

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to our Annual Parish Meeting.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020's Annual Parish Meeting was cancelled so this report covers the last two years.

The composition of the council remains as before: with two members representing Ashleyhay (Dudley Ibbett and Jane Smith) and five members Idridgehay and Alton (Carl Hempshall, Eric Matkin, Jill Matthews, Robert Tatler and Mike Westwood). The council has followed its customary pattern of meeting bi-monthly on the second Wednesday, normally at the village Corn Store and our last face-to-face meeting was held on March 11th 2020. Since then meetings have been held using Zoom which I think has worked quite well in spite of the occasional technical hiccup. Members of the public are very welcome to attend to observe and there is fifteen minutes available for public speaking at the start of each meeting. Councillor David Taylor has often attended in his capacity as our District and County Councillor.

Again this year, planning matters have figured largely on our agenda. Amber Valley District Council notifies our parish clerk of all planning applications in the parishes and the council then considers each one on its merits, and if necessary comments appropriately. Without going into the details of individual applications, I think it would be fair to say that we often disagree very strongly with some of the decisions Amber Valley reach and it is quite apparent that whilst we are most anxious to uphold and protect the integrity of the Special Landscape Area, which covers most of the parishes, and likewise the Conservation Area in Idridgehay, the same cannot always be said for Amber Valley. We are attempting to monitor how Amber Valley implements our Neighbourhood Plan and it has been referred to by them in some of their decisions and apparently ignored in others. Of particular concern is the long running saga of the multiple applications for the pig farm off Wirksworth Road where the non-implementation of various landscaping schemes and AVBC's obvious reluctance to enforce any of the agreed planning conditions make a mockery of the whole process. The farmer appears to be successfully running rings round them. A number of Ashleyhay residents are so frustrated by this farrago that they have referred the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman. We all await his eventual decision with great interest.

As was noted in the 2019 Annual Report, after a number of quite successful sessions our Community Speed Watch scheme was suspended in the summer of 2019, due to irregularities elsewhere. It restarted in July 2020 but then fell foul of increased Covid-19 restrictions in November and is still suspended. In the meantime the council has jointly purchased a radar gun and two warning signs with Hazelwood Parish Council and share the use with them on a rota basis. There is much concern in the village about speeding on the main road and it was encouraging early this year when a real speed trap opposite the pub was seen on at least three occasions. Emily Chard, our enthusiastic speedwatch co-ordinator, is working on ways and means to help us to obtain permission to install a pair of flashing speed signs which other villages have successfully utilised. Hopefully this will be achieved in the reasonably near future.

During 2019 two parish newsletters were produced and distributed but with everything shut down there were no newsletters in 2020 as there was very little to report and even less to advertise. But as the Covid restrictions lift and life begins to resume some normality we can look forward to a resumption of some of our parish activities. We are very grateful to Councillor Ibbett for editing and creating the newsletters and for the work he does in tending the website. The snow warden scheme remains in operation, many thanks to Hazel and Michael Haslam who again volunteered as wardens, and the free supply of grit was once more received. Luckily both winters were virtually free of snow.

With sadness I note the passing in late autumn of two individuals who were involved with the Parish Council. Alan Merigold was a long-term resident of Idridgehay and served as a parish councillor for some years, whilst Dick Parkin retired here after a career spent at sea and became our well-liked and popular parish clerk

I must, as always, thank our current parish clerk, Ros Hallam, for the highly efficient and enthusiastic way she does her job! We are very fortunate to have her and she is a real asset to the council and the whole community.

It is always nice to finish on an optimistic note and whilst there were no social or fund raising events in 2020 because of Covid, 2019 had been a very successful year with good levels of support for everything that had been organised by and run mainly in aid of the Church. I am sure everyone will join me in looking forward to a resumption of both church

services and the social and fund-raising events where we can once again gather together and support our community.