Annual Parish Meeting – PC Chair’s Report - Pippa Dennitts

From a Parish Council point of view we look back on an excellent year of development and progress.

With Jen as our Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and Clare as Assistant Clerk we have been able to make some exciting progress on projects and improving how we work. My Vice Chair, Peter Harry and all our Councillors have added huge value to different aspects of our overall work and I’d like to thank them all and recognise the time and effort they volunteer every month at our meetings and additionally through our various Working Groups, Committees, initiatives and of course things that arise.

We also enjoy consistent and positive support from both our District Councillor, Lynda McWilliams and our County Councillor Alan Goggin, so again thanks to them. It’s great to see our PCSO here this evening too.

Over the past year we have made progress in a number of key areas including:

* Awarding the first cohort of GBPS Students with their OBE – order of the Great Bentley Environment
* Adopting our Environment 20 Point Strategy which ensures we have an environmental eye on all the decisions we make.
* Purchasing a new tractor for maintaining the Green and selling on our antique Ford, which had been a feature on the Green for many years.
* We have made excellent progress on ensuring the South Side Track will be enhanced to enable better enjoyment of the Green in that area.
* Improving our approach to consultation / parish involvement in our work and will continue to build on this.
* Introducing 30mph wheelie bin stickers – available from the Parish Office.
* Introducing new Asset Inspection Software & reporting – starting with the play equipment, soon allotments, then other Parish Assets.
* Purchasing 2 additional Defibrillators for Aingers Green.
* Continuing to support local groups through the grants process, some of whom are here tonight to give a brief presentation on what they have spent their awarded money on.

Coming up in 2025 / 2025:

* Adult Gym Equipment
* Pond refurbishment
* Community Safety Working Group
* Continuing consultation / parish involvement
* Parish Council Award Accreditation
* Website review
* New cricket strip

There are a number of other people who actively support the work we do and I’d like to thank them and highlight their work for the Parish as well.

Our footpaths representative, Mel Sawers who, along with her spaniel Floyd, ensures our footpaths remain in good working order.

Our volunteer tree wardens - Sue and Faris Shimali - who ensure all of the Green’s trees remain healthy & safe.

Also our train station adopters – Dawn Vinn, Peter Neale & the team who work really hard to keep the station an inviting and positive environment.

Of course, across the area many others regularly go out of their way to ensure our Parish remains the vibrant and active place we all love. There are too many names to mention with all of the clubs, groups and events we have, but a special thank you goes out to all those who are involved in the Carnival and Village Show each year as these events form cornerstones to our village life.

As with so many areas, change seems to be a feature of village life as our Parish continues to grow and develop and this brings both challenges and opportunities. Our increased and increasing housing numbers, the growth of our school and the impact of these and other things on our Drs surgery, pharmacy, roads and village resources are all recognised as things we must adjust to and where possible make the most of. Over the past year we have been asked to think about the impact of the school growth, the possibility of a new Tesco, and new mineral extraction areas. These are things which could have significant and long lasting impact on our community and I’m always overjoyed to see the parish coming together in response to these situations. For me that is the most wonderful thing about village life is when people of the parish come together over something they are passionate about.

This meeting is all about celebrating what the Parish achieves each year and we have much more recognition coming up this evening, but for now let’s give a round of applause for everyone who contributes their time and effort to making the Parish of Great Bentley such a wonderful place to live.