

Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2021

It's hard to know how to begin writing a report on the Parish Council Events for 2021. A year that hopefully will never happen again. At the start of the Civic Year, due to Coronavirus, all Parish Meetings were cancelled and we had to rely heavily on our Parish Manager Cathy to make delegated decisions. All Parish buildings were shut and events were cancelled.

The Whitwick Community Crisis team, in conjunction with Woodstock were in full swing and became an invaluable source of help for local residents, delivering prescriptions and food parcels, but also with the help of Sue Colledge being an information point and helping hand with the families in Whitwick that were suffering due to the pandemic.

In July 2020, Parish meetings became virtual for the first time ever. The phrase "Your're on Mute" became one of the most used for the rest of the year as all remaining meetings were held online.

During the summer, when Covid restrictions improved slightly, the Parish had Rural Coffee Connect visit the Park. This was a success and many people came and socialised at the Park. Following on from this and trying to do more positive things in the Park, the Parish created an event called Park Brew. The first of these coincided with Macmillan Cancer Coffee Morning. The aim of Park Brew was to spread the word on what the Parish does and get all Park users together, we definitely succeeded in this when a large gust of wind turned over our Gazebo and all Park users, young and old came to our rescue.

On 24th September 2020, the Parish Council voted to make Councillor Ray Woodward Honorary Freeman as a thank you for over 30 years of service as a Councillor. This was done Virtually but with a socially distanced presentation.

With the use of Covid "Bubbles" the Lamp Post Poppies were able to be displayed again, however all Remembrance Services and Parades were cancelled.

On 26th November 2020, The Parish Flagpole was erected and Councillor Lisa Collins as Chairman was able to fly the first flag. The flags are flown according to our Policy and thanks go to Councillors Barker, Straw and Moulton for helping with this.

During this civic year, the Vehicle Activated Signs were purchased and installed. This project has been completed mainly due to the hard work of Councillors Anthony Barker, Ray Woodward and Peter Moulton with the help of local resident Mr Andy Dyke. This has been a long project but now the Parish owns two signs and is currently swapping them into different areas of the Parish and recording information.

The civic year ended on a sad note, when the April 2021 meeting was postponed due to sad death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh. The flag was flown at half mast in respect however due to Covid, no books of Condolences could be opened. This was done online instead.

Finally, as chairman, I would like to thank my fellow councillors in what has been an unprecedented year, however I would like to especially thank all staff for working together during this year, having to adapt to virtual meetings , working from home and continuing to deal with running the Community Office which has not been easy.

Councillor Lisa Collins

Chairman