

From the Parish Council – May 2021



The Parish Council had hoped to continue to hold its meetings remotely using Zoom until lockdown restrictions have ended. Unfortunately current legislation will not allow this to happen. Although that may change, from 7 May onwards, we have to hold meetings in person. Our Village Halls are not yet open to us to meet there and the idea of holding outdoor meetings sitting on the grass at Couch Green is too weather dependant to be viable. Following advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) it has therefore been decided from 7 May not to hold any formal meetings until we can do so either in our Village Halls or remotely. To cover emergencies, again on advice from NALC, any necessary decisions are being delegated to our Clerk, our Chair of Finance and myself. Hopefully this situation will be as short as possible.

Our Environment Committee has continued work on its programme. (Please see Steve Percy's article on page 11). They have also produced further comments for our submission on the District Local Plan (See IVN edition for April for our earlier comments). On "Living Well" we have expressed the view that with a larger population, more open spaces will be needed. This includes more footpaths, safe cycle routes and funding to see that they can be maintained. On "Housing Development" the need for

mixed development has been highlighted. In addition to our previous comments on "Carbon Neutrality", where planning is concerned, we have stated that it is essential that full environmental assessments are undertaken, positive nature outcomes are identified and required. Our answers to the survey have been submitted. Hopefully as many individuals as possible have done so as well. Within the Valley it is pleasing to hear that Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall Committee is considering installing solar panels on the south facing roof. What about others considering doing the same on other large buildings in the Parish?

On footpaths, a team of five spent a morning putting bark down on part of the east end of footpath 26 that joins the bottom of Church Lane Martyr Worthy to Easton Lane. We now have a supply of bark for the worst muddy footpaths as a temporary measure when needed. In the longer term we are hoping to get funding to put down more durable surfaces on the very worst of the paths which have suffered excessive wear due to so many

walkers. With bluebells coming out, a start has been made to clear the Bridleway (No.42) from Lone Farm to Itchen Wood. It is a mammoth task which the County seems reluctant to get done. Thanks to quick thinking by one of our Rights of Way Committee and the good offices of a local farmer, who has provided temporary storage, we have obtained a quantity of wood chippings from work on the Watercress Way. These will be spread on the muddy section at the start of the Bridleway (No.41) better known as Strawberry Lane.

In the April edition of the Valley News it was proposed to hold a Litter Pick on 5 June. After further consideration, as it will be difficult to hold a full event with tea, coffee and cakes afterwards, with the problem of picking up when grass has grown and that as the last litter pick was held approximately six months ago, it has been decided to postpone this event until spring next year. You can still pick up litter while out walking and as advertised previously we have litter picking sticks available for those who would like to borrow them.

Once again there are notices in some of our telephone boxes advising that they may be removed. Plans are underway for saving the box in Easton. The boxes in Itchen Abbas and at Couch Green could go. The last time this issue was highlighted only one person responded. The Parish Council cannot afford to adopt and maintain them. If anyone wants to keep them then please respond to the notice and also let us know. Unless BT can be persuaded to keep them with their phones or a group of volunteers can be found to look after them, as Easton is trying to do, then the boxes and phones will go. This may be the last chance.



Patrick Appleby
IVPC Chairman