

Chairman's Report- Annual General Meeting – May 2014

The major challenges this year have been:

1. exercising our rights under the new Community Right to Bid. Despite the clear desire of parishioners to protect The Ring o' Bells and the cricket field, the Parish Council found that interfering with age-old rights of ownership of land and property roused very strong feelings, and agreed to take no further action in either case.
2. supporting BANES Core Strategy (still not accepted by the Inspector) by developing the Placemaking Plan for the Parish.
3. understanding the options for bringing fast Broadband to the Parish.
4. the weather, with long term flooding, particularly in the Farmborough Lane.

Governance - A new version of our Financial Regulations was agreed – all available on the Priston Web.

Finance – it was discovered that we were in danger of paying our Parish Clerk less than the National Minimum Wage, leading to a further increase in the Precept this year, which has been accepted by BANES.

Planning - Responses on the following applications have been sent:

**6 Summerlea
5, Sarabeth Drive, Tunley
Parcel 8970 Tunley Road
The Watermill, Priston Mill
East Barn
Parcel 5856 High Street Priston
Land at the junction of Priston Lane and Tunley Hill**

The Council, led by Clare Cross, and assisted by a number of parishioners, including, I am delighted to say, from Wilmington, produced a draft Placemaking Plan for Priston Parish, which was presented to a well-attended Public Meeting followed by an extraordinary Parish Council Meeting in December. Our Plan was submitted to BANES on time, and has received only a minor request for amplification.

Highways and footpaths - Highways have done a sterling job of re-surfacing the High Street, although drainage of floodwater still leaves something to be desired at the bottom of the village.

The Parish Council's role in maintaining our highways consists mainly of negotiating for assistance from BANES Highway Department to deal with potholes and floods, and our Parish Clerk, Christine Hunt continues to do an excellent job here. We have had less success in getting Highways help in reducing the flooding by the dairy on Farmborough Lane, and the improvement you have seen is due to the impressive efforts of the Lippiatts and Bendalls with a very large number of drain rods.

Defibrillator - Thanks to John Wilkinson for his continuing support to this project, including the arrangements for continuing training. The Parish Council has now assumed all responsibility for financing this project.

Priston Website - Once again thanks to Richard Bottle for his efforts on our behalf, and for his assistance with:

Broadband - a public presentation was made in March by Wansdyke Telecom to explain their proposals for super-high-speed broadband in our Parish. BT and BANES "Connecting Devon & Somerset" representative met with Councillors and Richard Bottle to explain their intentions, and a note of this meeting is now on the Priston Web.