

## Walton Parish Council APM Chairman's Report May 2022

Firstly, I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors for their continued work and support over the last year.

I feel our strength as a Council has grown and the fact all are happy to remain as Councillors is testament to your commitment and clear enjoyment that comes from the delivery of tangible projects and endeavours that improve Walton and make it such a great place to live.

May I also thank our Ward Councillors for their active support, Alan Lamb and in particular Norma Harrington who has regularly attended Parish Council meetings. Her input has been most valuable across the full range of discussions from funding to compliance and beyond!

In terms of highlights from the past year, as predicted the Xmas lights project is approaching near legacy status both in the village and across the local area, with other Councils asking us how we manage to do it – which is great. The Bonfire Night spectacular was a sell out and despite the weather, was fantastic and raised significant funds for the Village Hall.

The success of these events in bringing the community together is what really pleases and motivates me and I genuinely feel that last year's main aim of looking to work more closely with the Village Hall continue and involving more villagers in our endeavours, has been achieved.

The pending Jubilee celebrations are exciting and once again show how we are looking forward to work as a village – the hall, church, pub and the cricket club in pooling our resources to celebrate such a momentous occasion – let's hope it doesn't rain on our picnic!

I am delighted at the continued success and vibrancy of the Village Hall and its committee. The plans for the hall are exciting and the relationship with the Scape School now cements the facility as a key and growing entity at the heart of the village and long may it continue but we do need to be vigilant as we do face a number of real challenges.

As predicted last year the potential impact of new development is a threat and I am pleased with the protocols we have in place to openly discuss how these effect the village. The Lovell scheme on the prison field, the glamping proposition on Hall Park Road, the British Library and the potential biomass boiler at Champagne Whinn are all developments that we have discussed in detail in representing the village and its views.

I would like to think our attitude is not viewed as anti-development but simply ensuring we get the right sort of development to ensure the village is protected and community continue to thrive. In this regard, I look forward to the plans for the new housing on Springs Lane, which will see positive development in line with the village plan.

One of the biggest concerns which is compounded by new development is traffic and significant work has been done through the year to research, appraise and establish robust solutions to excessive, and importantly speeding traffic in the village. May I thank Brodie and all councillors involved in their efforts to date and into the future as this is an ongoing challenge.

Finally a huge thank you to the Parish Clerk, Helena. She really is crucial to the smooth running of the Parish Council and we are extremely lucky to have her on board.

So in conclusion, I am delighted with our situation. We have strengthened our connections with the village and our relationship with the Village Hall, church and cricket club but as ever challenges lay ahead. The success of the local pub remains a concern, funding the church clock repairs at over £4,000 will be a challenge and managing the effects of new development is critical.

Thank you.

**David Aspland, Chair, Walton Parish Council.**