

## **Paul Hewett – SPC**

At the Parish Council Meeting in May 2014 Paul Chubbock stood down as Chairman and I was appointed. During his tenure Paul had achieved a lot, doing many things that should not have had to have done: he certainly put himself out, and for that I thank him.

It is an honour to serve as your Chairman for the forthcoming year.

In his Chairman report last year, Paul identified three strands and I want to repeat this approach for this year as well:

Things we did, what we still want to do, and some frustrations

### **Review of the year: What we did:**

More bins

More street lamps – 30 new LED lights cheaper to maintain and run

Introduced more Standing Orders (we had to do this - more regulation does not help the smooth running of Parish Councils)

Continued our improvements on the play area at Bullock Park with a teen Shelter and more play equipment to come

New Bus shelter on corner of Pound Green and A1075

New Emergency Planning Process meaning should anything catastrophic go wrong in village/A1075, there is a plan in place to cope

New traffic monitoring equipment. One of our biggest challenges we have as a village is speed. Now we have traffic data and awareness from drivers.

Resurfaced the church path.

Work progressing on the Cemetery: we have been fortunate here with the Leonard Farms s.106 agreement.

### **Plans moving forward: What we want to do:**

For 2014 we plan to run a Village Appraisal, through which we can develop a village plan with a more focussed village strategy

WW1 memorials – there is a focus here leading to 2018, but with some 2014-18 initiatives as well.

Continue street light replacement programme: Council finances are strong but we are financially exposed is major asset fails/streetlights break, etc. Not everything is insurable.

Completion of the Cemetery Extension.

Reintroduce more Village forums

### **A vision for the Council moving forward:**

Some of Paul's earlier frustrations still in place – there are now too many new rules, lack of resources and pressures on time. Perhaps these will never really go away.

But - we are one village and should think like one, and should seek ways to work closer together with other village activities, groups and societies.

We need to make the Parish Council more inclusive and welcoming to members of public and to Councillors. Perhaps the Appraisal can help in this. But I do want to

make changes to how the Parish Council works and operates, which will be a change from my predecessor:

- Our Parish Council comprises volunteers (Clerk excepted!), and we need to acknowledge their selflessness and commitment to the role and to the village. But we are also a big village – need to take more decisions and trust the process. We will get some things wrong, but we cannot and should not blame those when things go wrong if people are volunteering their time and doing the best they can do.
- I think the role of the Chair can and should change. The Chair serves the Parish Council and not the other way round. As long as due process is followed the Parish Council should be capable of taking and making decisions without the micro-managed, final say of the Chair. I am acutely aware that work commitments will mean I cannot attend all meetings, but that should not mean that the Parish Council is incapable of acting as a result. In fact, I like the idea of a Chair alternating at some meetings to give others the opportunity of overseeing the work of the Council, but that may not meet current Standing Orders.

Not everyone will like this change, but if we want an active, forward looking, entrepreneurial Council this should happen.

In closing, can I please take this opportunity to thank the Parish Councillors who make the role of Chair in this village a pleasure. Their can do attitude has been exemplified by a keen desire to help out to make things better for the village as a whole. Council representation on the WI Hall, the allotments, the Drynkings, cutting down trees, creating beautiful flower displays throughout the summer, and all of the other events and activities that take place in Shipdham in many ways exemplify the work undertaken by this Council: it is easy to knock, and yet it is the essential involvement from willing people that gets things done, and makes Shipdham a better place.

Can I therefore thank publicly the Parish Council, Lynda our District Councillor, and Rosemary our Clerk, for their hard work and effort over the past year, and express my enthusiasm for representing the village for the year to come.

Thank you

Paul

Paul Hewett  
Chairman  
Shipdham Parish Council