

18 May 2020 – Swyncombe Parish Council – Chairman's Report

I am very disappointed that I am unable to give you my Annual Report in person, but sadly this will have to do. Due to the situation surrounding Covid 19, the current advice is to postpone our AGM until next year. If this changes we will of course advise you. This also means that there will be no elections or changes of Officers until next year.

I will only be reporting April 2019 to April 2020 as is strictly correct so have omitted VE75 but I will say that it was wonderfully supported and well done to all those involved. More next year!

The Village Hall at Russells Water

The Village Hall at Russells Water had a successful 2019. Finances are in good shape thanks to some generous donations, the 100 Club monthly draw, and 3 events which each made a profit.

The Village Hall End of Summer Party on 31st August was great fun as always, the Quiz Night on 23rd November was well attended and we all enjoyed a lovely supper and grappled with general knowledge questions, and finally the Christmas Party on Saturday 14th December where we enjoyed carol singing with the Swyncombe Choir and a visit from Father Christmas for the children.

Hall bookings remain steady and we still have Pilates classes twice a week. The Luncheon Club continues to be popular and greatly appreciated and indoor bowling is regularly supported.

Quite some time and effort was spent planning for a VE Day Party on May 8th which has had to be postponed. We do not have a definite future date yet.

All in all a good year and we hope to get back on track with plenty of energy once we are able to.

Shopping Bus Service

The service is run between Swyncombe, Nettlebed, Bix and Stonor with Pishill. There are 12 ladies using the bus on a regular basis. If anybody wants any more information please feel free to ring Claire Harwood 01491 640805

Bonfire Night

This year the weather was abysmal so numbers were down and which meant that we made loss. However, there was money in the pot to cover it. We are hoping very much to hold the event as usual this November but circumstances may dictate otherwise. We will take a decision in September whether to hold the 2020 event.

Litter Blitz

The Litter Blitzes continue to be very successful both at Cookley Green, Park Corner and Russells Water. Thank you to all those who take part, your help is much appreciated in keeping our Parish tidy. We are now taking full advantage of support from the SODC in terms of loan of equipment and collection of rubbish by the council after the events. I would also like to thank Sam Fielden and Graham Ryes Webb for the loan of the trailer for the Cookley Green Litter Blitz.

Flytipping

We have seen a surge in flytipping of late. May I remind all that if you see some flytipping that you can report it on : www.fixmystreet.com which is also available as an App on Smart Phones. I have used the App many times myself and it is very user friendly or you can report it on line on your return home.

War Memorial

Continued thanks to Graham Ryes Webb and Nicola Perry for doing such a fantastic job on maintaining the War Memorial.

Speed Signs and Speed Watch

Thank you to all the members of the community who gave up their time to help with Speed Watch last summer. Thanks to their hard work we amassed data on many speeding drivers. This has enabled us to identify where the problem areas are, which are, the entrance to Park Corner from Nettlebed and the entrance to Cookley Green from Watlington. As a direct result of all the data we have amassed from this exercise and the previous exercise organised by Highways, we have been able to present a good case that we need a Speed Control sign, otherwise known as SID, and painted 30 mph signs on the road at Park Corner. We have agreed to purchase the SID with Cuxham and Watlington, which means we will share the sign and have it for 4 months per year. Our SID will be similar to the one at Crowmarsh Gifford that displays the speed at which you are travelling. (Red for over the limit and green for under the limit.) We understand that moving signs aids their ability to control the speeds, meaning that this should stop those who regularly drive through the villages getting complacent. The SID also records speeds so we will have the opportunity to see how effective it is.

The two sites for Swyncombe will be at the entrance to Cookley Green from Watlington and the entrance to Park Corner from Nettlebed. Once we have the exact positions we will be letting you know, we are working with Highways find the most efficient position for both.

We have ordered the SID, which we will pay for at a cost of £1409 excluding VAT - which we can reclaim. Highways are picking up the not inconsiderable cost of installing the poles which I believe is some £1000 per pole, this largely due to the road management for Health and Safety of the installers. Covid 19 has not helped with the ordering process once we have more information we will let you know.

Cricket Club

A report from Clive Goodall, Cricket Club Captain.

2019 was a good year for the Cricket Club and with 20 Sunday matches on the list we won 9, lost 7 and had 1 draw. 3 matches had to be cancelled due to weather or the opposition not being able to raise a side. Swyncombe had plenty of players for all fixtures.

The fence around the pitch made a big difference, saving a lot of time looking for the ball in the hedge.

We also invested extra money to improve the wicket in the autumn and despite the very wet winter this is starting to show now.

What a shame it looks like we are going to be very lucky to play even half of this season but judging by the banter on our WhatsApp group the players can't wait to get started.

Covid 19

At last to the dramatic events of early 2020 that brought us into a Pandemic. Extraordinary and enlightening times.

I feel privileged to live in the Parish of Swyncombe. The sense of community, support and neighbourliness has been extraordinary. From collecting prescriptions, the Five Horseshoes doing groceries, takeaways and generally acting as the Parish Hub, cake baking in Park Corner, clapping for the NHS across the Parish, at one point, even if we could not see one another, amazing Newsletters, email articles, WhatsApp Groups, supply of sour dough starter, Yoga classes, Pilates classes, shopping for neighbours, tennis balls for the sheep dogs, gardening advice, daily local flora and fauna articles, ad hoc deliveries from local businesses, phone calls to residents, VE 75 celebrations (more of which in next year's annual report!) the list goes on. Finally to Graham for supplying the wonderful pleasure of seeing the lambs which gave us all the feeling that Spring was coming and things would get better.

We still have a long way to go with Covid 19, so please continue to stay alert and stay safe.

Thank you to you all for showing what a community can do.

Parish Councillors

I would very much like to thank my fellow Councillors for all their hard work and commitment. Firstly, Peter Green, for having taken on being Vice Chair. I cannot thank him enough for his hard work and support over the last year. Sam Fielden for his continuing work with the Police and Highways, which has been quite a challenge this year. Peter Willis Fleming for his tireless work with Planning which has also been busy this year. Tracey Taverner for all her work with the Village Hall which continues to go from success to success. Lastly, and by no means least, Kristina, who keeps our Parish Council boat afloat. Without her unstinting advice and support we would all be lost at sea.

However, all these thanks from myself to the Parish Council sound very weak given the situation we now find ourselves in. Your Parish Council has been working so very hard at keeping our several communities supported over this very difficult time, thank you for all your commitment and tireless work.