

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

The composition of the council has remained as before with two members representing Ashleyhay (Dudley Ibbett and Jane Smith) and five members Idridgehay and Alton (Carl Hempshall, Eric Matkin, Jill Matthews, Mike Westwood and myself - Robert Tatler). Last June, Jill Matthews resigned from the council and I should like to thank her for her very welcome and enthusiastic contribution to our work. She is much missed. All existing councillors were recently elected unopposed as was Phil Brooks, who fills the vacancy left by Jill and who we welcome to his first council meeting this evening. The council has followed its customary pattern of meeting bi-monthly on the second Wednesday and for the last year our meetings have been here in St. James' Church. 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, who has frequently attended in his capacity as our District and County Councillor gives us welcome updates on the wider world of local government. I must congratulate David on being re-elected to Amber Valley BC where he is our local, and very active, councillor.

Again this year, planning matters have figured largely on our agenda. Amber Valley Borough Council notifies our parish clerk of all planning applications in the parish and the council then considers each one on its merits, and if thought 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. Although we do take heart from a recent decision regarding an appeal against the refusal of outline planning permission on Hillcliff Lane where development was explicitly excluded in our Neighbourhood Plan and where Amber Valley upheld the plan and refused the application. The inspector agreed with the original decision and the appeal was refused. 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.

Our Community Speedwatch scheme is now back in full swing again and traffic passing through the village is again being actively monitored. We had been asking Derbyshire County Council for permission to install a pair of SIDs (speed indicator devices) in Idridgehay to help with the long term problem we have of speeding traffic and always met with a blank refusal. However, in March 2022 DCC suddenly reversed their policy of refusing to countenance such devices and we were able to start what turned out to be a very slow and torturous process of applying for a licence to install two solar powered SIDs. After an interminable nine month delay permission was granted. In addition, we were also successful in our application to the Police Commissioner for a grant of £3,000 toward their cost and DCC very quickly installed the two posts required to mount our SIDs. I am hoping that this very evening we shall be able to finalise our requirements and place an order.

A Jubilee Picnic was held on Sunday 5th June in the field behind the Corn Store to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Whilst the early part of the jubilee weekend was blessed with lovely weather the Sunday was not: a very wet morning followed by a damp afternoon. Those that came along had a very enjoyable time with some very good entertainment but our numbers were down on what we could have expected due to the inclement weather. I must acknowledge with thanks the £1,000 which Councillor Taylor had obtained for us from DCC to help fund the picnic. A very encouraging number of volunteers came forward to assist and the parish council presented all children under 16 with very attractive jubilee mugs.

We are very grateful to Councillor Ibbett for editing and creating the newsletter and for the work he does in tending the website. The snow warden scheme remains in operation, although we could perhaps do with some snow, and many thanks are due to Hazel and Michael Haslam who again volunteered as wardens. The free supply of grit was once more received.

St. James' churchyard has now been declared officially closed and duly handed over to the Parish Council and we lost no time in passing on the burden of maintaining it to Amber Valley who should in due course take over its maintenance.

In the summer our newly appointed Parish Clerk, Angela Gratton, resigned having come to understandably feel due to an unexpected change in her circumstances, that she would be happier going back to her old, full-time job. We were sorry to lose her as she was settling in very nicely. However we duly advertised for a replacement and in July appointed Matthew Evans to the post. Matthew, much the youngest person at our meetings, has settled in very well and is proving an excellent clerk who is thoroughly at home with the minutiae of council procedure and keeping us very effectively on the procedural straight and narrow. He is also a whiz with the internet, etc and a great asset to the council.

The Coronation had rather crept up on us (or perhaps that is just me) and Idridgehay marked this very special and for many of us a virtually unique occasion with a celebration and buffet at the Black Swan last Monday afternoon. We had hoped for a very nice day and a good turnout; instead we had a very wet day but did get a decent turnout. I must acknowledge a grant of £400 which Councillor Taylor was able to assist us in obtaining from the county council. The next big event in the village will be the annual Garden Fete on Sunday, 16th July. Last year's Fete was a great success, much aided by an amazing spell of weather, and was very successful from both a social and financial perspective.

I say this every year, but I do feel that in this parish we are very lucky that the church and parish councils both work seamlessly together to organise events to benefit the whole community and that we are blessed with so many people who volunteer and are prepared to put themselves forward to assist. Now that the spectre of Covid has finally faded I am sure everyone will join me in looking forward to an increasing resumption of normal village life which revolves around both the church and social and fund-raising events where we can once again gather together and support and enhance our wider community.