

Henstridge Annual Parish Meeting 2007

Chairman's Statement

Welcome to the Henstridge Annual Parish Meeting. I am Norman Symcox and I was recently elected to serve as Chairman for this year.

Parish Council

As you are no doubt aware since the last Parish Meeting we have had a full election to the Parish Council and I would like to congratulate those members both old and new who were elected. I would also like to pay tribute to those members who did not restand, for the work that they did over the years. In particular I would like to thank those long standing members who are no longer serving namely Mrs Barton, Mrs Courtney, Mr Davies, Mr Heath and Mrs Moody. I think it is also appropriate at this time to mention the very sad loss of Peter Jackson who lent his energy and good humour to so many village activities.

I am pleased to be able to report that among the projects undertaken by the council, the allotments have been greatly improved. All of these are now taken and are being worked. We have been to provide parking facilities for the tenants and hope that in the very near future the area will be fenced by South Somerset Homes. I am also pleased to see that the refurbished Ash Walk Playground is still being enjoyed. The Council has also this year made a £3,000 contribution to the provision of disabled toilet facilities here in the Village Hall as well as making the regular contribution to the running costs of the Insurance of the building.

The Parish Council will continue to strive to improve the amenities of the Village where it is within our remit.

Council representation on other bodies includes myself on the Henstridge Airfield Consultative Committee and Mr Stobart as our representative to SALC. Michael Vincent is our Youth representative as well as the representative for Yenston.

Finance

The financial regulation of the Parish Council is the responsibility of the Finance Committee which is responsible for recommending to the Council what the precept should be and for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal control and making an annual statement of assurance confirming that such systems are in place.

I am pleased to report that the Council finds itself in good shape financially due to the measures taken in previous years and am able to report that this good housekeeping has enabled us to reduce the precept by some 15% from £26,000 to £22,000. The precept as you are aware is to meet the running costs of the Parish including Insurance, maintenance of the Council Burial ground and recreation areas, machinery, salaries and administration.

Can I also add that we have funds set aside for local community projects and would urge any organisation that has a project to come forward. The Parish Council will be glad to consider applications received for donation of these funds, so I would encourage you to keep this in mind during the year and if you feel you can make use of this please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk.

Planning

Planning matters are dealt with by the Planning Committee which meets every two weeks. The committee this year will comprise the whole of the Council.

Last year's Committee had an extremely busy year having made recommendations on 68 planning applications which is an increase of 9% over the year 2005/6.

It is the requirement of planning laws for the local Planning authority to consult with Parish Councils. The majority of planning applications for the Parish are dealt with by South Somerset District Council at its Area East office at Wincanton and passed to the Parish Council for comments. Following receipt by the Clerk, plans are initially examined all members of the Planning Committee prior to the planning meeting.

It is not the role of this Parish Council to determine any application, however at the meeting the job of the Planning Committee is to agree on what the response should be given to the Planning authority, from a local point of view and to highlight the most important local issues surrounding a particular planning matter.

Other projects

You may recall that at the last Parish meeting, the matter of litter clearing was raised. I am pleased to report that since then two litter days have been held with a reasonably good response from the village. It is proposed to run another of these days in the near future. The date for this will be published in Wot's On and we would welcome any volunteers who feel they could spare an hour or two. We will be delighted to provide all the necessary equipment.

And finally may I thank Mrs Moody for her kind help in providing the refreshments for the meeting.

Thank you