

## Welcome you to Stockbridge Parish Councils 2019 Annual Assembly.

As Chairman I would like to summarise the Councils business over the past twelve months. If you have any questions please ask them when you are invited to do so towards the end of the meeting and then please join us in a glass of wine.

Firstly I will run through Councillor comings and goings over the past year. This time last year we only had 7 out of 10 Council positions filled. Over the year we have lost one Councillor Iain Bell and gained 4 Angie Filippa, Richard Hills, Derek Halle and Stephen Taylor. That means at present we have a full compliment but not for long. As you know this is an election year which has resulted in 5 new and 4 returning Councillors. 6 Councillors did not stand for re-election. As only 9 candidates stood all 9 are duly elected, (Slide) the new Council will be Iain Bell, Guy Boney, Richard Foord, Roland Hales, Derek Halle, Alex Lawrence, James Leslie, Vere Stokes and Stephen Taylor.

Also last week we appointed a new Clerk, Belinda Baker after the unexpected departure of Michael Mortimer, may I welcome her to Stockbridge Parish Council.

I will now move on to the activities over the year.

The speed of traffic on the approaches to the Village and through the High Street still gives concern. But we hope continuing speed checks by the traffic team is having an effect in slowing the traffic. We have also ordered Village Gates for the approaches, again with the objective to slow people down. Hopefully these will be erected next month.

We also have a Working Group looking into whether a Neighbourhood plan or other approaches regarding planning would be appropriate for Stockbridge we are expecting to hear their conclusion in due course.

(Slide of Trout and About)

Trout and About goes from strength to strength it creates a good showcase for the Village. The Parish Council makes a small contribution to the costs although it should possibly be classed as an investment as the returns are considerable. On behalf of the Council I wish to thank the Trout and About team for their efforts and enthusiasm in staging the event.

The Council also fronted the Christmas lights last year and we intend to repeat it again this. With more time to plan, the Church, Businesses, School and PC together hopefully will start Christmas off with a show. Thanks to Paul Kidd and all of those who attend Stockbridge Cinema as their contribution goes a long way to funding the event. We are also very appreciative of what Sophie Walters and her team have done over the years insuring we did not have Christmases in the dark.

The War Memorial which a year ago had the cross hastily removed before it fell was fitted with a temporary cross kindly made and erected by Kim Candler. This insured that when the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the Great War was remembered last year the Memorial was not showing its age. Thank you Kim for your skill. We hope to have the Memorial restored by November and are currently going through the planning process with the kind help of Roger Tym. Still staying with the Great War Remembrance, there was a Country wide salute to the many who gave their lives by the lighting of Beacons. (2 Slides of the Beacon) Catherine Hadler from the National Trust lead the event in Stockbridge with the support of the Council but I must say that Catherine did most of the graft which ended with a surprising large number of people trekking across the downs on a cold November night to witness the lighting. Thank you Catherine for the work organising the event and also the work you do with our commons it is appreciated.

Catherine was also involved in keeping Stockbridge tidy last Saturday, where she and her team attempted to get across the responsibility dog owners have in controlling their dogs. You may already be aware that a couple of weeks ago we lost a sheep on the Downs after a dog attack. In the village many volunteers cleared the streets of rubbish thank you all I hope your backs have recovered.

I will move on to the matter that has dominated the Councils work during the past year, the land behind the old Police Station a subject that divides the village. I will endeavour to impart a modicum of reality into the situation something that has been sadly missing. Stockbridge is a small community with the majority of its residents having moved here and understandably many resist change as do some of the indigenous villagers. But is this fair for future generations? (Slide of Younger Generation) Sadly for most of us here tonight our connection with Stockbridge will end with either of these. (Slides of cemetery and for sale sign) But Stockbridge must be in a position to move into the future.

Firstly please don't imagine Stockbridge will ever go back to (2 slides, of horse and cart and of a few cars in the 50's) now a days you are much more likely to see (Slide of congestion) and this will only get worse with time due to the amount of building in the locality and TVBC taking the view that we are a Service Centre endlessly allowing ever more bushinesses in the Village.

New Street demonstrates both the problems that confront us in one a Surgery not large enough to serve the population and not enough parking.

I went go into the numerous parking reports compiled over the years bar one the 2013 report by the Working Party headed by Sheriden Sleep it concluded that even with the proposed spaces on the A30, Stockbridge still required a considerable number of extra spaces. The report also looked into possible locations to accommodate those extra spaces but at the time no sites were identified that were practical ie. between the dual carriageway on the Salisbury Hill. TVBC also conducted its own survey and concluded extra parking was needed.

So in an ideal world what might we want, a car park in the village to get the cars who park for a substantial length of time off the High Street and all the parking spaces installed with electric charging points. Don't forget that in 2040 or before, petrol and diesel engines will be phased out. Without charging points where will residents charge their cars, hooked up across the pavement? (Slide, image of people tripping over car hook-ups) That car park could also accommodate a new larger Surgery. We know this is required and have been informed by the Practice Partners that they have asked for consideration for a site if there were to be development behind the Police Station.

So where? well tongue in cheek under ground would be good! But there is more chance to win the Euro millions than that happening, (Slide of satellite picture of Stockbridge) there's the satellite picture of Stockbridge I challenge anyone to come up with any site that is large enough, central enough with good two way access other than behind the Police Station. The PC was well aware of that when it obtaining a Community Asset Order on the Police Station after it closed.

Who pays? I suppose I'm back to the Euro Millions win or maybe TVBC coming up with the money but I don't think the odds of that are any better either. So if not a capitalist solution might be the only way! We are a Capitalist country.

Why now? Because it might be available if we let this opportunity go by, if we get it, or even worse develop in such a way as to stop the opportunity ever being realised we would be condemning future generations to the same misery we have now, no appointments and no parking or worse no Surgery and no parking!

Now I will deal with the process employed by the Council regarding the approach by M&S. I must say at this stage this was not a Planning Application it was an invitation by a developer to enter into consultation. The Parish Council agreed that before it were to do so it would seek the views of residents and people using the village, then it would decide with a vote whether to consult or not. This it did and with a clear majority against, the Council has not consulted with the developer. Through the whole process the Council had been seen to be impartial but it saddened me that within an hour of me posting the questionnaire in Leckford opponents to the possible scheme were posting their proper gander through those same doors thus making the validity of our survey questionable.

Addressing the standards displayed in this Village over the past few months I have been appalled by the lack of respect given to this institution and others by people wishing to further their own agenda. Insinuations about Councillors have resulted in the Clerk having to give a warning of actions that might be taken to safeguard Councillors integrity. But that is nothing to the abuse Jenny Richard has had to suffer be it intrusion on to her property to stick up posters to confronting personnel going about their lawful duty. The Stares family have connections with this Village going back years and I know she is keen to give something back to the Community, she definitely does not deserve the disgracefulness treatment she has had to suffer.

The question has to be asked can Stockbridge be trusted in deciding it's own future or are we all to close to give an un-hysterical unbiased view?

Closing I wish to thank all the members of the Council for the work they have done over the year the time they put in on behalf of the Parish is enormous, I am afraid the Councillors who have taken on the bulk of the work over the years are not standing again they will be missed especially Councillor Lownie whose dedication to the Council has been exemplary. Thank you Alyson.

Thank you