

Henstridge Annual Parish Meeting 2010

Chairman's Statement

Welcome to the Henstridge Annual Parish Meeting.

Parish Council

The council remains largely unchanged from last year although we welcome Caroline Rowland as a co-opted member. Council representation on other bodies is myself on the Henstridge Airfield Consultative Committee; Mr Stobart is our representative to SALC and VHMC representative, a role shared with Jean Oswick. Caroline Rowland is our Youth representative with Michael Vincent representative for Yenston. Adam Temperton is our footpaths representative and also highways representative with Peter Crocker. Paul Brighten is the HALT representative.

There have been significant changes in other areas of the council. Tracey Watson resigned as clerk responsible for planning and finance earlier in the year with Rachel assuming these responsibilities. Fiona Parrott has joined as Rachel's assistant. These changes however have necessitated a move to new premises in order to comply with current health and safety regulations.

The Parish Council continues to strive to improve the amenities of the Village where it is within our remit. In response to comments from parishioners as a result of the very icy weather, the Council have committed funds for the installation of grit bins over the summer period. The decision on placement of these bins will be taken at the June Council Meeting and we would be grateful for any ideas on where these should be sited.

Nationally there has been an increasing interest in growing one's own produce. I am pleased to report that in response to local demand we have been able to extend the allotment space provided and created an additional 7 plots which have all been taken.

Finance

Unfortunately we have had to increase the precept to £23,000. This increase was to cover the anticipated additional costs of the new office premises. However I am pleased to report that subsequent to this increase, we have been able to obtain office accommodation at a peppercorn rent. This has enabled us to transfer a significant proportion of the money to our reserves which had become dangerously low. The precept as you are aware is to meet the running costs of the Parish including Insurance, maintenance of the Council Burial ground and recreation areas, machinery, salaries and administration.

The Council sets aside budget for small donations to local projects/clubs to be granted in the current financial year. It should be noted however that major expenditure has to be budgeted for the next financial year. Requests for consideration for expenditure need to be received by September for the financial year starting the following April.

Planning

Planning matters are dealt with by the Planning Committee which meets every two weeks. The committee this year will once again comprise the whole of the Council.

Last year the Committee made recommendations on 32 planning applications, a significant reduction on previous years.

It is the requirement of planning laws for the local Planning authority to consult with Parish Councils. The majority of planning applications for the Parish are dealt with by South Somerset District Council.

It is not the role of this Parish Council to determine any application, however at the meeting the job of the Planning Committee is to agree on what the response should be given to the Planning authority, from a local point of view and to highlight the most important local issues surrounding a particular planning matter. In common with full Council meetings all planning meetings are open to the public and public opinion on planning applications is always welcomed by the Parish Council either at the meeting or in writing. For your information, copies of meeting agendas are posted on the Parish Council's Henstridge and Yenston notice boards and on the Parish Council website.

Finally I would like to thank Adam Temperton for providing the refreshments and particularly our two clerks Rachel and Fiona without whom I don't think the council could function.

Thank you