

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS - 2012

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Annual Parish Assembly 2012. This is the meeting that makes me feel really uncomfortable as I have to tell residents what our achievements have been for the past twelve months. I would rather get on with things than blow our trumpet for some back slapping. Like I reported at last year's assembly, we are entering tough times with cut-backs coming at us from every direction. Only last week the County Council dropped the bombshell that it is looking to sell the Spinney. Something the Parish Council needs to discuss after this meeting. The following are just some of the issues we have attempted to address on your behalf.

TRAFFIC TGI ISLAND

I don't know if any of you have noticed but the upgrade work has started on the TGI Island. They have been very discreet and have not caused too many problems. At least that's the case for the daffodils I planted under the sign two years ago. I think they are the only thing that hasn't been drastically affected by the constant traffic jams. The island should be completed in the mid summer and let's hope that it proves to be of benefit to residents. I just hope the lights are sequenced properly.

POLICING

At present we are experiencing a mini crime wave in Binley Woods and we have become a real hot spot for burglars and opportunist thieves. There are a lot of people wandering the village and it's uncanny that a couple of days later, a number of thefts occur. If you see anybody who looks suspicious you should call 999 and let the police deal with it. Do not let anybody into your house to use the phone or toilet, and if they say they are from the gas, electric or other, make sure you see their badge and do not let them out of sight. The police have got their ideas who these people are but they need to be caught with proof. Let's try and help each other and the police in ridding the area of these undesirables.

VILLAGE GREEN

The Village Green path has been a great success and when the School Children attended the Remembrance Service on 11th November, it was a real hit with them. It is amazing how many people do not know where the Village Green is and they are missing out on a real asset.

HIGHWAY VERGES

The second round of tree planting is complete around the village and it was good in one way that we have had some rain to bed them in. We didn't expect them to be washed away though. It is disappointing that a number were pulled up and strewn around the area by residents who were not happy with the positioning of them. A phone call and discussion would have been far better and we could have come to some agreement to move them rather than have them destroyed by so called adults. It is amazing how some residents do not want a tree on the verge yet persist in parking their cars on the grass churning the verges up. We would ask residents to please keep the verges clear of parked cars, especially when the owners are not from Binley Woods. After the minor hiccup on verge cutting last year we have now gone back to our original contractor who is doing a fine job. Again, we expect a few anomalies, but hopefully these will be very few.

PARISH PLAN

The Parish Plan is well under way and we are waiting results from the first survey for the Housing Needs. Councillor Ken Short has done a sterling job in both Charing and co-ordinating the plan, and should have a special thanks. He is not looking forward to the completion as he will have too much time on his hands. The final questionnaire is being compiled now and should be delivered mid to late summer this year. Please make every effort to fill it in as we need to know what residents view are about their village.

RECREATION GROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Funding has been applied for to help with the installation of a skate board facility at The Recreation Ground in the rear field. There will be three units which will be sited half way down the field towards the woods. Hopefully the children of the village will take ownership of the equipment and police it to stop vandalism etc. Contact with these children is something we are keen to build on and form a strong bond with them.

PARISH MAP

The Parish Council have agreed to have a Parish Map produced by a local artist to commemorate both the 50th Anniversary of the Village and the 80th year of the Parish Council. It will be something that will be left to future generations as a legacy of the village today. Many of the landmarks in Binley Woods will be included and we hope to have smaller prints for purchase by residents. The painting could take six months or more to produce and will be a lasting testament to the village for years to come.

STREET LIGHTING

We are aware that a number of Councils are switching off street lights at night in a move to save funds. We have approached our supplier to request what savings could be made and we are waiting a reply. Once we have this information we can decide whether it is a viable project or if the outlay is greater than the savings.

LIBRARY

You all know that the library has now closed and the County Council have put the site on the market for sale. The Parish Council have applied for funding in an attempt to purchase the facility in order to use it as a Community Building. There are a lot of activities we are short of within the village and some of these could be housed in the library. Let's hope we can be successful and achieve the purchase.

QUEEN'S SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

We have decided that this is a celebration we should not miss and with that in mind, have booked the Village Hall on Sunday 3rd June from 4pm to 7pm for an indoor Street Party. Unfortunately we are restricted to numbers of 120 and these will be on a first come basis. People attending will bring their own food and drink and we are providing some entertainment for the event. Tickets are going fast so to avoid disappointment, get your name down quickly.

CONCLUSION

My tenth year as Chairman and a very testing year it has been. Filling in funding application forms has now become second nature to me although I have been told that only 10% are successful. The funds we have received in the past ten years has enabled the Parish Council to implement improvements within the Village whilst not raising the parish precept a great deal. We all hope this can be the case in future years although the Parish Precept is quickly being drained into services which we have had funded in the past by County and Borough Councils. All Councillors have worked hard to keep Binley Woods a pleasant and friendly place to live and work, and thanks for all their effort and support. Once again, a special thanks to Ken Short, who has really thrown himself into the Parish Plan and has put so much time and effort into the project. We have lost one Councillor earlier this year, Ken Crawley, who has resigned for personal reasons. We wish Ken all the very best for future years. Finally, thank you to all Councillors and to our Clerk, John Cook, for their hard work and enthusiasm throughout the term of office, and look forward to better times.