



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - 2019

After such a turbulent time on the wider political scene it is important to state that Parish Councillors do not represent any Political party – they represent the community which is everyone who is here tonight and those who are not. Our Parish Meetings are regularly supported by our Chelmsford City Councillors – Cllr. Richard Poulter and more recently Cllr. Sue Dobson. We look to them for wider support from Chelmsford City Council, particularly on planning-related matters. We thank all our guests and residents for coming along this evening.

The Parish Council Year 2018/ 2019 has proven to be somewhat of a challenge one way and another, but nonetheless we have achieved quite a significant range of projects in that year.

The Parish Council works closely with a wide range of mostly voluntary groups— providing for all age groups within the Parish e.g. First Responders, Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch, Bicknacre Friendship Club, Danbury & Bicknacre FC, our 2 Village Halls, 2 Schools, The School Room, etc. and sometimes we are also able to help some of them financially. Some of them are represented here tonight and I would like to extend the appreciation to them from the Parish Council. I would like also to take the opportunity to thank our Handyman John Cousins who has been fundamental to many projects throughout the Parish, including making and donating the war remembrance pieces – which was well above and beyond his role.

The Parish Council have again been successful in obtaining funding. We received £6,800 from the Local Service Fund for a 2 year Community Gardener Role and the changes are already visible. The Parish Council received £1,180 from the Essex County Council Community Initiatives Fund for matched funding for new swings at Lodge Road which are now in place, along with a CCTV system generously donated by a nearby resident which is very much appreciated by the Parish Council. Our Clerk is always seeking opportunities to obtain funding to enhance our villages and does a splendid job.

The Parish Council was delighted to learn that this year Bicknacre was shortlisted for the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) Village of the Year Competition. The RCCE judge visited on 21st May 2019 and was extremely impressed with all aspects of the village, in particular the splendid job the Friends of Priory Fields undertake and the visit to Priory Primary School, so we are keeping our fingers crossed for the results on 10th July 2019. We now have Community Herb Gardens in both villages with the support of White Elm Garden Centre and also the Essex County Council Youth Offenders Group who have done some of the excellent preparatory work. Our thanks to White Elm for the splendid planters they donated around the village. The Woodham Ferrers Herb Garden was planted by the children of St.Mary's School.

One of the most challenging items we have had recently is the very disturbing situation with respect to the potential closure of St. Mary's School – the Parish Council continues to support the parents where we can to try and keep this School open. The matter is currently being considered by the Education Department of Essex County Council who are keeping the parents and the Parish Council informed on their findings/decisions.

You may also have been to the latest event which was the Open Air Cinema on 11th May 2019. Unfortunately, I was on holiday but those who attended had a great evening and the feedback was excellent. There will be another cinema event on 6th September 2019 and we will consider running the event twice a year if the support continues.

We have other projects planned for the future; an additional 20 community car parking spaces at Bicknacre Playing Fields, which will hopefully help alleviate parking issues. The possibility of a Pentanque Court/Club at Woodham Ferrers is being considered. We have had the great news that one of our younger residents will be applying for the role as a Community Special Constable.

We currently have 2 Parish Council vacancies one for each village. This has put quite a strain on the remaining Councillors in addressing any issues/questions raised by the residents. We do have the occasional positive comment about the Village Greens, Xmas events, and so on.... which is really nice to receive. I'd like to thank the Councillors for their support and to ex-Cllr. Chris Saltmarsh who is still in the background assisting.

This is a plea to anyone who might like to join us. There is a warning attached to this plea though – don't expect miracles! In my experience the work involved is analogous to eating an elephant – one small mouthful at a time! Please get in touch with the Clerk for any further information – maybe come and observe at one of our monthly meetings. One way and another being a Parish Councillor gives one ownership of a whole range of options to achieve/resolve and contribute to within the Parish. Why not give it a try?

Cllr. June Saltmarsh – Chairman



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The Parish Council resolved at the 4th December 2018 meeting to ask for a Precept of £74,610 from Chelmsford City Council an increase of £4,750.00 & 7.07% from last year. On a Band D property this equates to an increase of £5.07 per annum per household. Further details are overleaf. The Clerk is in the process of finalising the 18/19 Audit.

WOODHAM FERRERS & BICKNACRE PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR PRECEPT 2019-20 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 4TH DEC 2018

REF FROM 2017-18	ITEM	BUDGET 2018-19	BUDGET 2019-20
1	Payroll - Clerk, all other staff & casual labour	£32,260.00	£32,260.00
5	Park & Grounds Maintenance - Bradley Faulkner	£8,000.00	£8,000.00
6,8,9,10, 22,23,24	Village Maintenance (JC) General Village Expenses / Items (incl utilities & insurance)	£7,000.00	£7,000.00
7,12,13	Professional Services (Audit, Surveyors, Electricians)	£2,200.00	£2,200.00
14, 17,18,20	Administration, Training & Hall Hire (Incl EALC / SLCC Annual Fee)	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
11,15,16,19	Parish Office (incl. rent, phone, internet, office purchases)	£4,200.00	£3,500.00
21	Essex Digital Copiers lease & printing newsletters	£3,750.00	£2,900.00
25	Petty Cash	£250.00	£150.00
26	Chairman's Allowance	£200.00	£300.00
27	Section 137 Expenses	£0.00	£0.00
1 to 7	Community Grants	£1,300.00	£1,000.00
New line	Elections 2019		£800.00
TOTAL		£61,160.00	£60,110.00

NEW PROJECT FUNDS	£
1 X COMMUNITY SPECIAL CONSTABLES	£1,000.00
THE HOOE - BUCKET SWING	£1,000.00
THE HOOE - NEW FOOTBALL GOALS	£1,000.00
UNPLANNED/EMERGENCY WORKS	£1,500.00
ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING BICKNACRE PLAYING FIELDS	£4,000.00
HERB GARDEN WOODHAM FERRERS	£500.00
COMMUNITY SUMMER EVENT	£1,000.00
INCREASE RESERVES	£4,500.00
TOTAL PROJECT FUNDS:	£14,500.00

PRECEPT 2019/2020:	£74,610.00
PRECEPT 2018/2019	£69,680.00
£ Increase from 2018 -19:	£4,930.00
% Increase from 2018 -19:	7.08%