

**Holwell Parish Council**  
**Chairman's Report 2018-2019**  
**For the AGM**  
**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

Good evening and thank you all for coming tonight.

This is now the end of my second term as a Councillor and my eighth year as your chairman. As ever it has been a year of ups and downs, some challenges and various issues dealt with.

I am very grateful to Mr Colin Everett for standing once again as a councillor for Holwell. His commitment to the village and the Parish Council is much appreciated and his experience and knowledge is always helpful.

Sadly this year Mr Michael Bowen resigned as a parish councillor and now both Mrs Rosemary Gainsford and Mrs Keeley Sparrow have decided to step down. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for their commitment to the Parish Council. Mrs Sparrow has been with us for 4 years, Mr Bowen for nearly 8 years and Mrs Gainsford for a little over 14 years having been co-opted in January 2005. It has been a pleasure working with each of them and I wish them well for their future endeavours.

Mr Ken Jordan was co-opted to replace Mr Bowen and is now a fully pledged councillor as of May 2<sup>nd</sup>. As well as a number of other responsibilities, Mr Jordan has taken on the role of updating and maintaining the Parish Council website, which as a bit of a technophobe I am extremely grateful for.

Holwell are currently short of 2 councillors and would welcome any offers to join us. Anyone who is interested should, in the first instance, contact Mrs Ann Warner our clerk. There is one resident who has expressed an interest and hopefully will join us in the near future.

The Parish Council representatives undertake varied tasks during the year, all on a voluntary basis. Councillors attend the monthly meetings of the council, held within Holwell Bowls Club and which are open to the general public to attend and make representations. They occasionally also attend other meetings, such as planning meetings and representing the village with various organisations. There is also the need to carry out practical tasks to make our village a better place to live in. More importantly they do it with great enthusiasm, with great grace and without seeking glory or praise for what they do. I thank them all for all they do.

As always, Mrs Ann Warner, our clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, deserves and warrants the biggest thanks. She keeps all of the councillors updated making sure they are furnished with all the correct information they need. Mrs Warner works tirelessly for Holwell and goes above and beyond her allocated role.

Mr Michael Kelly has again done a great job of cutting and maintaining the Recreation Ground and children's play area. The ground is in great condition and is often remarked on by others. Sadly Mr Jeff Thompson, who had been working alongside Mr Kelly passed away last year.

Mr Nigel Eaton has reinstated the Village Magazine over the past year. I know it is a lot of hard work, but is a definite positive for the village, so thanks to him.

Mr David Barnard continues his role as our County Councillor. Now I would like to formally congratulate and welcome Mr Sam North who replaces Mr Harry Spencer-Smith as our District Council Representative. We look forward to working with both him and Councillor Barnard, using their knowledge, resources and funds to help Holwell run as efficiently as possible.

Hitchin Hawks football team and Ickleford Cricket Club Third X1 continue to make good use of the grounds and the facilities in Holwell. The arrangement between them and the PC has worked well and will hopefully continue for many years. I look forward to hearing their reports shortly.

Over the past year we have had 8 Parish Council Meetings. Issues dealt with have included;

**CALA Homes Development**

Although the development is well underway, the Parish Council and particularly the HACT group are still working tirelessly to ensure our village is considered in all aspects. The main point of contention is the fact that ALL the traffic comes through Holwell, whereas the obvious, fairest and ideal solution would be to have a one way in one way out system. I am sure we will have many other matters to report on this situation before it is finished.

**Pavilion**

The pavilion is still standing but as the years go by, continues to have a number of issues mainly due to the subsidence. Mr Mick Kelly and Mr Rob Day work hard to keep it running with a variety of repairs. Mr Day has again spent many

hours sprucing it up as well as working on the cricket square. It is my ultimate wish that one day we are able to secure the finances to replace it.

The appliances in the pavilion are due to be tested shortly.

### **Recreation Ground**

Mrs Rosemary Gainsford has continued to carry out checks within the Recreation Ground and report any issues that may occur. What will we do without her?

Mr Lawton has cut the hedges around the Recreation Ground and they are looking great.

To save the PC some money this year, Mrs Warner, Mrs Gainsford and myself armed ourselves with loppers and saws and spent a couple of mornings cutting down the sycamore suckers around the edge of the recreation ground. If left, they would have continued to cause much damage to the hedge and grow into trees. Although it didn't take long, it has been suggested that next time this needs to be done, we send an appeal to residents to help set up a working party.

Hopefully the Parish Council will shortly be securing some funding to carry out some repairs and maintenance in the children play area to ensure it is as safe as possible for the many users.

### **Highways**

As a Parish Council, we continue to keep an eye on roads, verges etc. in Holwell and report any issues to Highways and then wait for them to rectify the problems.

The Parish Council are aware of a small number of vehicles parking on the yellow lines at the opening to Rands Meadow. After seeking advice, there is little the PC can do, but would request that drivers are mindful of the lack of visibility when trying to come out of the turning.

### **Rights of Way**

Access from Holwell Road to the Play Area alongside Peter House. There have been a few issues with this modification order. The owner of Peter House appealed the decision that the access be reinstated and it is now in the hands Simon Bell who has informed us that it is unlikely to be dealt with until 2020.

### **Finance**

Holwell Parish Council raised the precept this year, to help enable us to deal with the many costs of looking after the village. The year-end accounts of income and expenditure will shortly be able to be viewed on the Parish Council website [www.holwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.holwellparishcouncil.gov.uk) . If any residents do not have access to the internet please contact the parish clerk or one of the councillors who will be happy to provide you with a copy. The Parish Council strives to be transparent and open with how public money is spent. Like every other organisation the Parish Council sets a budget which is monitored regularly and reviewed often. The Parish Council has the responsibility to manage and maintain the village and the recreation ground. This includes: grass cutting and the upkeep and repairs to the equipment, emptying of both general bins and dog waste bins, hedge cutting, playground inspection, upkeep and repairs, tree inspection and maintenance, the upkeep of the pavilion, notice boards and of course, insurance, utilities and website costs. The precept is used for all of these alongside any grants that the PC is able to secure.

### **Planning Applications**

This year, the Parish Council considered a few planning applications, most fairly straightforward, with the occasional trickier one. It's important to bear in mind that it's North Herts District Council which makes the final decisions on planning applications, but the Parish Council submits comments and recommendations, having taken on board the views of members of the public and taking into account how they would affect the village.

### **Matters for special consideration**

The Scarecrow competition will be held for the third time again this year. There were some fantastic entries last year and I am looking forward to seeing how the residents manage to surpass themselves. In addition, there will be a few additional stalls scattered around from the organisers of the Village Fete committee, which will hopefully take place next year.

We have now secured a grant to get a defibrillator for the village. This will benefit residents of Holwell as well as the bowls, cricket and football teams. There are some technical issues that need to be dealt with before having one installed in the telephone box in the middle of the village.

I would like to end my annual report by thanking not only my fellow councillors and individuals who work with the Parish Council, but all the residents of the parish who are involved in any aspect of the community. Your parish council is only a small aspect of the village we live in and share, far more residents are involved in other areas of this parish and I wish to thank you all for whatever you do. Thank you all once again for your continued support.

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

Yvonne Hart  
Chairman