

**STOKE MANDEVILLE PARISH COUNCIL**

**PARISH ANNUAL MEETING**

**REPORT OF CHAIRMAN**

**2011 - 2012**

# **STOKE MANDEVILLE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Annual Report of Chairman 2011-2012**

### **Introduction**

It is a requirement that the Chairman of the Council produces an Annual Report to residents on the work of the Council during the past twelve months. It is impossible to do justice to this in a short report and the following is but a snapshot of the work undertaken between May 2011 and April 2012.

A number of changes have taken place within the Parish Council during the year due to the May Council elections and the resignation of our Clerk, Paul Walter at the end of September. However, these changes have not affected our work which continues to deal with the many issues which come our way and efforts to improve facilities within the parish.

### **Olympics and Diamond Jubilee**

2012 is an important year for Stoke Mandeville with the Olympics 2012 and HM Queen's Diamond Jubilee. With the Paralympics taking the name of Stoke Mandeville, work began last year in considering how the Parish Council could celebrate this event. Considerable networking has taken place with countywide and other organisations in being part of the management of the celebrations for Buckinghamshire. In early November representatives of the Council visited Much Wenlock in Shropshire to make links with that parish being the source of the original Olympic Games one hundred and twenty five years ago. As a result the successful twinning of the Primary Schools of Stoke Mandeville and Much Wenlock has emerged with joint ventures planned for the summer Games. Much Wenlock has since presented Stoke Mandeville school with a de Coubertin Oak tree grafted from the growing on the site and at the time of the original Games. The de Coubertin Oak tree together with an Oak tree presented to the parish by Aylesbury Vale District Council to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, will be planted on the green in front of the school to complement the village sign. News that the Olympic torch will travel through Stoke Mandeville on 9<sup>th</sup> July was welcomed with delight. The Parish Council is working with others in making the necessary arrangements to accommodate the many visitors expected to line the route in Stoke Mandeville, where bunting and decorations are to be displayed. A grant from the Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity has enabled floral planting in front of the parish sign to celebrate the Olympic Games and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

### **UK Power Network**

For over two years residents of the village have had to deal with a number of power cuts of several hours duration, usually during the winter months causing great difficulty especially to elderly, disabled and vulnerable people. During that time the Parish Council has been involved in meetings and correspondence with UK Power Network, electricity suppliers to the area with no satisfactory resolution to the problem. As a result of our approach and the intervention of the local MP, David Lidington, work started on 9<sup>th</sup> January to install a new power circuit across the railway bridge with an additional circuit to avoid power failures as in the past. Most of the power lines in the village are above ground and affected by trees and other conditions. UKPN has now assured that additional tree clearance will take place with ongoing maintenance in an attempt to reduce the frequency of power disruption.

## **High Speed Rail 2**

High speed Rail 2 has been the focus of much of the work done by the Council during the year. The confirmation by the Government in January 2012 that the line would travel across Buckinghamshire on its way from London to Birmingham with serious implications throughout the parish of Stoke Mandeville was met with grave concern. Members of the Council are continuously involved in discussions with local authorities and other organisations in Buckinghamshire and also national organisations against HS2. The work of Community Forums established by the Government and managed by HS2 Ltd, began in early April 2012. The Parish Council has agreed to participate in the work of the Forums in the interest of residents in terms of compensation and mitigation. However, in taking this approach the Council remains totally and resolutely against the proposals for the establishment of High Speed Rail 2. The Parish Council is grateful to the Stoke Mandeville Against HS2 Action Group [SMAG] for its continuous work in keeping the parish at the forefront of the national debate.

## **Car Parking on Roads Opposite Stoke Mandeville Hospital**

The severity of car parking on residential roads opposite Stoke Mandeville Hospital and the wider area, causes major problems to residents and has increased during the year. Attempts by the Parish Council to overcome these daily difficulties has met with little sympathy from the Buckinghamshire NHS Trust. An approach to District and County Councillors for Stoke Leys led to a petition being signed by one hundred and fifty residents protesting against on street parking by visitors and staff of Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The petition has been presented to Bucks Transport, Buckinghamshire NHS Trust, the Greater Aylesbury Locality Forum, the Parish Council and David Lidington, MP for Aylesbury. Meetings with the Hospital Trust, Bucks Transport and local Councillors are ongoing. At the time of writing this report we are told by the Buckinghamshire NHS Trust that a further 300+ car parking spaces with a multi storey car park will be constructed on the Stoke Mandeville Hospital site in the not too distant future. However, unless there is a review of car parking on the site leading to a reduction in car park charges or a park and ride provided from the Aylesbury Town Centre to the hospital, the situation is likely to remain unresolved with many of the current problems remaining.

