

Annual Parish Meeting

Annual Report 2017_18

Higher Tier Councils

- The Parish Council operates in a context of significant financial pressures on higher tier councils, Police and other services. Far more is expected to be done for less and there have been massive budget cut-backs and withdrawal of rate support grant.
- One counter to these pressures is the decision to form a Unitary Council for Buckinghamshire. There are two options for this, a single unitary authority covering the whole of Bucks, or two unitaries, one north and one south. The Parish Council has not taken a view on which would be the preferred option but sees the integration of services as a good thing. The result will be an entirely new authority.
- For the Parish Council there is the prospect of further devolution of services, in addition to the current agreement, for example tree work or minor pothole repairs.

Growth

- The draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) allocates 1,000 new homes for Haddenham. Most of these are expected to be delivered in the next 5 years, rather than spread out over the plan period to 2033. This will mean a huge influx of people with higher demands on local services.
- There is currently a consultation on a change to the National Planning Policy Framework standard methodology to assess housing need. The implication for Aylesbury Vale is 50% more may be needed. Haddenham is a strategic settlement so that could mean another 500 homes.
- The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) is proposing a new expressway in an arc between Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford (CaMKOx). Associated with this could be 1 million homes, 4 new towns and the east-west railway.
- We are waiting for the selection of the route of the expressway, and of the three options the southerly route would run just north of Haddenham along the A418 then dip south and across to Aylesbury. The decision on the route is expected soon.
- The NIC invited entries to a concept design competition for development in the arc. The Fletcher Priest entry focussed on Haddenham & Thame area. There are a lot of people spending time looking at delivering new homes in this area.
- The VALP has been submitted to the Inspectorate for examination however, Aylesbury Vale will have to review the plan within 2-5 years after its adoption due to the aforementioned changes. This will be government driven, not by the districts.

Customer demand

- There is an increased demand for delivery of public services. This is time consuming and resource intensive.

- Parish Councils are more accessible now than higher tier councils so more and more is expected, but often the Parish Council can only redirect to a higher council. Hopefully this will become easier when we have the new unitary authority.

Business management

- The Parish Council is getting business fit, for whatever comes next with more devolution and growth, it is moving rapidly from the 19th to the 21st century.

This includes:

- ✓ Annual cycle of business planning & budgeting
- ✓ New accounting system
- ✓ Section 106 – planning with AVDC for recreation & leisure
- ✓ VAT advice and maximisation
- ✓ Building reserves – previously none and aging assets
- ✓ Reviewing policies & procedures
- ✓ Keeping up with best practice

Asset management

- For a village of its size Haddenham has many assets and more are coming.
- The Parish Council is introducing processes for surveying, planning and budgeting.
- Programmed management of: streetlights; trees; ponds; premises; play grounds; sports ground; open spaces; registered village greens; devolved responsibilities
- Utilisation of S106 funding to improve the play equipment at Banks Park and Sheerstock
- New grounds maintenance contract
- The Churchyard has been closed for burials and maintenance responsibility passed from the Church to the Parish Council. This has proved quite challenging as inspection of the boundary walls and lichgate has identified a significant amount of work is needed, which will cost in the region of £100,000
- Preparing to adopt new assets: open spaces at the big development sites; sports pitches; play grounds; 2 pavilions to build; burial ground; possible car park

Growth and Communications

- We need to responding to the growth agenda. Should there be a review of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP)? We have spoken to AVDC and BCC Highways Officers and would have to think creatively about growth options. Residents may see this as a threat. We could easily find that everything changes again with outside influence from the expressway, and a possible new settlement, which would negate any work done on a revised NP.
- Newcomers to the village will need to be welcomed, there will potentially be new talent and energy to tap into.
- There are growing demands on the Parish Council services and a need to improve access to the PC office and availability of service. The existing room is not secure for lone working and there is inefficiency due to the lack of available separate meeting space.

- Communications are under review, with a new electronic newsletter; new web-site; and publication of a village guide. Social media needs better monitoring and responses but this is impossible to do with current resources, and additional staff will be needed.

David Truesdale - Chairman