

# **Chairman's Annual Report 2019/20**

## **St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council**

### **Parish Meeting - May 11<sup>th</sup> 2020**

My fourteenth report as Chairman of St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council.

I write this report in the middle of a world-wide Pandemic known as Covid 19. Since March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Hurst, along with rest of the country, has been in lockdown and I am currently not sure, at this stage when we will get back to normality- if ever!

I start with some very sad news. On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> of April, our dear friend and colleague, Councillor Howard Larkin, passed away peacefully at his home aged 77. Howard was an absolute gentleman and a pillar of the community, serving for over 35 years as a Councillor and chairing the council on two separate occasions. We owe so much to this very special gentleman. He was involved in all areas of Council life and the village of Hurst and our community would not be what it is today without the hours of dedication and devotion he put into preserving our parish. Howard became our planning expert, representing the council at hundreds of appeals and committees to preserve our village. He also ran the allotments, supported the Community litter picks and was always around to help with our St Nicholas night celebrations and village events.



Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Janet, their Children and Grandchildren at this very sad time. We will of course be looking into a fitting memorial for Howard in the village after lock-down ends.

**Councillors** We welcomed Sam Turvey, our new village Ward Councillor in Aug 2019 - Sam fills the vacancy after Christine Lambert's departure.

## **Clerk**

In her 11th year, Maria continues to provide a “first Class” service, even through this current lockdown. Maria was one of the first Parish Clerk’s to get us all set up for virtual Council meetings – this could become the future!

## **Hurst Village society**

We continue to work with and support our society both financially and for advertising our latest updates, news and village initiatives.

## **Precept (Hurst Parish Council tax) for 2020/21**

Councillors voted to increase our precept by 4%, that equates to £2.05 extra per household for 2020/21.

## **Grants**

During the year, we made donations to the following organisations:

Hurst Village Society	£200
Hurst Cricket Club	£250
Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association	£250
Berkshire Vision	£100
Lavell’s Wetland Trust	£300
The Link Visiting Scheme	£100
Citizens Advice Bureau	£500
Keep Mobile	£500

## **St Nicholas Night- 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2019**

Over 300 residents turned up to this year’s event, a great family occasion that begins the Hurst Christmas calendar.

**My special thanks:**

Howard (owner) Green Man Public House, for turning on the lights and providing the mulled wine.

St Nicholas Singers for leading the carols

Waltham St Lawrence Silver Band

Haines Hill - for providing and erecting another wonderful Christmas tree

Chocoholics – Childrens' goody bags

Hurst Cricket Club - for providing the parking

Waitrose - Mince pies

Many thanks to all those who turned up and made this, our fourteenth annual event, another success.



## Police and Traffic Management

There are several roads within our Parish on which more than 30 percent of traffic has been exceeding the posted speed limit.

The roads mainly concerned are Forest Road, the A321 through Hurst, Davis Street, Lodge Road, Hinton Road and School Road.

The data which the Parish collects from traffic speed profiles on these roads, is sent to Thames Valley Police Traffic Management Operation. Decisions are then made, by that team, on the appropriate enforcement which is required and put into effect.

As a matter of interest, a recent traffic monitoring project was carried out during the current lockdown phase of the Coronavirus situation, so a comparison can be made between that and the normal traffic profiles.

The volume of traffic has been at around 30 percent less than normal - but the speed profiles have been very similar. Average speeds are running at 30 mph but with the usual percentage of traffic exceeding the posted limit.

The Parish's continuing efforts will ensure that up-dated speed profile data is regularly made available to Thames Valley Police to enable adequate enforcement action to be made on those roads of concern.

We have also purchased some additional equipment this year to aid the ongoing battle in combating speeding vehicles. Our new visual activation device provides instant and very focused results. So far, we have carried out 7 sessions around the village - my thanks to Paul Palmer who supported me on all occasions.



## Planning

The council has continued to monitor and comment on all planning applications in the village. When applications have been considered by WBC, members represented the parish at the various planning committees.

During the year, we were successful in defending the community against over development and applications that did not fit with our Parish/Borough design guide.

Our planning expert, Howard Larkin, guided us all through another year.

## Meet your Councillors

We continued our Saturday meetings throughout the year.

## Community Orchard

Progression continued with the planting of wild daffodils on the banks of Church Hill. Due to the pandemic, our spring plans for a wild flower meadow and a log hive have had to be put on hold until late in the year.



We have installed 4 new benches, which were kindly donated by Hurst Village Society.

## Commemorative Bench at St Nicholas Church



After a request of help from the church, we removed the old lime stump and installed a new bench to remember those who fought on our behalf.

Councillor Curry and I represented the council on the unveiling of the bench with the ceremony being conducted by Reverend Graham Theobald.

## Neighbourhood Plan



### ***Banners reminding residents to complete the questionnaires***

Up until the lockdown, our team was making great progress. In February, myself, Lou Robinson and our clerk, Maria Bradshaw, presented the results of resident completed questionnaires. Over 60 villagers joined us to review the results.

Next steps and progress will be uploaded to our website.