

Minsterworth Parish Council - Chairman's Report May 2022

It was good to be back! Although COVID case numbers remain high, our vaccine protection meant that we were able to return to physical Parish Council meetings at the Village hall from June 2021 onwards. We managed with Zoom, but physical meetings are undoubtedly much better. This is especially the case as the new AV system in the renovated Village Hall means that we can display the agenda and other documents on the screen for all to see, making the meetings much more inclusive. We are grateful to the loyal band of residents who support Parish Council meetings.

Residential developments continue in the village, with relatively few planning applications being refused. This is because Tewkesbury Borough Council does not have an adequate 'reserve land supply' for future housing, and consequently applicants can use this as a reason for an appeal against any planning refusal. The proposed 4000 house development extending across Churcham and Highnam has gone quiet. Through our recently established inter-parish group meetings, we are aware that the Forest of Dean are now favouring 'dispersed development', i.e. the adding the additional houses to existing villages, rather than building a whole new community. The lack of mains drainage in Minsterworth remains an issue, with some of the recent developments having to spend significant sums on drainage systems. It is good to see new arrivals in our village however, and we are especially grateful to those who get themselves involved with village activities.

The largest project currently being undertaken by the Parish Council is the formulation of a request for improving road safety measures. We have undertaken road traffic surveys, and used this information as a basis for improvements. The document is available to Minsterworth residents on the Parish Council website. When we have your comments from a public meeting on Monday May 9th (6-00pm in the Village Hall) we intend to formally submit our requests to Highways. Please do attend this meeting and give us your opinion.

Traffic flow over the past 6 months has been disrupted by the Severn Trent roadworks, replacing the water main. There had been several emergency repairs over the previous 5 years, so the work did need doing. The traffic lights were annoying, especially when the management team appeared to be unable to adjust the timings of the lights to account for peak flow. The Village WhatsApp group was invaluable in reporting issues of excessive delays! Severn Trent did respond quite quickly to requests however, and I think that the contractors were generally respectful of properties when working at their entrances.

Minsterworth remains at risk of flooding, and the Parish Council submitted a detailed document outlining their concerns to Highnam PC with regard to the potential effect that the proposed new Highnam development might have on increased flow of water across our parish. There were also concerns about potential tidal flooding in March, when a combination of high winds and a high tide posed a risk of the Severn over-topping. Fortunately, this did not happen.

Paul Bell, our new clerk, replaced Fiona in April 2021. His good nature and high level of competence has provided the Parish Council with an excellent service, so we are especially

disappointed that for personal reasons he has recently submitted his resignation. I hope we will be equally as lucky with his replacement.

Things do not happen in our village without a good deal of effort, so I would once again like to thank all of you who keep verges and hedges outside of their properties trimmed and tidy, to those who collect litter and plant flowers outside of their houses, and to those who keep our village greens clean and tidy. The playground at Minsterworth Park continues to be well used, so thanks to all who have done hedge trimming, tree planting, equipment repair and all the other things that are needed to maintain its use. If we can get a longer lease we would apply for more play equipment.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors, Tewkesbury Borough and County Councillors for their input into the running of the Parish Council. It is a huge commitment, and we hope that residents are satisfied with the work done. It is your village, so please do send us suggestions for improvements.

Roger Blowey

May 2022