

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2013

There have clearly been two main pre-occupations for your Parish Council in the past year – HS2 and the proposed Energy from Waste Incinerator at Great Moor Farm. Both these projects have been strenuously opposed by your Council and many meetings have been attended by members during the year. Whilst the Council opposes these schemes a pragmatic approach has been taken in as much as an organisation with a revenue of around £10k per annum can hardly fight the might of the Government which can spend ad infinitum, with our money, or even the County Council which is also financially far more powerful. We have as far as is possible engaged to ensure that, if the worst situation applies, we have gained as much mitigation as possible to render our future lives at least bearable.

The arguments against each project that we have advanced are as much against the principles involved as in respect of the damage that we believe each project is inflicting on Twyford. Our arguments are centred upon the reliability of the forecasts in both cases and, by projection, on the financial impact on the county, country and Twyford individuals should these prove to be unachievable.

The Council will continue to represent the village's best interests until one or both of these projects is cancelled or until it is not possible to have any further influence. Our thanks in this respect are due to Councillor Sloan and to others in the village who have devoted much time, blood and tears to these causes.

More parochially your Council has sought to improve the village and to make progress on a number of projects that the Parish Plan of 2005 suggested as important in the minds of the village. In the first instance, we are planning to update the Parish Plan, and possibly extending this to a Neighbourhood Plan under the auspices of the Localism Bill. This latter would allow the village far more influence on the manner in which it develops over the next decades. However, as with many ideas emanating from a government there is a fairly hefty price to pay to be part of the game and the debate must be had as to the value for money of taking such a step.

Otherwise, your Council completed the acquisition of the additional land earmarked for the Burial Ground extension. However, on making a formal application for change of use we were asked to have an archaeological survey carried out as the site had, as many will know, been part of the original village in Saxon and Norman times. This has been completed and your Council envisages a period of negotiation with the District Council before the entire site can be made available for its chosen purpose. This matter is an agenda item for the Parish Council meeting following this AGM.

Your Council has acquired additional dog waste bins situated close to the allotments and in Mill Lane and it is reported that fouling in this areas has diminished. It is our intention to provide a further bin close to the new shop premises once these are opened. On the subject of dog fouling it remains the case that, despite a bin being available at the Rec., fouling continues on the ground and it is hoped that owners will continue to be vigilant when exercising their animals here. It has also been reported that significant amounts of excrement have been deposited in piles in the field behind the houses on the south-western side of Bicester Road. Whilst this latter is not directly a matter for the

Parish Council, as it is on private land it is hoped that those responsible will desist from this practice as soon as possible.

The Church clock and chimes have been a cause celebre for a number of years; indeed they were the basis of an important court case a number of years ago when the then occupant of the Old Red Lion sought to have them silenced. The management of the clock and associated chimes in Twyford is somewhat unusual in that although they are situated in the church the responsibility for their maintenance was given by the donor in 1947 to the Rural District Council and presumably its successors. It is believed that legally the successor to the RDC is AVDC although somewhere along the line the responsibility was assumed by the Parish Council. Whether the PC is directly or indirectly through the DC responsible for the upkeep the cost falls upon the village through the Precept, so, on reflection, it is probably better value for the current situation to obtain as undoubtedly your PC will be more frugal with your money than would the DC.

During the year just past considerable time, effort and money has been expended on bringing the electrical supply in the bell tower and to the clock and chimes up to scratch. Apart from one small item we believe that this has now been achieved. Thanks are due to Councillor Cook for volunteering to oversee the clock and chimes and to dash up the tower at the slightest opportunity.

Our Rec. Is now protected in perpetuity as part of the QEII scheme and a plaque to commemorate this will be available during this summer and we may have a small ceremony to reflect on the benefit that this will bring to the village. The cricket and football clubs continue to do sterling work on maintaining the grounds at little or no expense to the village and Michael Roberts, Tony Hill, Alan Watts and others are to be thanked for this. At last, and again thanks to the two clubs who contributed financially, a replacement tractor has been acquired which, after a slight false start, is proving its worth.

During the year, in addition to the regular Council meetings your Council held a special meeting at the School at the request of Years One and Two who had expressed concern at both the speed of traffic along Bicester/Portway Road and at the number of potholes that seemed to be popping up, or rather down, on our streets. As a result of this meeting the Council arranged for the local Police to attend the School to discuss with the pupils what could be done about speeding. The County Council were also contacted about the state of the roads and whilst a number of potholes were repaired there has been no considered response from the responsible County Councillor with any sort of plan to render improvements to the road surfaces.

Finally, discussions have been continuing during the year with Urban Self Build a company who have been promoting the use of part of the allotment field as a possible site for houses. Your Council have made it clear to USB that, in order for the village to be asked to support such a scheme, there has to be a benefit to the village by the provision, at the very least, of a number of plots on which affordable homes under the control of the village could be built. In order to move this forward it is likely that a Housing needs Survey will need to be conducted and your Council is debating how this might be progressed and funded.

Moving into the ongoing year your Council hopes to continue to provide reasoned opposition to the two projects mentioned at the start of this report. We will also look to provide permanent grit bins at various points in the village to assist with vehicle and pedestrian movement during inclement

weather. Your Council will also support the new village shop in some material manner after it has opened. Otherwise we will work with villagers to assist them in any way in which we can and continue in our efforts to maintain and enhance to surroundings of the village.