

**CHAIRMANS REPORT
PECKLETON PARISH COUNCIL
2022**

I am pleased to report that the Parish Council has had another couple of active years and has continued to fulfil its duties for the benefit of its three village communities. Like most others issuing reports covering recent times we have functioned and continued pretty well without Covid disrupting things. For quite a time we did have to use zoom but that went well. The government have now taken away permission for zoom to be used for Council Meetings, but I would have preferred the government to have left it as an option for us. At the moment we don't need it but who knows what might come next.

The Councillors have worked well, and it has been their involvement and work that has made things happen although it is a bit of a strain particularly as there are only four Councillors. We have two vacancies and for one reason or another it appears as if there is no appetite for being a Parish Councillor. This is a major concern and somehow or other this issue does need to be addressed. It may come to a head in 12 months' time because the current Council's elected period comes to an end and elections for all Councillors will be called in May 2023. So, it is perhaps timely that I mention I have decided to stand down and will not be a candidate next year.

If we wish to see our villages progress and continue to be pleasant places to live, that is best achieved by local representatives. The Council is not something that should be sub-contracted and therefore is solely dependent upon interested residents coming forward and joining the Council.

The Council's decisions and actions are documented in the minutes of its meetings, and these are all available on the Council's web site. Therefore, I will not go through each and every thing that the Council has done during the past year. Those of you who are interested please visit the web site and read the details for yourselves.

Although for the last couple of years the news outlets have been obsessed with a limited number of issues it has been common for Councils across the country to be commenting and reporting financial restraints and difficulties, but Peckleton Parish's finances remain well managed and in a reasonably healthy position. It is with some comfort that I report the current council do have a good financial situation. In the 2021/2022 year all planned expenditure was undertaken, and the end of year financial position is again nicely positive. This year's financial management has revolved around paying for the replacement of all the street lights. The lamps are now LEDs which is going to reduce the annual electricity usage and cost as well as the yearly maintenance fee. But the total capital cost does have to be paid. To reduce the impact this is going to have the Council has obtained extended payment terms at a reasonable rate. We obtained grants from HBBC and Shire Community. There may also be the possibility of a further contribution of £10,000 but at the moment this has not yet materialised. So, at the current time the Council's budgeting is having to bear this in mind, just in case this contribution is never received.

For the coming year a number of costs are increasing or needing to be met and the Council decided it was necessary to increase the Precept by 10%, which is very much a reflection of the street light project and a desire to continue making improvements. I expect this is not welcomed and it should be noted the Council's planned budget for next year will not be fully met by the Precept. The Precept has been set to recover only the annual overheads and re-occurring expenditure with a total of £39,069 but with other costs and in particular one-off capital projects being funded from reserves, the planned total expenditure for the coming year is £47,695. If it all goes as predicted the Council's finances will still remain healthy.

The Council has and will continue to support local activities and throughout the year again gave donations to local events and made contributions towards the upkeep of each village.

HBBC and the County Council have started to prepare and consult on their future development plans and the Council is keeping them under review and ensure our Parishes opinions and views are constantly and vigorously put forward at each consultation stage. In particular I hope the development plans will be based on each of our villages retaining their rural aspect and in this respect all councillors and residents need to be acquainted with the HBBC Development Plan.

HBBC are also reviewing Parish Council's boundaries. I think it is something you should acquaint yourself with and I encourage you to send your views to the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The review of parish council's geographical boundaries only happens every 10 or 15 years and so if you would prefer the status quo or would like to see changes then now is the time to put your opinion to HBBC. There will not be another chance for at least another 10 years.

Amongst the changes that can be reviewed is the Councils name. Peckleton Parish Council does not reflect the reality of the Council covering the three very separate villages and communities. I hope someone will be able to come up with a more apt name.

The closing date for comments is the 18th May so not much time to respond should you wish to.

As always, there are quite a few things under discussion for the improvement of the parish and individual villages but there are two things that are uppermost in my mind. Firstly, Traffic. It affects all three communities and we do have ongoing discussions with LCC Highways although they are frustratingly protracted. Our County Councillor, Mr Ross Hills, is helping and has offered a financial contribution from LCC for the installation of Vehicle Activated signs. We have also budgeted for their installation in all three villages, we just need LCC Highways to agree and approve where they can be sited. Secondly, from some comments made, the Parish Council can and should improve its connection and consultation with residents.

Finally, I would again like to thank the Clerk, Vice Chair and the Councillors for their efforts and commitment to the Parish. Councillors are volunteers and I have much to thank them for. The Council worked well.

Peter Chick
26/04/2022.