

Chairmans' Annual Report 2021/2022

St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council

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

Another very busy year. We started the year at the beginning of another 4-year cycle which was reduced to three because of the extra year during the Pandemic.

We started the period with 4 vacancies that soon became 5. Through a selection process we managed to find 5 excellent residents to fill the vacancies.

Our new councillors:

Kate Beauchamp

Paul Palmer

Mac Stevenson

Nicky Ewart

Tony Robinson

All have made a massive contribution to the Council.

There were several projects that played a big part of our year that I will go into more detail in my report.

Precept (Hurst Parish Council Resident Tax) for 22/23

Annual amount went from £44,700 to £48,400 – increase of £4.15 per household per annum

Grants

Once again in March we considered the applications we had received for grants. We were delighted to award grants to the following organisations to support their valuable work within our community:

Citizens Advice Bureau: £500

Keep Mobile: £420

Berkshire County Vision: £500

The Link Visiting Scheme: £400

Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy: £250

Community Orchard

We managed, in conjunction with WBC, to plant new hedging around the perimeter of the Orchard



St Nicholas Night

After a year off, normal service resumed in 2021 with another great turn out.

Many Thanks go to....

Chocoholics - Liz and Roger Cossey for the Goodie bags

Richard Hardy for the Mulled wine

Chris Zeal for providing his support and equipment to ensure the tree made it safely into place.

Waltham St Lawrence Silver Band

And of course:

our Councillors

Annual Spring Litter Pick

Thank you to all those who joined us on Saturday 2nd April, we managed to cover most of the village.



Speed Monitoring

My special thanks to PC Adam Young. Adam has spent many hours with me checking speeds/booking those over the limit and checking the 'no access' roads.

We will of course continue to play our part in monitoring our roads and liaising with the Police.



Checking vehicles in Lines Road

Planning

We had several very contentious applications to deal with, and possibly the largest proposal ever!

Outline application for 200 homes in Lodge Road came in during February. I managed to pull together a complete village, including HVS, PHAG, Neighbourhood Planning team and several village experts to work on the application.

Then to provide residents with updates and key information to support their responses. We await the decision which we expect in May/June.

Special thanks to Lou Robinson who supported Councillor Lyon, collating the information to support our very detailed response.

Other items.....

New village notice boards. We have now upgraded those in Davis Street/Lodge Road and the Village Hall. Forest Road will be completed in May.



Picture features our new sign at Davis Street

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Councillor Paul Palmer is leading the preparations for our Hurst 4-day event to Celebrate this very special occasion.

Community Hub

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is a planning charge. It allows the Borough Council to charge developers who are building in our Borough. The Parish Council is currently in receipt of CIL monies which Members felt should be spent for the good of the entire community of Hurst. After considering several options, the favoured project was to assist in the replacement of the current Scout Hut, located at the Hurst Village Halls, with a contemporary, fit for purpose, Community Hub.

Whilst currently in the early stages of planning, the Community Hubs' vision is to provide a multi-use building for use by the entire community. Whilst remaining the home of the Hurst Air Scouts, the Parish Council will also use the building as a base for the Parish Council. Additionally, the building will be able to be let for a whole range of activities including, but not limited to, the Youth Club, keep fit classes and a friendly meeting place.

The building is hoped to house two main halls, a kitchen, storage, and toilets. Suitable landscaping will be undertaken outside to retain and enhance the currently small open garden space.

As the project gains momentum, we will keep you posted with developments via The Hurst Word. Look out for our future editions! In the meantime, we welcome your thoughts on what you'd like to see the Hub used for and the ambiance you would like created.

Defibrillators

Working with Sian Lyndsey, a Forest Road resident, and the village hall Chairman, we have secured another 2 machines that will be fitted in May 2022.

And finally, on behalf of the village, I would like to say a huge thankyou to our volunteer Councillors and our Clerk, Maria, for their hard work during a very busy and challenging year.

Wayne Smith