

Hatley Parish Council

Chairman's report 2020 / 2021

For the second year we are holding our APM/AGM on Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions.

I would like to start by acknowledging the work of numerous members of our community who have continued to help and support their neighbours over this past year.

It has been heartening to see new friendships and alliances flourishing. East Hatley now has a WhatsApp group and whilst it was primarily set up to share information and offer practical support, it also offers residents the opportunity for casual contact with each other and hopefully helps to reduce loneliness and isolation.

The same group who set up the WhatsApp facility also organise regular collections in both East Hatley and Hatley St George for the foodbank which was recently set up in Gamlingay. There have been three collections so far and it has been heart-warming to witness the generosity of our community.

There are more thanks due to members of our community who have generously given their time specifically to Parish Council projects – to Martin Ward for his weekly inspection of the defibrillator throughout the pandemic. Martin used to head up a Defibrillator Group who were all part of an inspection rota but for the past year has assiduously carried out the inspections on his own and to the same high standard.

Thanks also to Alan Pinney for all his work with the speed sign; Alan regularly re-locates the sign and re-charges the battery and we are very grateful for his continued commitment.

Peter Mann has spent a large portion of the past year trying to find more funding for the renovation of the toilets at the Village Hall. The aim is to update the toilets and ensure that they are fit for purpose and accessible to all users of the hall. The Awards for All funding already secured has been extended for a further 12 months and Peter is hopeful that a National Lottery Community Fund application may be successful later this year. Peter has worked hard to try and find ways of reducing the overall cost and coming up with a functional design and the Parish Council are very grateful for all his hard work.

Over the past year we have held five Ordinary Meetings and three Extraordinary Meetings. We have responded to several planning applications and a consultation on the proposed removal of our two BT phone boxes.

Because the pandemic has imposed so many restrictions on our daily lives we have not accomplished as many tasks as we might normally hope to over the year. However, we have still been busy:

1. We carried out two Parish consultations: one on traffic speeds through Hatley St George and another to obtain a true picture of mobile network availability and service issues.

As a result we are resolved to apply for a Highways improvement grant in order to lower the speed limit through Hatley St George and we are also resolved to find a way of improving the mobile phone reception service in both villages, our next step is to contact our MP, Anthony Browne, to see how he can help us with this problem.

2. In January South Cambs felled three diseased trees in East Hatley and replaced them with eight new trees, planted on Highways land between East Hatley and Hatley St George.

Thanks must go to Micky Astor for taking on the decisions of what trees to plant and their exact locations. We are very grateful to Martin Ward, Alan Pinney and Peter Gouldson who have taken on the task of keeping them watered in this early stage of growth and thanks especially to Martin Ward and Peter Gouldson for generously donating their household water for this purpose.

3. Once again we have successfully campaigned to retain both BT phone boxes in the village.
4. In October 2020 and March 2021 we carried out village litter picks which were well attended and sadly very fruitful in terms of the litter collected. We intend to organise another one in early autumn.

Litter has certainly been on our minds this year; lots of us take local walks and are regularly reminded of how much rubbish is thrown from passing cars. For now we hope to carry out twice yearly collections and can only hope that drivers who witness us looking after the verges will be less inclined to chuck stuff from their car windows.

Thank you to Heather Williams, our District Councillor and Sebastian Kindersley, our County Councillor for their regular attendance and valuable contributions over the year. They continue to update and inform us on many issues including the East West Rail project and the Thakeham housing proposal.

Thanks must go to my fellow councillors for their support and hard work over the year and also to Kim Wilde, our Parish Clerk, who continues to share with us her wide knowledge and wise, calm words of advice.

Thank you.

Margot Eagle
Chairman, Hatley Parish Council
4th May 2021