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PAULTON PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORTS
2020-2021

2021

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INTRODUCTION

Contained in the following pages are the annual reports of Paulton Parish Council for the civic year 2020/2021. The reports are completed by the Chairman of the Council and by each of our individual committee Chairmen's and/or Vice-Chairmen's. We hope the reports give residents an overview of the Council's undertakings throughout the last year and shines a light on what is to come. If any residents wish to give feedback or have questions regarding the reports, then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Carol Hall

Clerk of Paulton Parish Council
clerk@paultonparishcouncil.org.uk

THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT



Well, what a year we have had! We started it in lockdown and conducting all Parish Council meetings via Zoom (I have to thank all the Staff and Councillors for embracing this and for keeping the business of the Council running) and then from the 7th May we were able to start face to face meetings again.

This year we have said goodbye to 3 very good Councillors due to work or family commitments, and I'd like to thank them for their contribution to Paulton Parish Council. However, I am happy that we have welcomed 3 new Councillors who all bring their own unique strengths and experience to the Council.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Graham Dix, who is our longest serving Councillor – 51 years to date and still serving! We are planning to mark his first 50 years by planting a tree (delayed due to Covid), and the Parks and Amenities

Committee are working on this as we speak. He is inspiration to us all, so please look out for details.

Our Green Spaces: We have been very busy during this last year, having had the play areas at the Memorial Park and Miners Recreational Ground resurfaced, as well as installing 4 new accessible benches and planting an avenue of 10 ornamental pear trees in the Memorial Park. In other tree related news, the avenue of trees planned for the Miners Recreational Ground will be planted later this year, the Rotary Club have donated 6 saplings and we have also been successful in applying for 30 trees from the Queens Canopy initiative in partnership with the Woodland Trust for 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'. These will all be planted around the village in the appropriate season.

The Library @ The Hub: We eventually took over the Hub in June 2020, which took far longer than first thought. Lockdown also hampered opening hours, however after a refit and redecoration we finally opened the doors on 23rd September 2020. You will find a Café and Library in the Hub – visit Café Bombero for its lovely coffee, cakes and lunches, and there's also a lot going on in Paulton Library too, which is ran completely by volunteers. Please come down and see us! The Hub is open between 9am and 4pm, you will be able to browse in the library but please be aware that library books can only be taken out when the

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volunteers are there – please check the PPC website for details.

Paulton Community Website: Another useful website which the Parish Council were delighted to support is the Paulton Community Website, ran by Susan Burnett and has lots of information about things that are happening around Paulton.

Paulton Swimming Pool: The pool has been able to open its doors completely after running under very strict Covid restrictions. The Pool Manager and Staff have been amazing in keeping this village asset running under very stressful conditions, so I am so pleased that it has weathered the storm and is now able to operate fully again.

Local Events: Sadly, there was no Party in the Park this year due to Covid restrictions. Peter Yeates was able to commemorate a very reduced Arnhem Memorial Service and the Remembrance Sunday Parade was a very small service, but we were able to stream both of them live to enable residents to attend virtually – a first for us. This year the PPC Events Committee have decided to run the Remembrance Sunday Parade on Sunday 14th November 2021 and the Christmas Market on Saturday 4th December 2021.

Community Engagement Event: Finally, I hope you all enjoy our Community Engagement Event that is being held in



October, as we are trying a different format from previous years. For a start this is a drop in event, which I am hoping means more people can attend, and there are representatives from all PPC Committees. This will give residents an opportunity to chat to the Councillors making decisions on their behalf, give feedback and make suggestions. We have also invited groups running in the village and those who receive grants from the Council to attend, so that residents can see how we, the Council, are spending your money. Please let us know what you think, good and bad, so we can run an event that is informative and engaging.

CLlr Gail Garlick
Chairman of Paulton Parish Council

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

The Planning and Highways Committee is a very busy one with monthly meetings where we receive, consider, and comment on planning applications and forward our decisions and observations to B&NES Council. We also address traffic management matters. From April 28th because of COVID, our meetings continued on Zoom, but since May, we are now back to face to face meetings.

Planning: Over the past 18 months we have considered and commented on 80 planning applications. We are expected to visit each of the planning application sites, so that we can learn first-hand what the application is about and make recommendations based on our local knowledge and the information we have received. It means we are very much in touch with the daily lives of our residents.

As a Parish Council, we do not have the authority to reject planning applications outright. This lies with B&NES Council. However, our comments very much guide B&NES Planning Officers and Committee as to what the planning outcomes should be. Of the applications received over the past 18 months, B&NES and Paulton Parish Council agreed as to whether to support

or not support a planning application in 91% of cases. The majority involve home improvements and account for 54% of all planning applications. These include for example, extensions, porches, garages, and garden rooms. New dwellings accounted for 15% (eight in total) of all applications, which were mainly in-filling, and nine applications (11%) were to do with foliage, such as cutting back dead wood from trees. The remainder where to do with a variety of other planning issues. Perhaps the most interesting recently was to do with a change of land use to tourism, looking at the positioning of three tourist units, known as Glamping.