## **Planning**

### ***Forward Plans***

As part of the process to develop the new Vale of Aylesbury Plan, the Parish Council conducted a survey to canvass the views of residents on the future housing and employment development needs of the Parish. There was in general a great commonality of views within the responses received which was encouraging. The majority of people responding (more than 2 to 1) agreed that some housing development is necessary over the next 20 years with the majority voting for a range of 25 to 100 houses. The village was the most popular location for development. It was also felt that there should be some small employment development, each unit taking less than 10 employees. Any development should fit in with the character of the village and be phased over a twenty year period with the infrastructure being provided at the same time. Particular concerns were voiced around public services and transport with a fear of widespread development causing Stoke Mandeville village to become merged with Aylesbury town. As work continues on the Vale of Aylesbury Plan, proposals for more speculative large scale development are being submitted by developers for adjoining parishes. With the threat of HS2 causing property blight in Stoke Mandeville, it will be interesting to see what affect this will have for potential future large scale development in Stoke Mandeville. We are extremely grateful to those residents who responded to the survey either in paper form or on line.

### **Development Control**

In addition to being involved in Strategic Plans for the area, the Parish Council also deals with Development Control – Planning Applications - on which it makes recommendations to the local planning authority. During the year under review forty two applications for the parish were considered being in the main for extensions and alterations to dwellings. Larger developments have included the Arla dairy and processing plant at Aston Clinton and the proposals for a supermarket on the Stoke Mandeville Hospital site. When larger applications are received for comment the Council ensures that residents are aware of proposals and can contribute to the Parish Council's decision making process.

### **Street Furniture and Assets**

The Council has a number of assets in street lights, notice boards, litter bins, dog bins, parish seats as well as the Burial Ground, the Allotments and Playing Field. It also owns the Community Centre which is managed under Lease to the Community Association. The continuous cost of replacement and repair is a heavy cost to the Parish Council budget. However, the Council has this year replaced and repaired notice boards and seats, provided a new bus shelter on Wendover Road in partnership with Weston Turville Parish Council, new litter and dog bins have been provided at Hawkslade and a new safety surface in the children's playground in Eskdale Road as well as new football goalposts on the playing field. Guttering at the Community Centre has been replaced as well as a new piped water supply from Eskdale Road to the Centre and new doors to the Park Room as well as the re-lining of the car parking spaces. Ongoing work in maintaining the old church site continues as well as clearance and maintenance of the allotments.

### **Speeding Traffic**

Speeding traffic is of serious concern along all main roads within the parish, especially the A4010 Risborough Road, the A413 Wendover Road and areas of Hawkslade. Previous attempts to gain evidence of this by the use of trevolo strips has not worked, Therefore, six Councillors have voluntarily undertaken police training in the use of speed safety equipment in order to records speeds of moving vehicles. To date the concerns of residents about speeding have been verified but more needs to be done and further speedwatch sessions are planned. When evidence has been collated as to the problems the Police can be brought in to validate the results and enforce penalties on speeding drivers.

### **Training and Development**

Parish Councillor training and development is an important element of being a Councillor. A number of courses are provided by the Bucks Association of Local Councils and also by Buckinghamshire County Council. During the year Councillors have attended courses on Being a New Councillor, Understanding Human Resources, Finance and also Community Leadership.

### **Representation**

The following Councillors represent the Parish Council on external bodies ~  
Great Aylesbury Local Area Forum ~ Jenny Hunt  
Wendover Locality Forum ~ Andrew Clark and Sarah Copley Clerk to the Council  
Hawkslade Neighbourhood Action Group ~ David Starr and Pat Wood  
Council Local Planning Committee ~Jenny Hunt

### **Hello and Goodbyes**

During the year we welcomed new Councillors Mungo Duncan [Stoke Leys], Brian Tyndall [Stoke Leys], Stephen Watson [Stoke Grange] and Brian Adams [Hawkslade]. We were also pleased to welcome new Clerk, Sarah Copley, who took up post based in the Parish Office from the end of November 2011. We said goodbye to Cllr Andrew Tipping who did not stand for re election at the beginning of May having been a Councillor for eight years and Vice Chairman for five years. Also to Margaret Spencer who resigned due to ill health after many

years as a Councillor and a supporter of the Parish in a voluntary capacity. To them we offer grateful thanks for their continuous work and commitment. Sadly, at the end of December, Councillor John Wiseman passed away. John had been a Parish Councillor for Hawkslade for eight years. He is greatly missed.

### **Appreciation**

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to fellow Councillors for their support throughout the year and also to Sarah Copley our Clerk. New ideas and initiatives for local councils are emerging and many changes are to come our way through Acts of Parliament such as the Localism Act and also the Power of Wellbeing. Looking back the over past year it has been one of hard work, change and dealing with emergency and difficult issues. But now is the time to look forward to the many initiatives and developments which are possible, including becoming a Quality Council. Also the delights of looking forward to the Paralympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, both of which give opportunities to bring our communities together at a time of celebration.

Jenny Hunt  
Chairman  
April 2012.