Chairman's Report

Annual Parish Assembly 2020

It is well known how much I enjoy and value our Annual Assembly, and I must say it is a great disappointment to me that we were unable to hold this event this year because of the Covid 19 Lockdown. There is no doubt that we are in extremely difficult times and we can have no perception of how our lives will change over the coming months. However, we are a very supportive community, which will give us resilience in the months to come. Our Groups have established strong friendships within them. These will sustain us over what we know will be an exceedingly difficult period of time.

As always, I will start by thanking Phil my Parish Clerk, and my Vice- Chairman, Richard, for their assistance throughout the past year, and also my fellow councillors for their attendance and support.

I am also grateful to Phil Alford our Wiltshire Councillor who has made time in his very busy schedule to be with us at most of our meetings where he has been most useful in giving updates and help where he is able.

Thanks also to Maggie Ledbury our PCSO who has conscientiously provided us with monthly crime reports for our area, keeping us well informed. I am delighted to show our thanks to her with our award for outstanding service to our Atworth Parish community. Hopefully, a time can be arranged shortly for her to receive this.

I give my thanks to Richard Clark and all the Village Hall Trustees, also to Steve Clark for winding our village clock every week, and keeping it in good order, and of course to the WI who work throughout the year as our village caretakers in keeping Atworth litter free.

We have many groups in our village covering a variety of interests from Sewing to photography. The Youth Club is till active and looking ahead to building on their membership. Brownies and Guides are thriving. Very many thanks to all these group leaders who endeavour to enrich our community.

We have had a busy year with considering planning applications and also maintaining the Parish fabric. Over the past year we have been a little more quiet than usual.

- We joined a scheme with Melksham Without Parish council, sharing a Speed indicating Device between our Parish and theirs.
- We had repairs to our footpaths along Bradford Road, Mead Park and outside Snapdragons Nursery.
- We finally replaced the lanyard at Shell Court and bought new flags.

- There had been major disruptions along the Bath Road. These were because of new gas pipes being laid. We had to call them back to implement a better repair to our road and also to reseed verges, and happily they did a first-rate job on this work.
- Following a near collision at Mead Park, a remedy was sought with Highways and the Police. Locations for yellow lines were identified, so a solution could be put in place soon.
- We welcomed Reverend Jane Palmer to the Parish in July. She is our new priest for St. Michaels and also Christchurch.
- Having said our goodbyes to Maggie Ledbury, we very pleased to meet our new PCSO Janet Gould who I am sure will be an asset to the Parish.
- We were delighted to have Brian Flynn as our new Footpath Warden and look forward to benefiting from his work in keeping the access to our footpaths well maintained.
- We have ordered Armed Forces and Centenary Commemorative benches for the Clocktower area, which I am sure will look splendid.
- The Village Hall has had further improvements with speakers, projector, new screen.
- The Hall also received an Area Board grant for new tables and chairs, and we thank Phil Alford for supporting this application.

The “not so good” news was:

- We still have vacancies on the Parish Council.
- We had vandalism on our Recreation Ground with a hole made in the dry-stone walling. The repair cost £375 bringing a total spend on recent repairs to £1,000.
- Greasy substances had been spread over the play equipment.
- The Jack & Jill bench along Purlpit was removed because it was in pieces.
- We had three minor road traffic collisions near the school.
- Lighting the Clocktower had been discussed on numerous occasions, but this was abandoned as it was proving more costly and complicated than first envisaged.
- Our pavements still suffer overhanging branches and overgrown, protruding hedges.
- There is still inconsiderate parking with vehicles on footpaths.

I look forward to next year, hopefully Covid -19 free, aiming that we will continue to make Atworth Parish a better place in which to live, where we can build on all the strengths within our community and can take pride in our local environment.

Effie Gale-Sides