

Chairman's Annual Report 2014-15

After eight years in which the council was served by Mrs Linda McCormack in the office of clerk and financial officer we have had two changes of officer in those roles. Mrs McCormack attended her last meeting as clerk in April 2014 and was replaced by Mrs Amanda Wilson. Mrs Wilson resigned from the post in October due to a change in her personal circumstances that meant she no longer had the time needed to fulfil those duties. We subsequently secured the services of Mr Simon Oldham as a locum clerk and he was appointed to the position of Clerk and Chief Financial Officer to the council in February.

One of the main concerns for the council during the year has been various items of work that have been identified as appropriate areas for the expenditure of money received from the sale of the former picnic site on Lea Moor Road. It has always been accepted that some of that money should be invested with a view to the future provision for another cemetery. This has been done; £10,000 has been invested in the only way permitted for the funds of a parish council. Some money has been spent on improvements in the playground at Lea (fencing, picnic tables and new swings) and further expenditure is planned there. Work has been done in the cemetery to clear an area that will accommodate a further 20 burial plots and work has been planned to restore the Receiving House at the cemetery. In the Memorial Gardens, an iron railing has been erected around the war memorial and work has continued to improve the area in front of the memorial. I should like to thank particularly Cllr. Ward for the work that she has done in this area.

For some years there has been concern expressed about vehicles speeding on the roads in our area. Further speed checks have been made by the county police, but no specific recommendations were forthcoming. The council has set up a working group to consider the subject of speeding and road safety more generally and to make recommendations. At present it seems that no money would be available from county council funds to undertake any works.

This year the precept set by the council for its own funds and collected as part of the council tax levied on all properties in the parish has been kept at the same level as last year. However, because of the removal of grant support from central government, this means that the sum available to the council this year will be a little less than last year. Council tax charged by the other councils (AVBC and DCC) has been increased.

I wish to thank both of the clerks, Milly and Simon, who have supported our activities this year for their service and conclude by thanking all of the council members for their support throughout the year. In particular I wish to express thanks on behalf of the community to 4 members of the council who are resigning at the end of this year. They are Cllrs. Steve Chambers, Pete Robinson, Maggie Shields and Mike Wiser who have between them given more than 25 years of service to the community.

Ian Hooker