

Annual Report of Chairman of North Nibley Parish Council: 2019/20

The 2019/20 year has been quite a challenging year for the Parish Council. Elizabeth Oakley, our Clerk for a few years was off work sick for eight months and decided she was unable to return to work. Elizabeth subsequently resigned in March 2020.

I wish here to express gratitude to all the councillors who have stepped in to help us through this period and to Councillor Rex Symons who has taken on responsibility as acting clerk. I am extremely grateful to the help they have all provided to keep the Council running in 2019/20.

The year was due to be the final year of the four year period of this Council, with Parish Council Elections due in May. However as we reached the end of the year our work was made more difficult by the restrictions put in place as a result of Covid-19. But our responsibilities continued and we needed to find new ways of working as we entered the new Council year. One of those changes was the government's decision to delay council elections until May 2021.

Several events organised by the Council have had to be cancelled, including the popular annual clean-up day in March. The Council is hoping to reorganise that event when it is decided it is safe to do so.

Meanwhile, thanks to some generous funding, some new adult exercise equipment has been installed in the playing field.

Our Annual Parish Meeting is normally the time when we put forward ideas for future local developments. Unfortunately this year that meeting also had to be cancelled. The Council had planned to discuss with parishioners ideas it has been looking to develop, including some outline plans for a new children's play area in the Village. We will consult on these ideas and listen to proposals for possible funding once we are able to do so.

During the year the Council were called upon by Stroud Planning Authority to comment upon many complicated local planning applications. All planning applications are subject to public comment and this Council continues to encourage parishioners to send their comments to Stroud Planning authority.
([https://www.stroud.gov.uk/search-planning-applications.](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/search-planning-applications))

We have worked to maintain the two telephone boxes in North Nibley, supported by the voluntary work of two parishioners, Peter Timbrell and Bob Hewish. In 2019 both boxes were repainted and are now looking very smart. I should like to express our gratitude to both volunteers.

The Council is continuing to look into speed awareness projects, throughout the village. We were working on a plan to install cameras on the B4060 through the

Village. Unfortunately we have been unable to progress these plans as all such developments are currently subject to review by Gloucestershire Highways authority.

The Council also continues to explore options for Affordable Housing within the Parish and will communicate developments as they become available.

Jean Palmer, our Cemetery and Burial Clerk retains all Parish records and has worked hard to support families with their enquiries.

A tree survey of Council property at the New Road Cemetery and St Martin's Churchyard has been undertaken and works carried out. Meanwhile the Council, which is also responsible for maintenance of the closed Churchyard, has been working at resolving longstanding problems with the churchyard wall adjoining the old Vicarage. Arrangements were made to spray the ivy and councillors have voluntarily carried out maintenance work.

Towards the end of the year the Council received a legacy from a former parishioner. In accordance with his wishes, cheques were paid to the Chapel, the Monument Trust and the Village School. The legacy fund was also used to support the work to re-open the village shop as a Village hub.

The School used their contribution towards a new Breakout Space, the opening of which the Council was represented.

Once again in 2019 the Council awarded Annual grants to local organisations. Those awards were made at the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting.

The village defibrillator at the Hall has been serviced and future arrangements have been made to be combine this with Wotton as a way of decreasing servicing costs.

As we enter 2020/21 the year has been very much coloured by the Corona Virus Lockdown. We continue to work with our Neighbourhood Warden and Police Community Support Service to help safeguard the parish throughout the lockdown and beyond. Parish Council meetings continue to be cancelled and members are meeting by Zoom Video Link.

On behalf of your Parish Council I should like to wish all parishioners a safe and successful year.

Kenneth Brown
Chairman.