



Kirklevington and Castle Leavington Parish Council

Annual Report of the Chairman

This annual report covers a two year period due to the COVID crisis and no Annual Meeting being held in 2020. It can also be seen that there has been a change in Chair of the Parish Council within this two year period which has resulted in their being input into this report from both the past Chair, Parish Councillor Mrs Jennie Beaumont and the present Chair Parish Councillor Mr. Nigel de Badgecoe

May 2019 – January 2021

Jennie Beaumont

This report covers the period May 2019 to January 2021 as due to personal circumstances I stood down as Chairman in January this year and the baton was ably taken on by Nigel DeBadgecoe, who has written the second part of this report. This part of the report covers events in 2019 which were our usual very successful KirkFest and our Annual Christmas celebration; singing carols round the Christmas tree followed by seasonal refreshments in the Village Hall. The Events in 2019 seem such a long time ago that they are difficult to remember and unfortunately the usual events in 2020 for example the Kirkfest could not take place. (We did however enjoy the Christmas event, organised by the Church which took place on The Green)

However on a more positive note our highlight in 2020 was the refurbishment of the play area. After discovering that we were responsible for the boundary wall on the south side our first requirement was to have the wall repaired. That accomplished at a cost we hadn't known was our responsibility we moved on to the fun part. To get all the Parish Councillors involved we had meetings, socially distanced in gardens to view plans and managed to get the new equipment approved. This was all achieved within budget but with very useful help from the Stockton ward councillors and William Hall Charity. The Parish Council had operated a very tight budget and accumulated savings which we had been determined would be used to modernise our play area. (The children playing there each day more than justifies this, my thanks to all involved). The seating etc. will follow in due course, weather and availability permitting

Although I have stood down as Chairman my interest in our Parish is not diminished and I have decided to continue to serve on the Parish Council for now. Although the objections to the Planning applications currently being built were well documented at the planning application time they were not given due importance by the developers and many problems such as the flooding should and could have been avoided. Unfortunately local knowledge is discounted too easily. The battles which are on-going are outlined in the second part of this report which is written by the new Chairman Nigel. My thanks go to him for taking on the role and all members for their support to me during my term in office, particularly Ruth Mazonas our clerk for her invaluable help.

January 2021 – May 2021

Nigel De Badgecoe

Due to personal reasons Jennie Beaumont sadly had to step down from her role as Chair of the Parish Council and proposed myself, (Nigel De Badgecoe) to continue on her behalf – this motion was seconded by Graham Tebbs and Pramada Deepak.

I would firstly like to say that Jennie has been an amazing ambassador not just for Kirklevington and Castle Levington but for Yarm, Ingleby Barwick and beyond with a very impressive 42 years of service in politics and Stockton Borough Council. We also say a big thank-you and good-bye to Graham Tebbs our vice Chair and James Simpson one of our Parish Councillors, a big thank-you from both the Parish Council and the residents for all your contributions. We offer a warm welcome to Damian Hadfield and Andy Alton who have taken up these two vacancies and look forward to working alongside you in the future.

In the short time I am been in role, we have made a concerted effort to make the council more easily approachable (via a single email address) and visible in the fantastic work we all do. We have invested a huge amount of time in creating the new website and make every effort to update it as often as we possibly can so its content remains relevant. We are working very closely with the Village Hall and have regular dialogue with the church to make sure they are suitably represented.

We have started forging a relationship with Story's so we can raise issues and concerns as quickly as possible, this includes the proposed 2-way traffic on Pump lane, this is not wanted by either the residents of Kirklevington nor Story's themselves and we are working together to try and oppose this with SBC.

The banks application for 90 / 97 houses at the west side of St Martins Way continues to be a major concern, not so much for the building work itself as that has already been passed by appeal but the (already granted) means of access which involves dragging all the HGV movements through the village without a care for our residents safety – particularly the children who play and live on St. Martins Way, The Green and Moor Close together with the surrounding areas of the village that the vehicles will pass through – this issue has caused an uproar within the village and has been publicised via the local press and a specifically arranged zoom meeting with SBC planning department. I do not expect a favourable outcome as although there is a 'potential' for an alternative route using the Story access road to the south of their site – this would involve a cost that Taylor Wimpey don't need to spend so this is leading to a "profit before people" type safety campaign starting.

We also have another concern with Theakstons who have seemingly awoken a previous 'sleeping' application for 300 houses on the land south of Yarm School Rugby fields –

they already have an approved application for 100 houses there, now they are re-trying their luck with the earlier application on the similar space. We can only imagine what the traffic implications will be because of this and still no sign of the crossing there for children to access the school.

We have been blighted by fly-tipping on Saltergill Lane, pollution problems in the Picton Stell, potholes and water leaks on Forest Lane and crazy roadworks on Pump Lane, that said all have been managed as well as can be expected.

Following on from the Playground revamp last year, we are now looking to replace the benches with new maintenance free recycled plastic ones, this will work hand-in-hand with a generous grant received from the William Hall Trust last year so we can have them all matching and replace the older worn out ones. We are also looking to plant more bulbs around the village to improve its aesthetics and try to utilise the space around the Story's site to do the same.

So in my first few months we have had to deal with garden / PRow floods and ongoing drainage issues from the Story site, 2x different major planning applications, a website revamp, a change of half the Parish council members, roadwork issues and the tail end of a global pandemic, I doubt there will ever be a dull moment.

A big thank-you to all members of the Parish council for their continued involvement and to specifically to Ruth Mazonas who works tirelessly behind the scenes as clerk and responsible financial officer to the Parish council.