

Annual Parish Meeting 10/05/19 – PC Chairman's Report

This past year was a time of big changes and events that have kept Dundry Parish Council very busy.

They started with the introduction of the GDPR in May last year, under which we had to make sure we are fully compliant. I am happy to report that both the council and the Web site are.

In August 2018, we had a major emergency in the village when a fire broke out at Downs Farm. This not only caused serious concern about the course, the handling and the environmental, health and safety impacts of the incident, but it also highlighted other long-standing issues for our residents such as noise and HGV traffic. Using our local knowledge and the input we receive from parishioners, we are working with NSC to ensure that this business can run its operations in a safe and in the least disruptive manner. This process is ongoing.

In my last two reports, I kept updating you about the situation around Dundry Playing Fields, on how our relationship with the previous users broke down and how we found it difficult to find a way forward. I am pleased to report that we have now come to an exclusive agreement with Chew Valley Youth Football Club for a 12 year lease and licence for the clubhouse and pitches, for the use of under-18 footballers only (by “exclusive” we mean that no other clubs will use the fields, they are of course open as a recreation ground for the community). We also agreed to hold much better contact and communication than in the past and we feel we can build a positive relationship with this club which does valuable work in getting young people out and about. We are currently consulting with solicitors on how to put this agreement into legally worded contracts to be signed later in the year.

Dundry remains an area of low crime but is nevertheless plagued by hotspots of ASB, fly-tipping and littering. Especially the situation at Hill Road Turning Circle has got so much out of hand that a whole range of remedial options were discussed between the PC and the affected local residents. Most of these solutions were, unfortunately, either not viable or too expensive. We are therefore grateful to the police that despite their strained resources they have made dealing with this ASB a priority and put an action plan into place. Although it does not seem that we can make the problem go away completely, any measurable reduction in incidents can be considered a success. Please help the police in any way you can.

Improving our environment and making Dundry an enjoyable place to live in is not just something we can expect to happen. It takes personal involvement and commitment to do something about it. In this spirit, the “Dundry Litter Busters” were formed and took part in the Great British Spring Clean in April, collecting more than 40 bags of litter around Dundry Lane, West Dundry Lane, Highridge Road, Hill Road and part of Oxleaze Lane. Their next outing is on 19 May, at 10.30am, starting at the Royal British Legion. Please mark this date in your diary and come out to support them.

Another group of volunteers undertook a survey of all the footpaths in the parish, noted their condition and forwarded a report to NSC. They, too, must be thanked for their great work.

During the past year, DPC assessed and commented on 15 local planning applications, ranging from small home alterations to large scale projects such as the Bristol Airport expansion which required extensive research and insight to be commented on. Given the limitations of our road network, the current noise and air pollution levels and Parliament recently having declared an “environment and climate emergency”, it seems totally detrimental that the airport wants to increase its passenger

throughput from 8 mio ppa to 12 mio ppa and beyond. DPC sent a detailed reply to this PA and is also actively participating in the PCAA, which continuously keeps an eye on the various issues surrounding the airport.

A plan to build 4000 new homes in the Green Belt in our area seems to have been shelved and is not part of the Joint Spatial Plan covering future housing development until 2036. However, we are keeping in contact with our neighbouring parishes in case this situation changes.

Other problems and projects the Parish Council is keen to provide input on and make our voice heard are various traffic problems (most notably the accident hotspot at the bottom of Dundry Lane but also wider consultations on the Joint Transport Plan for the region). We request road repairs and keep in touch about the installation of fibre broadband by Truespeed, which is due to be completed and connected later this year.

As you can see from our agendas and minutes available on the Web site, we have a huge amount of information to process, to discuss and decide upon every month and I would like to thank everyone for their time and dedication in doing so.

At the beginning of my report, I was talking about changes:

As a result of last week's local elections, we are pleased to welcome back Hugh Gregor as our local NSC councillor. He held this post in the past and we are looking forward to working again closely with him.

Over the past year, a number of long-standing parish councillors as well as our previous clerk Judith Hoskin decided to resign from their posts. I would like to thank them for their hard work, which often involved spending lots of unpaid time and effort. However, change is inevitable and I believe that having new members on the council, and a new clerk of course, will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to our work.

Following the uncontested Parish Council election, we still have one vacancy. If you do care about this community and want to be actively involved, please get in touch to discuss how you can join the Parish Council and what kind of local projects you might be interested in.

Finally, I would just like to say that it has been an honour to be your parish council chairman for quite a number of years and, if I'm re-elected in this position on Monday, I am looking forward to another year full of challenges and rewards.

Holger Laux
Chairman
Dundry Parish Council