

EVERLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019 - 2020

Everleigh Parish Councillors have again worked hard over the past 12 months to maintain the infrastructure of the village and have organised a number of events to bring the people of Everleigh together on a regular basis. Latterly, the Parish Council's focus has concentrated on supporting villagers during the current Coronavirus threat, which is clearly our top priority at present.

The Planning Sub Committee, comprising Cllrs Jenny Jones, Kim Wheeler-Mallows and myself have diligently scrutinized several planning applications over the year to ensure new initiatives are in keeping with the village environment and Design Statement of 2006, which continues to be a valuable reference document.

Our playground and property has been well maintained by Cllr Kim Wheeler-Mallows and supported by Cllrs Eliza Hudson, Andy Earle and Peter Evans of the Property Sub Committee. The creation of the playground as a village hub for wider use by our community continues to be a success.

In January 2019 we submitted a proposal to reduce the speed limit on the A342 and Marlborough Road from 50 to 40mph. After a review, Wilts Council have decided that the speed limit on the A342 is to remain at 50mph and that Marlborough Road is to be split into 2 parts: South, from the A342 to Coombe Cottages the limit is to be reduced to 40mph; and North, from Coombe Cottages is to remain at 50mph with this zone extended to the KK tank crossing. Implementation is due to be complete by December 2020.

The village now has a new defibrillator, located by the noticeboard at the junction of the A342/The Street. We are most grateful to the Tidworth Area Board for a community grant of £462-50 to cover half the cost of purchasing this important equipment; the Parish Council provided matched funding.

Parish Councillors have been at the heart of several village events over the past year.

A group of 15 hardy souls gathered at 9am on Sunday 19th May at V Tank Crossing/Weatherhill Firs to Beat the Bounds of Everleigh Parish. We conducted a leisurely and very enjoyable 8 mile+ hike around most of our scenic parish boundary over a period of just over 3 hours. Congratulations to Cllr Kim Wheeler-Mallows for laying on such a well organised event.

Everleigh's Midsummer Tea Party took place on Sunday 23rd June at St Peter's Church with Mr and Mrs Robert East synchronizing the community effort. This involved a lot of work to tidy up the church yard and then support for the setting up and conduct of a highly successful event, raising valuable funds for the Churches Conservation Trust.

Our Summer Party took place at the playground on Saturday 13th July. Activities included egg and spoon races, baton relay races, golf pitch and putt and a coconut shy. However, the turnout was very disappointing with only 15 adults and 6 children attending the event which takes a good deal of endeavour and expense to conduct. The Parish Council spent £128 on the hire of a portalo, prizes and coconuts, which is not good use of limited resources for so few parishioners. We may therefore need to consider the future of the event in due course.

Our village bonfire/fireworks night did not take place last November. The event takes considerable time, effort and funding to organise, and it was apparent that Everleigh residents have not been fully supporting the evening in recent years. Consequently, parishioners were consulted in May/June to seek their views. Only 13 out of 94 households responded that they would like the event to continue. We will keep the situation under review.

On Saturday 7th December the annual Village Carol Service took place at St Peter's Church. Our vicar, Jo Reid, conducted the service with aplomb and the village children were most impressive in delivering the readings with real confidence and style. Cllr Kim Wheeler-Mallows produced excellent lighting effects and Cllr Eliza Hudson laid on superb refreshments – mulled wine, mince pies and hot chocolate. This event was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The year concluded with a village litter pick on Saturday 7th March, as part of a national initiative "The Great British Spring Clean." 11 volunteers turned out and collected 18 bags of rubbish from the verges of all arterial roads approaching and running through the village.

Since early March, life has been dominated by the Coronavirus situation. As we settled in for the long haul, we adopted a COVID-19 Support Plan, dividing the village into 6 areas each with a co-ordinator and volunteers to support our villagers as a team effort. Co-ordinators liaised with residents and were ready to provide appropriate support, particularly for those who may be most vulnerable perhaps due to age and/or medical conditions. Additionally, volunteer supporters stepped forward to help, with shopping, collecting prescriptions or general welfare. There continues to be plenty of advice and updates on the COVID-19 threat in the media and key information is posted on the Everleigh village web site at www.everleigh.org.

Our village emergency plan, issued last January, also remains fit for purpose as a source for contact details for Parish Councillors and emergency services. Everleigh residents seem to be coping well with the situation. There is an atmosphere of cheerful resolution and community spirit, with neighbours looking out for each other. Plans are likely to evolve and have been kept deliberately simple, with the intent of offering support to villagers in an unobtrusive way and to provide flexibility for the inevitable changes to come.

The Parish is fortunate to receive excellent support from other directions. Our Wiltshire Councillor, Ian Blair-Pilling, continues to provide close support for the Parish Council. On the policing front, Wilts Police Community Policing Team continue to provide security for the village with limited resources.

For the future, the Parish Council's immediate priority is to continue to provide support to villagers during the present Coronavirus situation. Two other priorities remain: Maintain the village's infrastructure, particularly the playground; and continue to lay on several events per year to enhance village community spirit when possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow parish councillors and the parish clerk, Mr Phil Gill, for all their support, enthusiasm and hard work during the past 12 months; Team Everleigh continues to thrive!

DENIS BOTTOMLEY

Chairman, Everleigh Parish Council

28th April 2020