

Annual Report Kilmeston Parish Council – Simon Young

I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for all their work on behalf of the Parish Council during the last year.

The Annual Parish Meeting did not take place as planned in May 2020 due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Five Parish Council meetings took place last year. All took place virtually, bar one, which took place outside the Village Hall. Interestingly, the use of Zoom increased the attendees, which was a good thing.

During the course of last year, the Parish Council has sought to build a close working relationship with our three neighbouring Parishes. This has helped to form a united position on two key issues, namely the A272 and the source of the River Itchen.

We have helped fund the new speed indicators on the A272 and have agreed to provide a working party to move their location providing maximum impact. The Parish Council have attended meetings with Cheriton Parish Council and Hampshire Highways, to improve the signage and safety on the A272 crossroads. Hampshire Highways have agreed to implement the changes during 2021.

Together with Cheriton we have lobbied the National Trust to clear the source of the River Itchen and have dug the ditches to improve the drainage of surface water.

As a Council we continue to keep a watchful eye on the planning site SD.63 as identified in the SDNP Local plan 2014-33.

The Parish Council worked with Ofcom to improve the mobile phone signal in and around the Village Hall. I would like to thank Ofcom and their partners for providing this service for free as it is enormously beneficial to the village and school, which means we have a defibrillator that works!

We helped in securing the village hall a £10,000 coronavirus grant which was much needed.

Working parties have been established to cut vegetation back on the parish footpaths which are now passable at all times of the year.

In 2020 we joined the Lengthsman scheme, and under the leadership of Councillor Parry improvements have been made to the parish. I would like to thank him for his help in organising this.

2020 was also the year of embracing the digital world. Thank you to Graham Cresswell for redesigning the village website. The new design enables the Parish Council to communicate far more effectively with the Parish. More importantly, it improves transparency. We are committed to publishing the minutes and agendas as quickly as possible after each Parish Council meeting. The website also allows members of the public to report simple problems, such as potholes and fly tipping.

The kilmeston.slack.com page has been used to gauge the mood of the Parish on major topics of interest i.e., Boomtown. We intend to use Slack and email to survey public opinion in the future.

A working party has been established to begin the process of acquiring FTTP for the village. This is without question the biggest challenge we face. The team have worked tirelessly and at speed to achieve our current position. It is not a straightforward process and we believe it will take some years to come to fruition. Their work is very important to future proof the Parish, and I would like to thank them for their commitment.

The Village Fete Committee kindly agreed to donate a circular seat for the Village Green. This has been ordered and will be installed shortly.

The Parish Plan was completed by the Parish Plan Steering Committee and approved by the Parish Council. The Plan is available for all on the website. Thank you to all those involved.

I would like to thank members of the City Council for their attendance during the course of the last year.

Finally, thank you to the members of the public who have attended our meetings and expressed their points of view. I hope that we have gone some way to achieving the wishes of the majority.