

Holton Parish Annual Meeting 23 May 24

Welcome

Agenda

- Introduction.
 - Brian Pridmore, chair, personnel cttee, Brookes liaison group and liaison with Playing fields cttee general representation of the council
 - Allan East – Vice Chair, liaison with many village activities, Orchard member and playground equipment
 - Charlotte Keely, personnel cttee
 - Robert Barter, Brookes liaison cttee
 - Andrew Murray, Village hall cttee.

Sonja acts as the focal point for the council and is the responsible officer. Providing continuity and advice. In addition supports many other activities and cttees in the village. As ever a busy year and our thanks for all that she does.

Slide

Many planning applications this year and the council has attempted to provide consistent and even-handed treatment whilst protecting the green belt and the character of the village. Work hard to ensure good relations with planning department and, whilst we don't always agree, we have good open communications on important issues.

We have discussed the Brookes liaison at length – more of that to follow.

The PC has worked hard to secure grants for improvements and secured a major contribution to the play equipment of more than £23k

in addition to other grants for items such as bus stop storage and road safety improvements.

Work on the churchyard extension continues and we are very close to concluding what has been a drawn out process. There are just a couple of minor issues to overcome before the land can be added on to the churchyard.

We have also put considerable effort into ensuring that the path to school has been kept open and, whilst there are some contradictory views, we have been focused on ensuring safety for the children of the village. This has not always been easy given vandalism of the gate that has been put in place and also pressures placed on the headteacher of the school but we believe that a satisfactory compromise has been put in place which supports the need for safeguarding of the whole school and ensuring safe passage of our children to school.

Road safety continues to be an important issue and we will discuss that in more detail later also.

Perhaps one of the more controversial subjects has been the management of verges within the village and I am aware that several people have expressed views with regard to the policy that we have adopted. I am very pleased to report that diversity in our village is increasing, that said, we are not yet content that we are getting in right and Allan is taking the lead once more on trying to ensure we achieve the balance between environment, safety and, yes, tidiness...

Finally, we now have a dedicated team of highway fix my street superusers in the village, Clive and Mel, who have made great strides in pothole repairs and also in ensuring that the Giga Clear contractors cleared up their mess. Thank you both for your hard work in this regard, you are making a big difference.

Slide

So, some highlights:

We have a new playground – this was a major effort from Allan and the PC team and it has received universal praise.

We have bollards to prevent parking (semi-legal) at the school.
Entrance

There was a very successful litter blitz

High speed internet is inbound – thanks to Clive and Mel they cleaned up their mess and we have some pretty big potholes repaired.

Slide

We are mostly a volunteer-based village and it is thanks to a few willing soles that we get things done. Thanks to everyone who has helped out this year for your dedication and efforts

A special thanks also to Jan for most of the pictures tonight and for our excellent facebook picture sharing sight. She is also working hard to ensure the archives are in good order and is always keen for donations to help maintain the history of the village.

If anyone would like to volunteer then please do reach out to any Councillor or the Clerk and we will make the connections.

Slide

Turning to finances now:

We held broadly flat on Council Tax this year and finished the year broadly level. These are a few of the key areas of expenditure for the village but does not include our other grants or major capital spends.

If you want to see these then please check the accounts on the website published after they have been audited and do raise any questions with myself or the clerk.

Slide

Moving to the coming year our focus is very much still on ensuring that the Brookes development is sympathetic to its surroundings, provides the right balance of housing for local people and is connected to the village so as not to become a dormitory settlement on our doorstep.

This is the latest layout of the site and it represents a big change from the original. Crest Nicholson have been listening and, within the constraints of cost and also what the district and other 'regulatory' bodies have mandated, they have taken many of our views into account.

Against an approval of 500 houses there are c. 464 dwellings in the plan.

Slide

The Western Access has been secured and the alternate East East proposal appears to be not only refused but no longer on the table.

Bus routes are agreed and the PC is negotiating to ensure that a pathway will connect the park to the existing village to enable use of the Church, village hall and to enjoy our countryside without need to traverse the busier roads.

Slide

Over the coming months the PC will continue to work with both the developer and SODC to secure the best design and facilities for the

new development whilst endeavouring to integrate as much as possible with our existing community.

In addition, we continue to focus on Road Safety in the village as an ongoing concern and it has been suggested that we re-invigorate the road safety cttee for the coming year.

The main focus will be to review the previous changes that were implemented, gather views from villagers and then make recommendations with regard to any more changes required to the PC.

If you are interested in joining this review then please pass your details to the Clerk.

Thank you all for attending this evening and for your attention, I shall now turn over to open forum for your views, questions, ideas. Over to you.