

Chairman's Annual Report 2023/2024

How quickly the last year has gone and I hope by the time you read this report the sun is shining everywhere in Brewham and the ground is at last beginning to dry out after an extremely wet but fairly mild autumn and winter.

Planning:

There have been a number of planning applications throughout the parish this year. Some of these seem to take a very long time to be considered by Area South of Somerset Council which is not surprising as they are very short staffed and the area Committee only meets once a month for four hours and has to consider applications from the whole of South Somerset.

Highways:

The Highways Department and Wessex Water continue to be kept busy in the parish filling in potholes and repairing water leaks. Following the Highways Department turning down the request to extend the 30mph limit beyond the crossroads at Border, the residents believe that the decision was wrong and are now considering getting a professional report done and re-applying to the for the limit to be moved, which has the support of the Parish Council, as the traffic along the main road continues to go very fast together making exiting from Border very dangerous. Fly tipping on Pinkwood Lane remains an ongoing problem and the new owners of Copplesbury Farm have been asked if they can cut the hedge back at the top of Hassocks Lane because exiting on to the main road is very difficult. There are a number of very large lorries using the small roads throughout the parish but this does not seem to be a problem that can be solved.

Footpaths:

After eight years, the footpath through Swanton Farm remains blocked and Eve Wynn, our Footpaths Officer, had hoped the work would be completed in December but she has little power to do anything as all work on footpaths now has to go to a Committee for approval. The repairs on the footpath between Hoofprints and Cook's Farm; the bridge on Card's Farm and other stiles throughout the parish still need attention.

Village Activities:

The village celebrated the King's Coronation with a Coronation picnic in North Brewham and a Coronation afternoon tea in the beautifully decorated Village Hall. It is good to see the Hall being used for various activities including the bi-weekly Chat & Coffee, termly Pilates classes, the Annual Show, the children's Christmas party and most recently the Brewham Hub which is held every Friday morning as well as various events organised by the Village Hall Committee.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank everyone who gives up their time to organise and run all these events and activities.

Church, Churchyard and Burial Ground:

St John the Baptist Church continues to have two services a month with the Easter Service, the Harvest Festival, the Remembrance Day Service, the Christmas Carol Service and the Christmas Day Service being particularly well attended.

Graham Kimber mowed and strimmed the Burial Ground and Church path and David Nye and his helpers continue to look after and maintain 'The 'Living Churchyard Wildlife Habitat' with the help of the sheep and once again there were some lovely flowers this spring. In June Somerset Wildlife organised an Introduction to Wildflower Identification and about 65 species were identified.

The work on the yew trees was eventually done in August and then earlier this year, due to the very wet weather during the autumn and winter, a part of the Burial Ground wall collapsed into Mrs Ward's garden. Quotes were obtained for the repair and it is hoped that the work will be done in June.

Policing:

We now receive a report from Wincanton police before each meeting. Crime in the area thankfully remains low and we are continually reminded to keep outbuildings securely locked as there are always opportunists around and there have been a few reports of potential burglaries being disturbed by residents.

Below the Tower 2024:

Ric Rogers very kindly once again agreed to put together the latest edition of Below the Tower which is just back from the printers and will be distributed to every household shortly. A number of people have moved out of and into the village since the last edition in 2022 and I would like to once again thank Ric, on behalf of the Parish Council and everyone in Brewham, for all the time and hard work it takes to produce this very useful publication.

County Councillors

Lucy Trimmell and Tom Power have attended as many meetings as they can to keep us up to date on the new unitary Somerset Council and we receive a monthly newsletter. As you will have read in the press, the Council has very big financial problems and there will continue to be major cutbacks.

I would like to end this report by thanking Ric Rogers for again serving as our internal auditor. My thanks too to everyone in the parish who has attended and contributed to our meetings and a very big thank you to everyone in the parish who gives up their time and energy helping with village life. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their support and work throughout the past year.

Wishing everyone a very good summer.

Robert Jackson
Chairman

May 2024