The Local Plan Partial Update: The Local Authority has introduced a new Local Plan Partial Update to review housing and development requirements in B&NES. As a Parish Council, we have commented on this plan. Our comments were mainly to do with the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone which is located to the North and West of Wickes at Old Mills. This Enterprise Zone is intended to provide jobs for local people, removing the need to commute. We have objected to changes in plans for this Enterprise Zone involving more retail establishments. We have supported a change in the mix of land use to include hotel and office use. Paulton Parish Council is represented on the stakeholder's group where we are updated and consulted

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about developments in the Enterprise Zone.

Highways: The main issues regarding highways throughout 2020 involved traffic calming and speeding. A Community Watch Speed Scheme was suggested by our Paulton Neighbourhood Police Team. However, Covid restrictions meant that this had to be put on hold for the time being. Additional 20mph signage was requested from B&NES.

Concerns from residents about parking at the bottom of Ham Lane steps leading to Alexandra Park led to a request for bollards to be put in place. B&NES Highways Officers advised about the location of these bollards and Councillor Grant Johnson paid for



these from his Empowerment Fund. Many thanks Grant. In 2021 residents were once again concerned with speeding. B&NES highways team were contacted and asked for support. The response from B&NES was that there were no further plans to add additional traffic calming measures. This is because there were 20 mph speed

limit restrictions across all of Paulton with signage, with road markings and speed tables. Once again help from Rob Hendra of the Paulton Neighbourhood Police Team was requested. Rob addressed a meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee and once again mentioned setting up a Community Watch Speed Group. He said the police would be very keen to support such a group, but community involvement was essential, so please get in touch if you are interested.

Finally, the committee discussed the possibility of getting 'Smiley Face' speed signs to reduce speeding, which are also called Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). Research has shown that these signs are said to reduce accidents by approximately 31% and are even more effective on roads with lower speed limits. Paulton Parish Council will certainly be investigating the possibility of acquiring two or more of these signs and will seek advice as to their location.

All in all, despite Covid a very busy time for the Planning and Highways Team. My thanks to them all for their tremendous support and hard work over the past eighteen months

Cllr Liz Hardman

Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee

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2. PARKS & AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Who would have thought that since my last report that we would still be in the middle of a pandemic? But thanks to my fellow councillors, our employees and Zoom we have been able to continue with our services and make improvements.

The Memorial Park: We have replaced the surfaces under all the play equipment with top quality safety material, and we are also about to put a new base under the blue shelter, but unfortunately it has been reported that young children are climbing on the shelter; this is very dangerous and must be discouraged. 4 more picnic tables have been installed in the with easy access for those with mobility aids. The outdoor gym is still under used, so just a reminder that it is open to all individuals or groups to use. The equipment is as good as any in the area so give it a go!



We are continuing our tree planting programme by replacing old and rotten trees with new ones. We also received a very kind donation of 10 ornamental pear trees from an anonymous villager which has completed our avenue from the South to the North of the park.

Miners Welfare Recreational Ground:

Usage of The Rec is increasing with football training and keep-fit classes – it's great to see local people getting active in our open spaces. The BMX track continues to be well used and we will look to see if we can expand it in the future to make it more suitable for older children and teenagers. We welcome any improvement suggestions to be sent to the Clerk for us to discuss at our Parks & Amenities meetings. We hoping to put more seating in the youth shelter which is being well respected, apart from the occasional graffiti.

We are in the throes of planting an avenue of trees from the car park along to the bowls club. This planting has been delayed by covid, but we are confident that it will be completed soon.

Wallenge Open Space: In my opinion still one of the hidden gems of Paulton and deserves to be used more! It certainly has one of the best views in the area and a great play area.

Allotments: All are currently occupied and are regularly checked by this committee.

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They are all well maintained and are credit to the allotment holders. We are hoping with the advent of Oxleaze being handed over to the council that there will be many more allotments available for the village. We will make sure villagers are kept up to date as this progresses.

Cemetery: As always, the Cemetery is a credit to the village and to the workforce who maintain it – thank you. If anyone comments on the cemetery one can be assured that it is always more than complimentary!

Dog Mess: Although this is a problem everywhere, it appears that more dog mess is being reported in Paulton. Dog owners are responsible for picking up and binning the mess, and we have plenty of bins around the village to be able to dispose of it quickly. We even have some poo bag holders in common areas thanks to considerate villagers who installed these. It's very important that our open spaces are left clean and free of dog mess so everyone can enjoy them.

Again this has been a challenging eighteen months but thanks to all who have been involved in maintaining and improving the facilities around our Parish.

CLlr Cyril Mitchard

Outgoing Chairman of the Parks and Amenities Committee

3. EVENTS COMMITTEE

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on all our lives during 2020 and is still impacting us today. The only event that Paulton Parish Council held in 2020 was Remembrance Sunday which was very low key. The following article appeared in the winter edition of the Paulton Magazine:

"Lest we forget...and Paulton did not forget as on Sunday 8th November, representatives from local associations laid wreaths to remember the 39 local men who gave their lives in the two world wars, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945."

