

# Grendon Underwood Parish Council Annual Report 2018/19

Dated: 28 May 2019

**Author: Cllr Kim Moloney (Chairman)**

My second full year as Chairman has been demanding and stimulating on a number of fronts ranging from local issues to National infrastructure plans impacting the Parish.

Again, I am indebted to my fellow councillors who have taken more of the strain this year voluntarily working for the greater good of residents while each one of them lead their own busy lives.

Special thanks go to Cllr Benfield for his support as Vice Chair. His knowledge and passion for the community is outstanding. He has spent many hours carrying out essential maintenance work in the village at no charge. Cllr Jackman as the council's lead on the MUGA project & its past representative on the Village Hall Committee and at the Saye & Sele Foundation; Cllr Hedgecox who has been worked hard as Chair to the Personnel Committee. Cllr Shepherd for overseeing the MVAS cameras before handing over to Cllr Mackenzie. Cllr Mackenzie, in collaboration with the Go30 resident group, is championing our efforts to stamp out speeding through the village. I would also like to put on record the Council's, and my personal, thanks to BCC Cllr Angela Macpherson (and this Summer elected Leader of AVDC) who has, yet again, been a faithful friend of Grendon Underwood and its residents. Similarly, AVDC Cllr Cameron Branston (and now in his new post as Chair of the Economic & Business Development Committee) continues to be a valued influencer at District level on our behalf. And behind it all our Clerk keeps us on the straight & narrow. I thank them all.

Locally- we continue to drive the initiative, started last year, to ensure all Council business is open & transparent. To this end all Council business is carried out electronically on Council owned equipment open for regular scrutiny; there is no petty cash or cheques in the system & our formalised PO system ensures no one person can authorise expenditure unilaterally. All council policies, working documents & application forms are formally approved by council.

I am also passionate about support for our elderly population. So, I am delighted to report meeting with the Headmistress of our school to discuss how both old & young can engage more in the community together. A number of possibilities arise such as getting the elderly in to see school productions, starting a 3rd Age lunch club, making a tree park & sensory walk for young & old. I hope to report more on this in the coming year.

# Grendon Underwood Parish Council Annual Report 2018/19

Dated: 28 May 2019

Planning – Whilst a proportionate & sustainable growth rate has always been acceptable to residents, non-sustainable large-scale developer proposals remain a concern. As a Planning Consultee of the Planning Authority (AVDC) we will always respond to request for comment based on the majority of your concerns if & when we are informed of them. We have 12 more houses at Shakespeare Orchard (Lears Lane), 14 more at Leonard's Gate, 11 on the old garage. So, for a village of our size, Grendon already makes its fair contribution to housing need. We continue to grow into the 22<sup>nd</sup> century & we look forward to welcoming our new neighbours.

Reserves - Following on from last years RFO report, Council has embarked on a controlled, progressive, but prudent, campaign to gradually reduce unusually large reserves with the aim of getting this money back into the community. Projects initiated last year include a full gully scraping of the whole of Main Street and side roads & full CCTV coverage around the VH that has been put to good use by Thames Valley Police. This coming year Council will contribute to maintaining our verges & hedges (after not renewing our Devolved Services Agreement with BCC), upgrading all our footpath lights to LED, a wholesale upgrade of the VH toilets & replacing community amenity benches at the War Memorial, playing field, & picnic area. I will leave it to the RFO report for more detail.

Community - We are also aware of several projects being proposed by residents all competing for limited funding this coming year & Council will always seek to support building community cohesion whenever possible. This means supporting projects that can be shown to be the priorities of the majority of residents. Currently under consideration include MVAS cameras for the speeding initiative, improving the church crossing of Broadway, maintaining the church yard, digitisation of a village archive, upgrading the War Memorial, collaborations with school & other community cohesion ideas. Council will have some difficult decisions to make and inevitably some will be disappointed. Council will always prioritise on its statutory duties, including safety issues and then discretionary projects as money allows.

The MUGA project continues. The project is funded by s106 money which comes from levies on developers building in the village. We are already incurring costs for the basics; professional services for lease agreements, insurances, plans, whole of life costs etc. Coming on stream hopefully this year.

## Grendon Underwood Parish Council Annual Report 2018/19

Dated: 28 May 2019

Council is now fully compliant with the requirements of latest data protection regulations. A council phone & email addresses are operational.

We held the annual precept request on Council Tax money the same as the previous year & this year we will ask for a larger contribution to reflect our growing population, so long as there continues to be no local impact on Grendon residents' council tax.

I would like to mention our wonderful village shop & post office and the lovely people who run it. They are a vital asset to the sustainability of our community and we wish the new baby & parents well.

We are encouraged by the building works at the Swan. Hopefully a wonderful new era awaits us.

Crime - Our community police team advise very low crime rates, apart from a spate of vehicle theft & a couple of very rare, isolated but serious incidents in the village. They continue to be a friendly, open supportive friend of Grendon.

Nationally – We continue to be a focus for national infrastructure projects all going through our area at once. Council continues to urge authorities at District, County & Nationally to consider the cumulative impact on our already overstretched infrastructure. See the BCC & AVDC reports for more.

Decisions at County are still subject to delays as the Unitary Authority beds down – local council elections being delayed to next May.

The VALP is still in progress and, should there be sufficient interest, Council will represent resident views at the public consultation due, at time of writing, imminently. As it stands, council agrees with the basic principals of the plan – that growth in a particular location should be sustainable & needed & not just as a result of a bureaucratic blanket increase regardless – and our revamped Planning Response Policy reflects that.

Construction traffic along the 'approved' HS2 & EWR construction routes down Broadway & Edgcott Road have already started & final volumes are still subject to fierce debate. We are also extremely concerned about the environmental damage already under way for HS2 enabling works.

Whilst awaiting the final corridor, we expect to be on the cusp of a 1 million house building programme along the Cambridge / Oxford Expressway. Council has joined protest groups to pass on your concerns to Government and County.

# Grendon Underwood Parish Council Annual Report 2018/19

Dated: 28 May 2019

I do commend reading the other reports from our community stakeholders - BCC, AVDC, TVP, VH.

On behalf of the full Council, I wish our residents a wonderful community-based year.

**Kim Moloney, Chairman of Grendon Underwood Parish Council**