

## **Holbrook Parish Meeting**

Chairman, Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen

In preparation of this report I have gone through all my Monthly Councillor reports from April 2020 to try and capture what has happened over the past year.

I could not attend the Parish Council Meeting in April which must have been an actual meeting as I was self-isolating. I had been to France to open up my mobile home. How little we understood at what lay ahead.

By that time most Council staff were working from home and council meetings were undertaken on Skype. Whatever happened to Skype? This was eventually replaced by Teams and Zoom was used for Parish Council Meetings - much more efficient methods of conducting meetings.

May brought lengthy council meetings on line as everything stopped when council members lost their connection with the meeting and as voting in a meeting is a legal process a lot of time was spent chasing the poor member who was struggling to re-connect due to a poor signal. Of course we know now that to go on mute and stop the videos increases the band width for all participants. Now we are all digitally accomplished we will be going back to a possible actual Council Meeting in a very large venue very soon.

We also saw the introduction of Business Grants, Emergency Needs Grants and a Hardship Fund. Furloughing for staff outside the public sector became a lifeline for businesses.

We made available £100,000 to help community groups respond to the needs of their community and all three of my villages were successful in their applications.

Babergh in July issued a Statement on Tackling Climate Change with the ambition to be Carbon Neutral by 2030 and the carbon reduction plan is progressing well.

In August the Discretionary Grant Scheme was extended for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses.

We were encouraging our residents to keep safe by washing our hands and keeping a distance. We were also encouraging everyone to shop locally.

The Council held a delayed Annual General Meeting in September 2020 and Kathryn Grandon was elected Chairman. At the same meeting the Proposed Changes in Planning were discussed and our comments were sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and we still await the result of the consultation. It was also agreed that Public Realm services who manage open spaces and play areas etc would come back in house in October 2021

In November I was very proud to stand alongside the Parish Council at the Holbrook War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday to pay our respects to those who have given their lives for their country.

In the last year from my locality grant I was able to support Holbrook Helpers, Holbrook First Scout Group and Holbrook and District Preschool and Playgroup.

I would like to pay tribute to all our residents who have been working on the front line (and there are many frontlines) for their unstinting service to our communities. We all agree that the Vaccination Programme has been a resounding success.

I want to thank Holbrook Helpers, The Churches and the many volunteers and good neighbours who have gone the extra mile for all our residents who are isolated and vulnerable.

Finally Chairman I wish to thank you and the Parish Council for all the support you have given me over the past year and I feel very privileged to serve you and the community of Holbrook.