

Chairmans Annual Report – May 2019

Once again it is impossible to start this Annual statement without the words – ‘it has been a very busy year for Feock Parish Council and to condense all the work and time that Councillors and staff spend over a year into a succinct report is indeed a difficult task.

I propose to give a brief summary of works and projects that have been achieved over the year, a list of those that are proposed or in progress and give an idea of some of the issues which might dictate future parish council resources and energy.

To sum up an overall theme for this year would probably be the word **CONNECT**.

In my annual report last year, I made the point that the work of a parish council is meaningless unless the community it represents knows, understands and can participate in the work that it does and despite the sophistication of modern communication, this can be hard to achieve.

Alongside our website, Facebook, Twitter, emails and posters we now have the quarterly **Community Connect** newsletter which reaches every household and is proving a worthwhile investment. This goes alongside the appointment of our Community Navigator, as part of our two-year Wellbeing Project in conjunction with Truro City Council. Sharon Nettleton is already a huge asset to our team and works within Feock parish for two days a week. Through the Council’s investment into the **Community Connect** project, strong links are being made between ourselves, voluntary organisations, school, surgeries, village halls, neighbouring councils and many more. Huge thanks go to Cllr Keith Hambly-Staite for his vision and commitment to our Wellbeing initiative. I hope it becomes a permanent feature of the council.

On a similar Wellbeing theme, the council has completed the refurbishment of the **Micro Library** in Devoran. It is one of the most popular micro libraries in the whole county and now hosts a monthly afternoon Reading Group. There are also bookswaps in all our former phone boxes.

Our **Community Transport Scheme** continues and so much thanks must go to our volunteers. We continue to encourage other parishes to join with us as surely this is the way forward for not only helping people connect but for sustainable transport. Special thanks to our retiring volunteer organiser Ian Annear, who will be hard to replace.

The profits from the very successful **Meet and Eat** lunches will we hope help to restore the supermarket bus run for local people.

In our **Parks** improvements have been carried out at **Devoran Park**, repairs at **Retallack Field** and also **Park An Gwarry** in Carnon Downs has been refurbished thanks to Section 106 money from the Taylor Wimpey development. New signs are being prepared for all of these. The next play area for our attention for improvements will be **Retallack** in Feock. Improvements have also been made at Point Quay.

The parish now has 5 defibrillators – our final one installed with the bookswap at Point Green.

Our **Community Emergency Plans** are well underway under the guidance of Councillor Lightfoot and should be completed in the next few months. Thanks to those people who have volunteered their time on these.

Our **Speed Awareness** campaign has continued despite the frustrations of the Speedwatch team and many other similar volunteers in other parishes at the problems that the police have in keeping this moving. We have sponsored a school competition for speed awareness posters which have resulted in some wonderful banners which will be on display very soon.

We have also increased the number of **Share with Care** signs within the 20mph zone in Devoran.

On Highways - the 20mph speed limit and zone has finally been completed in Devoran, also speeding and highway improvements to Forth Coth in Carnon Downs. Planters have been put up to control parking and

enhance Carnon Downs village. The ongoing flooding problem at the bottom of Old Carnon Hill is at last being addressed and thanks goes to all the Carnon Downs councillors and residents for persisting on this one.

So on to briefly list those projects which are ongoing. To those of us outside the wheels of bureaucracy it may seem a long process – indeed it is, particularly with Highways and very often with changes of personnel and procedures which seem just to frustrate us all.

One example of this is the new recreation area at **Pengelly Meadows** but it will soon be a new sports area with a 5 a side football pitch, outdoor gym equipment for adults and a table tennis table, provided by S106 funding - some different facilities to those in our other recreation areas. Under the same funding it has taken some time to negotiate a footpath along Bissoe Road.

The Council has agreed to feasibility studies to be undertaken for highway Improvements in Feock and also along Old Carnon Hill down to the crossing.

Following the success of our footpath trails, Cllr Allen has created a footpath working group which is highlighting improvements to be made and as part of our Wellbeing Initiative we aim to provide '30 minute walks' which will be accessible for all ages, buggies and wheelchairs.

There are plans prepared for the further tidying and planting of our roundabouts when road closure offers the opportunity.

And for the future – there are three serious issues which are hitting the headlines: We are in a **Climate Change Emergency** – this has been declared by Cornwall Council and we have been one of the first to have followed. An open meeting last week brought nearly 40 people together with parish councillors and an action group is being formed. Perhaps now is the time for council resources to be directed towards investing in climate change mitigation – sustainable transport, more cycle ways, cycle and car charging points, electric car clubs and other carbon neutral concerns. The aim of the new group will be threefold – to work with councillors on actions and issues they can address with County and nationally, suggestions for community actions and for individuals to address in their lifestyles and homes.

The UN report on the **loss of habitat and species** is truly alarming. The parish council has already in place several schemes for tree planting, seed sowing and the protection of trees through a potential survey and tree preservation orders.

The third issue is the initiative in Cornwall to protect our **ancient hedges**. Our Neighbourhood Plan makes special reference to the importance of these and you can be assured that our Planning Committee will be vigilant on this matter. On the matter of planning only ten years ago the parish council could only hope for sympathetic developments and too often was powerless to prevent unsatisfactory development. With our Neighbourhood Plan in place, I am delighted to report that we have more powers to steer development towards the benefit of our community and we are much better placed to prevent poor proposals. My thanks to all those councillors on the planning committee and for their recent success in defending the Council against a planning application for a new housing development at Valley Lane, Carnon Downs.

Finishing my term of office, I have one regret that there hasn't yet been the opportunity to set up a **Youth Council** for the parish. The Climate Change issue now seems the right time to engage more with younger people in the parish and it is indeed on tonight's agenda.

My final thanks go to the amazing Clerks Debra and Debbie who work tirelessly on our behalf and indeed we would not manage without them. After six years it now seems that the parish office is a well-known, welcoming, helpful and informed place for anybody in our villages and you can even borrow a book and fill up your waterbottle while you're visiting - a change of culture indeed.