

## NORTH WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT PRESENTED AT THE APM ON 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2017

The council met for the usual six bi-monthly meetings over the past year with an additional extraordinary meeting called in February to discuss a number of current planning applications. Our comments on all the planning matters presented to us over the year are all recorded in the minutes of the relevant meetings so I do not feel it necessary to review all these again here tonight. We did also respond to the Mendip survey about Open Green Spaces in the village and had a meeting with them but our comments did not seem to gain any support from within Mendip planning.

This year we have seen a number of changes. In January we welcomed the new Village Agent John Lapwood who gave a presentation to the council and villagers present and he has also attended the Village Café to provide further advice to villagers and we look forward to working with him in the years ahead.

Over the past year we have had to say goodbye and thank you to our retiring Clerk Bill Bartlett and I would like to take this further opportunity of thanking him once again for his diligent service over so many years. His position was taken by Hazel Brinton who took over the reins in November last year and has been working with Bill to collate the financial report for the past year. One of Hazel's first projects was to set up the new Parish Council web site [www.northwoottonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.northwoottonparishcouncil.org.uk) where many news items are listed along with agenda and minutes of all the Parish Council meetings. Thank you Hazel for all your work in setting up this excellent facility for us.

The usual matters have been dealt with over the past year – mainly planning matters as already mentioned and I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their diligent work in overseeing problems regarding flooding, footpaths and – perhaps the most tiresome – highways problems of potholes and poor road conditions, so thank you all.

Our July meeting was well attended due primarily to some adverse reactions to last year's Festival Traffic and I would like to thank Steve Russell-Yarde for taking on board our comments and we look forward to a peaceful – and perhaps more organised - traffic flow this year. I hope we will hear from Dick Hamilton, the new festival liaison officer, on this matter later this evening.

In February this year the Motocross event at Launcherley caused some problems on the day due to excessive weather conditions but I am pleased to confirm that the organisers attended our March meeting, expressed their sincere apologies – and agreed to monitor events in the future. It seems that the scheduled meeting for May did not however take place but I presume that future Motocross events will still return to the area.

There are two ongoing matters that we did not fully resolve last year which we will carry forward for our attention this year. We have been trying to get Batts Bridge near the Old School House repaired but this is a Listed Structure so we need to liaise with MDC and SCC and have failed to get either to provide the necessary authority. I was pleased to see that both our County Councillor (Graham Noel) and District Councillor (Nigel Hewitt-Cooper) were recently re-elected so I trust we can see some action here in the coming year. The other long standing concern is the Stocks Lane bridge over Redlake which is considered to be a pinch point on the river after periods of high rain causing the flooding in Stocks Lane itself and Church View and I am aware that Cllr Shimmin is maintaining pressure on SCC to get this matter fully assessed.

My fellow Councillors helped with a clear-up of the verges along Stocks Lane last April but I see that this area needs our attention once again so I trust I can rely on them all – perhaps with some volunteer villagers - for another Saturday morning of dedicated service to ensure the Village is well maintained in these times of austerity when it seems we cannot rely on other Authorities to look after the community as we would all like.

Thank you all – both to my fellow councillors for their steadfast support, and diligent guidance when I was tempted to put a foot wrong, and to the many villagers for their attendance at our meetings over the year.