"As the names on the Roll of Honour were read out, two Paulton residents Margaret Barret and David Garlick placed a cross in the ground at the War Memorial bearing the name of each person."

"Unfortunately, it was a Remembrance Service like no other as Paulton residents couldn't gather in their usual large numbers to pay their respects. There were no Hymns sung but the Reverend Adam Pitt attended to lead the commemoration in prayer and the Act of Remembrance, the Roll of Honour was read out by Gail Garlick Chairman of Paulton Parish Council who is also a veteran of our Armed Forces, and the Last Post and Reveille were played by Michael Sheppard a member of Paulton Concert Band."

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"It was a very different Remembrance, but we did not forget."

The annual Switch on of the Christmas tree lights, with the stalls in the hall and others dotted around the precinct didn't take place, but the usual hard work to light up the village went ahead.

We don't normally detail the work that goes into lighting of the tree, but it is sometimes worth letting everyone know how this takes place - it doesn't arrive by magic! The council purchased the tree from Tibbs who were also tasked with erecting it, Somer 2000 were the electricians who dealt with connecting the electric supply and the safety aspect, and our groundsmen placed all the lights around the tree – no mean feat I can assure you. Then by magic the tree came to life with the lights shining out over the war memorial – a small bit of normality in such strange times and it gave hope that things would get back to normal sometime.

This year there are 5 war graves in our cemetery which are going to be 'dressed' by the British Legion in conjunction with PPC, which is the first time Paulton has been included. Details will be available before the event, which will take place on November 13th at 11am.

Remembrance Day is Sunday November 14th. We are hoping that this will be as in previous times. A Parade to the War Memorial with a short service, followed by a



service in the Methodist Church. Although 2020 wasn't normal, we are hoping that this year, we will be able to resume the usual format for our residents to pay respects to the fallen.

Christmas tree lights switch on:

After feedback from residents, we have decided to move our Christmas tree light switch on event to the first Saturday in December (4th). This will be in the usual format with stalls in the Methodist hall and more around the precinct. There will be something for everybody, from Santa for the youngest in attendance to mulled wine and cider for the adults. So please come and support this village event.

For all these events to take place safely, there is a great deal of work done behind the scenes by the PPC Admin team, from road closures with accompanying road marshals and first aiders being in place for the safety of all who attend.

We are keeping our fingers crossed that

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Covid-19 will not affect our plans this year, but we have to be aware that the pandemic can change very quickly and this could mean either area lockdowns or regional circuit breakers which will mean that events may have to be cancelled at short notice... let us hope that this doesn't happen and that we can all enjoy the different village events.

Cllr Anne Lyons

Chairman of Events Committee

4. HUB MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

January 2017 saw the start of a very long journey for Paulton Parish Council with its plans to take over the running of the Paulton Hub, library, and café facility from B&NES council.

Creating and submitting the business plan, working out the finances and the plans for the redesign, going to consultation, numerous meetings with B&NES Property Department and B&NES Librarians, communication with the Landlord and Solicitors. all took an enormous amount of time which was more than a little frustrating, but we knew that this would be good for Paulton residents so kept on moving things forward.

In Spring 2020 the library was still a work

in progress. However, the end was in sight, and even with Covid-19 interrupting life as we knew it, work had progressed and the new, improved facility for all the residents would hopefully open in the very near future.

The planned work was completed, and the library and the café were ready to welcome all residents to the planned grand opening on 23rd September 2020. Unfortunately, we were in the middle of a pandemic and Covid-19 restrictions meant we had to forego the amazing opening ceremony and just 'open' on the day.

It has certainly not been straight forward with the library having to deal with restrictions at times or having to close altogether, but since July 2021 the volunteers have managed to open the library for a couple of hours Monday to



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Friday and have even added Saturday mornings to the rota.

The library volunteers are really keen to encourage the young people of our village to enjoy reading, so in May the library held 'Elmer Day'. This highlighted a story about a very colourful elephant and it was lovely to see some of the children listen to songs about Elmer which were sung by Kathleen Still, one of the library volunteers.

During the summer school break the reading challenge took place. The theme this year was 'Wild World Heroes' and the take-up by the young people has been amazing. Many have completed the challenge and received a certificate and medal which they should be very proud to wear.

If you haven't visited the library yet, please do come in and see what we can offer from our extensive selection of books. If there is a particular book that you would like to read but it isn't on the shelf, it can be ordered for you to pick up at a later date. As soon as it is in the library, you will receive an email telling you when it will be ready to collect.

We are looking for more volunteers to enable the library to open for longer, perhaps opening on a Monday morning or afternoon sessions so that we are open for school children wanting to come in on their way home. Would you be interested in knowing more about being a library



volunteer? You will be made very welcome and help grow the library into a success story.

In addition, it is hoped that the library can be used for talks, author visits, displays etc. Some of these will happen in the evening, so if there is something you would like to see happen in the library, please get in touch.

For more information on volunteering or events, please contact the clerk of Paulton Parish Council or speak to one of the volunteers who will be very happy to give you further information.

Cllr Anne Lyons & Cllr Patricia McSherry
Chairman & Vice Chairman of the Hub Management Committee

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