CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

Cllr. June Saltmarsh

I don't think any of us believed that 2020 would bring so many changes to our personal lives / working lives / schooling - no matter whatever one's age and circumstances. The impact on the normal Parish activities (Speedwatch, First Responders, NHW, etc.) have been somewhat curtailed but I think in some ways this has enabled time for reflection and I'm sure that when things get 'almost' back to normal, they will return full blast.

Firstly, I'd like to give a VERY SINCERE thank you to our Clerk – Karen. As most of you are aware from the very start of COVID-19 our Clerk jettisoned into action. She has contributed significantly to the Health and Well Being programme that has been rolled out to other Parish Councils in Essex.

The Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) have also put support mechanisms in place for the Clerks and Chairman throughout Essex so that they can work collaboratively via Zoom and Microsoft Teams meetings and learn from this 'unique' situation. They have provided regular updates to ensure that all communities remain safe and follow Government guidelines throughout – so a big 'thank you' to the EALC Team.

At our March Parish Council Meeting, I am pleased to report that we were able to co-opt Peter Brown to the position of Councillor for Woodham Ferrers Ward. Welcome back to the Council Peter and especially at a time when we need a full team.

The normal business of the Parish Council has been going on. Parish Council has continued throughout with several Essex Highways issues still being pursued regularly. Planning Applications have still been coming through the system for the Parish Council to review – although as Cllr Richard Poulter reported recently neighbours of any development are not now receiving letters.

We continue to add facilities to our Playing Fields and now have multi gym equipment at both Lodge Road Playing Field and at the Hooe. We hope that you've had time to enjoy yourselves and keep fit at your own pace.

We have celebrated the work carried out (and still on-going) by THE NHS with the Thursday evening clapping sessions and occasionally dancing on our front drives!!! You may well have noticed our Nurses on the benches throughout out the Parish. Our sincere thanks to John Cousins (the Parish Council handyman) for providing these for us to admire.

Personally, I've tried to walk as many of the footpaths, commons, woods and roads just to see where they go – and having lived here for 45+ years have found it really peaceful just listening to the birds instead of the traffic, gazing at the blue sky without the aeroplane trails. Like many other residents I've seen this dilemma has brought joy with it as well. We're now walking and talking (at a distance of 2m) and finding different and beautiful places that we didn't have time to explore in the past.

At our Annual Council Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday 12th May the following appointments were voted unanimously:

Chairman	Cllr June Saltmarsh
Vice Chairman	Cllr. Lucy White

Thanks to all Councillors for their continued support during the past Council year with the promise of another challenging year ahead.

Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council a big VERY BIG THANK YOU to all those fantastic volunteers within the Parish of Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre. From day 1,a group of around 15 volunteers have steadfastly provided support in so many ways. Each and every one of them have gone the extra mile to ensure that vulnerable residents are and continue to be supplied with shopping, medicines etc.

A true Parish community spirit is alive and kicking.