

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 10 MAY 2023

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting of Bickenhill and Marston Green Parish Council and thank you for attending. This meeting is to enable me, as Chairman, to comment on our undertakings for the last 12 months and to let you know what we anticipate for the future.

The Parish Council serves about 8,000 residents and our aim is to encourage involvement of the people we serve, thereby creating local democracy. While the COVID pandemic created untold difficulties over a protracted period, on a positive note, it provided a great feeling of community and has been a testament to the Nation's ability to maintain a greater community spirit. I also feel it has enabled us to optimistically face so many challenging situations that may arise in the future. Long may that community spirit survive!

First of all I want to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for helping to build that community sense, for building on it during the last year and for their abundant involvement in all other Parish Council matters.

It is sometimes assumed that Parish Councillors merely attend a meeting once a month, but in order to play such a vital part in representing the interests of the community they serve and to try and improve the quality of life and the local environment, it takes much more than that. In this regard, it is necessary to be aware of the numerous views and suggestions that residents may have. However, although Parish Councillors can suggest ideas by engaging in constructive discussion and can comment on proposals and ideas, they cannot individually make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council. All decisions must be reached at a Parish Council meeting and, to make this work, there are, within the Parish Council five internal committees:

- Recreation
- Finance & General Purpose
- Planning
- Staffing
- Emergency

and for external committees on which the Parish Council is represented:

- Marston Green Parish Hall
- Marston Green Village Trust
- Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee
- HS2

If you are interested and would like to understand more of the work of the Parish Council, you can obtain information from the Parish Council website, Facebook and the various notice boards that are placed throughout the Parish. Or why not come along to a Parish Council meeting where half-an-hour is set aside for residents to discuss agenda items or to raise an issue for discussion at a future meeting?

Projects carried out during 2022/23

Some additional projects that received attention during the year were as follows:

- (i) The Parish Council were involved in having the post box, that had previously been removed from Elmdon Road, replaced.
- (ii) Problems created by an out of area Beagle Hound Club that met on the Amenity Land were alleviated.
- (iii) A number of trees were purchased for Millennium Wood, which were then planted by Marston Green Scouts.
- (iv) A defibrillator has been installed at the Recreation Ground in Marston Green (congratulations are also extended to all the Parish Council employees for receiving certificates on passing an extensive First Aid Course).
- (v) All the paths on the Allotments were replaced.

- (vi) A successful event to mark the passing of the Queen's Baton relay through Marston Green was held at the Memorial Garden.
- (vii) Donations were made to a number of clubs within the Parish, to enable them to celebrate the Platinum Anniversary of the Accession of Queen Elizabeth II.
- (viii) Support was provided for a Food Bank.
- (ix) Work was carried out on a number of trees, for which the Parish Council is responsible, following an extensive professional survey. (This was one of the needs and aspirations included in the Parish Council's Five-Year Plan mentioned in my report last year).
- (x) The paths in the Burial Ground were replaced.
- (xi) Representatives of the R.S.P.B again carried out mist netting at Millennium Wood, when they netted and placed rings on a variety of birds.

All regular annual projects were carried out as usual including:

- The Remembrance Day Service.
- The Christmas Lights and Christmas Trees in Marston Green. (We were again, unfortunately, unable to display a Christmas Tree at Bickenhill due to the road works.)
- Throughout the year our groundsmen continued to work on the maintenance of Millennium Wood, the Memorial Garden, the Chapel Garden, the Recreation Ground and the Burial Ground. These areas of greenery are maintained to a very high standard, as are the planters and hanging baskets, and for this we owe our thanks to Nikki and Tony, who continue to carry out such praiseworthy work.

During the year Parish Councillors Karen Dunn and Trevor Willis resigned and Kim Wallace has made a decision not to stand this year. All three have worked untiringly during their time with the Parish Council and I would like to thank them for their commitment and dedication. We wish them well and success in future projects with which they may become involved.

Two of these vacancies have been filled with Councillors Paul Powell and Leigh Trevis, both of whom are already extremely active and proving to be assets to the Parish Council. Welcome Paul and Leigh.

Queen Elizabeth II

In September the nation expressed extreme sadness at the passing of Queen Elizabeth II who died at Balmoral Castle after reigning for 70 years.

The Parish Council placed a wreath in her memory in the Memorial Garden and many floral tributes were also placed by local residents.

Coronation of King Charles III

As I write this report a lot of work and determined efforts are being made to ensure that the Coronation Day Event at the Parish Hall will be a particularly memorable and enjoyable day of celebration. I know it is going to be a resounding success.

I mentioned last year that none of what the Parish Council achieves would be possible without our untiring, ever helpful and supportive Parish Clerk, Julie Brennan ably supported by her deputy, Wendy Kent. Wendy joined the Parish Council last year and is also proving to be a real asset. thank you Julie and Wendy.

Other Organisations

I also want to express my thanks to the many volunteers in our community who give their time freely to the various organisations, clubs and charities, of which there are many within the Parish of Bickenhill and Marston Green. You all play a part in making it a special place to live.

Finally, I cannot let it go without saying what a privilege it is to be Chairman of the Parish Council. My appreciation goes to you for allowing me to hold the position. Here's to looking forward to 2023/24 and all it brings.