

## **Henstridge Annual Parish Meeting 2008**

### **Chairman's Statement**

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

### **Parish Council**

The council remains unchanged from last year. Council representation on other bodies includes myself on the Henstridge Airfield Consultative Committee, Mr Stobart is our representative to SALC and VHMC representative, a role shared with Jean Oswick. Michael Vincent is our Youth representative as well as the representative for Yenston. Adam Temperton is our footpaths representative and shares the role of highways representative with Pete Crocker. Paul Brighten Is the HALT representative.

I am pleased to be able to report that as mentioned last year, fencing of the allotments to the rear of Windsor Terrace has been completed by South Somerset Homes after a long battle! This now allows us to look at renovating the fencing at the top of the allotments.

Unfortunately , the play equipment had to be removed from the Furge Lane play area due to constant vandalism. The Parish Council need to consider what to use this site for long term and would appreciate any suggestions. Whilst on the subject of Furge Lane, we are aware of problems with mini-motorbikes at both Furge Lane and Ash Walk. We have been in contact with the police over this and would appreciate the public's support in contacting the police themselves when they witness any such illegal use of public land. The police need to catch people in the act or have members of the public who are prepared to give statements in order to be able to do anything about this but they are aware and have added it to their patrols.

We continue to be in regular contact with the Highways department with regard to both general problems and trying to address the larger issues of speeding and dangerous driving within the village. Unfortunately policy with regard to 20mph speed limits has changed in Somerset to bring it into line with DfT Circular 01/2006 and this will not be an option at the current time.

The Parish Council website ([www.henstridgeparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.henstridgeparishcouncil.org.uk)) is now up and running with sections covering meeting minutes and the newsletter amongst others. This will continue to be developed. Please look at it and we would be grateful for constructive comments and suggestions. On the subject of the newsletter, I should point out that this will no longer be distributed with Wot's On but copies of it will be found in the shop, pubs and Indian restaurant as well as on the website. Please have a look.

Needless to say, the Parish Council will continue to strive to improve the amenities of the Village where it is within our remit. You may recall that at the last Parish meeting a number of issues were raised in the open forum and these were followed up on by the Parish Council at their next meeting in June last year.

They included:

**Fly tipping** - Councillors were in agreement that this is an increasing problem and it was felt that the only way to stop this is to take the matter to the police. To this end the Parish Council used their July newsletter to encourage anyone with any information to contact them so that the Parish Council could contact the Police on their behalf, although no further complaints were received by the Parish Council.

**Concerns over areas of the village which are not adequately cleaned by road sweeper vehicles, particularly around the pinch points** - A letter was written to South Somerset Highways asking them for their proposal to provide a more adequate service in dealing with the cleaning of the roads and alternative arrangements have since been made for more efficient cleaning of these areas.

**Concerns over the Woodhayes hedge which had become very overgrown** – this was a matter which the Council were already aware of and taking action on and by the time of the meeting the hedge had in fact been cut.

**Concerns over the broken gate at the Ash Walk play area allowing dogs in to the children's area** – This matter was in the process of being addressed and the problem was successfully resolved

## **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 find itself in good shape and has funds set aside for short term projects including extra play equipment at Ash Walk and long term projects such as the future provision of additional burial space and a community building.

I am pleased to say that ongoing good housekeeping has enabled us make a decrease in the precept for the second year running, this now stands at £20,000. 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.

It should be noted that the Committee have set aside £500 in the 2007/8 budget for donations to local organisations/clubs and it is requested that any applications should be made in September via the clerk. During 07/08 the Parish Council have been glad to offer assistance from this fund to The Pre-school and the PCC

## **Planning**

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

Last year's Committee had an extremely busy year having made recommendations on 60 planning applications.

It is the requirement of planning laws for the local Planning authority to consult with Parish Councils and the majority of planning applications for the Parish are dealt with by South Somerset District Council.

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 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. In common with full Council meetings all planning meetings are open to the public, and public opinion on planning applications is always welcomed by the Parish Council, either at the meetings or in writing. For your information, copies of meeting Agendas are posted on the Parish Council's Henstridge & Yenston notice boards and on the Parish Council web site.

Finally I would like to thank Adam Temperton for providing the refreshments and particularly our two clerks Rachel and Tracey without whom I don't think the council could function.

Thank you