

Chairman's Report to Thornborough Parish Council 2017

As you all know, Thornborough Parish Council has responsibility for many aspects of village life and we also continue to provide for the major assets of the parish:

- Sir Harry Moore playing field and pavilion
- Village Hall (under management of the Thornborough Village Hall trust)
- Playground in Nash Road

...and this last site is now our biggest project.

The Playground is on a piece of land donated by the Hodges to Thornborough Parish Council in 1965. The Parish Council owns this plot of land as long as it remains a children's playground. Initially of course, it was the corner of the field next to the farmhouse, surrounded by grass. In recent years, the affordable housing in Orchard Close has been built and the playground is now part of that little development.

The Playground has been well used by parishioners and people from outside the parish for many years. Recently installed additional play items and surface matting have not lasted as long as we would have hoped and, despite the efforts of villagers and councillors, the playground has really begun to look rather tired which I am sure everyone has noticed.

We set up a working group who researched options and brought a design to transform the playground back to the Parish Council for approval. There is no way that Thornborough Parish Council can afford to re-vamp the Playground from the annual precept: the average price for a playground to be equipped from scratch is usually above £50,000 which is more than 3 years' total Annual Precept.

So we have applied for a WREN Grant and are currently awaiting the outcome of our application. WREN is a not-for-profit business that awards grants for community, biodiversity and heritage projects from funds donated by FCC Environment through the Landfill Communities Fund and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund.

Hopefully when we get the grant, and thanks to the hard work of both Councillors and Parishioners on the Working Group, the playground will be transformed. We will keep you updated.

Another major part of Thornborough Parish Council's work is around planning. While we do not have the authority to decide applications as that stays with Aylesbury Vale District Council, the planning authority, we can influence decisions as a Consultee. We take this responsibility very seriously, having no desire to prevent reasonable development but wanting to maintain a pleasant village environment and a traditional look to the surrounding countryside.

The recent auction of several plots in the village on the area of land known as Brookfield between the High Street and Back Street have created new and interesting situations and Thornborough Parish Council continues to monitor and comment where appropriate.

Lark Energy have completed the work on the solar farm at Thornborough Grounds and as a result offered a contribution of £1,000 per MW which meant for this project there was £5,000 one-off payment to Thornborough Parish Council. Thornborough Parish Council have set this money aside with the agreement of Lark Energy to go towards supporting children's play and leisure activities

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the Milton Keynes Local Plan remain of considerable interest and we follow the information and look at the implications as they arise.

The planned street lighting improvements continue. We now have two new lights recently installed in the High Street and are waiting for the light on the Green in Church Lane by the footbridge to be updated.

We continue to work on the website, keeping it updated and adding new information when appropriate. Accounts for 2016 are now available to view on the 'Transparency' page. We are always happy to hear what parishioners think of the web site and welcome comments and suggestions. In due course we will be setting up a Facebook page to raise awareness of the Parish Council and hopefully increase visitors to our website.

We have now produced 4 editions of the relaunched Thornborough News which seems to have been very well received. Currently published every two months, this seems to be frequent enough. We currently have a guest editor and Thornborough News is printed efficiently and speedily by Phillips Print in Buckingham and then distributed free throughout the parish by Sue Percival's team of delivery people. We are very grateful to Sue and her team.

Thornborough Pre-School have now been housed at the Sir Harry Moore Sports Field in the Sports Pavilion for two years. The arrangement has worked very well and the Pre-School are working well with Thornborough Cricket Club, our major summer user. Thornborough Parish Councillors are very pleased to have been able to support both local organisations.

The routine work of Thornborough Parish Council has continued as ever throughout the year, covering such tasks and issues as:

- Reporting potholes
- Maintaining the street lighting
- Maintaining the Greens
- Looking at planning applications and responding
- Reviewing and responding to relevant consultations
- Maintaining the allotments
- Paying for dog waste collections and general litter control
- Keeping the parish solvent and parish finance transparent
- Supporting local initiatives and amenities such as the village hall, Thornborough Infant School, St Mary's Church, the Post Office, the defibrillator and much more

Stuart Mitchell