider width on the path, such a small change made such a big difference. Then courtesy of a Village Hall Grant *the bench* arrived..... Many Thanks to Hazel for researching and arranging the bench and big thanks to Steve who quietly keeps our paths mown. Please enjoy!

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed or got involved with the Leys in one way or another, in particular the Leys Management Group who met throughout the summer. Thanks also to Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, South Warwickshire Barn Owl Survey team, Compton Verney and other agencies for their ongoing support and encouragement.

And Finally A big thank you to all the Parish, District and County Councillors, and many others who have given their time and energy so generously to maintain and improve the life of the Parish.

The Parish Council wouldn't survive without the ongoing hard work of our Clerk, Gina Lowe.

As always, as Chairman I have been grateful for the unfailing support I have received from the whole Parish Council Team -they are great! -thank you! And many thanks also to those many residents who have encouraged us to keep doing what we do.

THANK YOU

Brenda Rayson
Chairman (May 2017-18)