

Holwell Parish Council
Chairman's Report 2015-2016
For the AGM
Tuesday 10th May 2016

Good evening and a very warm welcome to all of you. I can hardly believe another year has gone by and I am here reporting again on the comings and goings of Holwell Parish Council.

I must as always start by saying a huge thank you to my fellow councillors, Mrs Rosemary Gainsford, Mr Colin Everett, Mr Mick Bowen and Mrs Keeley Sparrow. Your help and support over the past year has as always been invaluable. Special thanks go to Mrs Sparrow for taking on the task of starting the process of creating the Holwell Parish Council website, which has not been easy, especially in light of the poor broadband speed Holwell endures.

Our clerk, Mrs Ann Warner, continues to be the most fundamental part of this Parish Council and I am so grateful to her for everything she does behind the scenes to keep us going. Mrs Warner has been with this Parish Council for over 30 years and I hope she continues in this role for many more.

I would also like to say a big thank you to our County Council Representative, Mr David Barnard and Mr Harry Spencer-Smith our District Council Representative. We do appreciate them coming to our meetings, advising us on various matters and of course for the grants we have received.

Thank you to Mr Michael Kelly and Mr Jeff Thompson who continue to make sure the Recreation Ground and children's play area are cut and maintained regularly for all to enjoy. I had relatives visiting recently and they were extremely complimentary about the grounds and we often hear that the football and cricket clubs who visit the site are suitably impressed. I hope Mr Thompson is recovering well and will be back on the tractor soon.

Thanks to Mrs Liz Wood who has produced the Village Magazine again this year and also thank you to her and her husband Mr Edmund Wood for ensuring the village is kept free of litter.

Hitchin Hawks football team and Ickleford Cricket Club Third X1 have again made full use of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion. This continues to be a very satisfactory arrangement for both clubs and the Parish Council. They are happy with the facilities provided and the change over from one club to the other has gone very smoothly with both organisations ensuring everything is in order for the next one to start their season. This will be the last year that the current football team plays at Holwell and we wish them all luck for their futures.

A meeting has been held between the football and cricket clubs and it has been agreed for an under 12 team to begin playing games this year at Holwell on a smaller pitch in front of the pavilion and as they grow, they will move onto the main pitch, making way for the next young hopefuls to begin their matches. So this should continue to be a rolling arrangement for many years to come. Thanks must go to the cricket club for their support in this happening.

Visiting clubs for both the cricket and football continue to be very complimentary about the facilities. We are still hopeful that residents from Holwell will join one or both clubs.

I do not think I have forgotten to thank anybody else, so I will move onto the report of the Parish Council.

It has as always been a busy year dealing with many matters. We have had 8 Parish Council Meetings since the last Annual General Meeting.

Pavilion

The pavilion is still standing and the cricket and football clubs are happy with it, but we would still love to replace it at some point. We know this will be a huge financial undertaking, not to mention the organising of it and there is some debate whether it is worth it. I would like to think that 100 years from now, the recreation ground is still being used by young footballers and cricketers and I am not sure the current one will last that long. It is certainly an ongoing issue. Thank you to Mr Kelly who tries his very best to keep it in as good a state of repair as is possible.

Recreation Ground

- Thanks to Mrs Rosemary Gainsford for continuing to carry out checks within the Recreation Ground. Thankfully the horrible task of emptying the bins has now been passed on to the council.
- Mr Lawton has again cut the hedges around the Recreation Ground and they are looking great.
- We have recently had the hedges cleared of sucklings, trees trimmed and new plants planted and although there are a few gaps at the moment, once the new plants take hold, it will make a big difference to the look of the grounds.
- A new picnic bench has been placed in the play area. Thanks must go to Mr Smith for laying a concrete base (in quite horrible weather) so the table could be placed on it. Mr Smith has also now erected the new bench at the rear of Mr and Mrs Wood's property.

Highways

- The humps along Holwell Road have now been repainted on the other side thanks to Mr David Barnard pursuing this at our request and ensuring the work was carried out.
- We have now received a report relating to the vehicle speeds and visibility along Pirton Road. The outcome of which we have had time to peruse and will discuss it later in our meeting.

Rights of Way

Footpath 6 encroachment. A meeting was held recently between officers from the Enforcement agencies and witnesses from Holwell. At present I am unaware of the proceedings and look forward to hearing what occurred and hopefully this will be dealt with in the very near future.

Access from Holwell Road to the Play Area alongside Peter House. At present, we are number 11 on the list to deal with this issue.

Planning Applications

There have been a few planning applications that although we have objected to, have been approved in the past year.

The application for Harvest Farm.

The application for The Piggeries development.

The application for the crematorium.

The application for the Pirton development at Holwell Turn, although it still has to be decided how many houses will be built.

We have the village picnic to look forward to on July 2nd, let us hope the weather is as glorious as it was last Sunday. I hope to see many of you there.

This now concludes my report, apart from saying again how much I appreciate you all and it has been a pleasure to represent the Parish Council as chairperson for another year.

I will now hand over to Mrs Ann Warner to continue the meeting.

Yvonne Hart
Chairperson