



Clerk to the Council: Karen Parnell

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Chairman's Report March 2016

As usual our report looks at how we have performed over the last twelve months against our action plan and *generally* it is good news.

The ford area still looks better than ever, with its natural landscape and wildlife returning, and the 4x4 vehicles are being kept well away from the fenced off areas. We have to thank the efforts of Cllr Len Carter for this and his willing band of volunteers.

During the summer The Village fete, hosted by the National Trust, drew in large visitor numbers and was another great success with proceeds in the region of £1200 being raised towards the Court and the local community. Our thanks go to the Volunteers and Staff at Coughton Court, Mike Gittus, who opened the fete, and the many people who supported the event through their donations on the stalls and just turning up to enjoy the day.

Also, during the summer holiday, the old railway bridge was demolished and replaced with an embankment that has now opened up the views across adjoining fields. It was completed with one week to spare with the final stage being a pair of purpose-built benches, at no cost to the village, that use some of the original coping bricks.

The school is an inescapable part of the local community. It performs well, it contributes to the local activities, employs people within the village, educates our youngsters, and the Parish Council is committed to supporting its development. However, we also share the school's frustration in what appears to be a long delay in providing a school car park, which it needs for its future development as well as providing safe traffic conditions for everyone. A scheme, supported by the landowners has now been agreed in principle by the Highways Authority. As soon as the County Council has approved the officers' planning application, and has agreed the funding we will then see work starting on site.

One of the more frustrating problems in the village continues to be the drainage systems that are managed by Warwickshire County Council and Severn Trent. Despite the surveys carried out, several properties in the village are still at the mercy of heavy rain and the ageing drainage systems that struggle to cope. The parish council is very grateful for the efforts of our Karen and Dennis who continue to press for answers and action from the statutory agencies.

The parish council will always listen to the views of residents when important issues are at stake. The old Rick Yard site that lies at the heart of our conservation area was the subject of a planning application in November. This had far reaching implications in respect of flooding, impact on the environment and suitability within the local community. Following a residents meeting, it was clear we could not support this application after noting everyone's views; none of which supported the application, and it was in fact refused by the planning authority.

We have made some progress on improving our footpaths and after agreement with the footpaths officer will be repairing the steps in Sambourne Lane. Dog fouling remains a concern and we are still waiting for a response from the Dog Warden in respect of the problems near the nursery in Sambourne Lane and outside the school.

This report will be published on the website and we aim to circulate this to all residents in the form of an annual newsletter along with the results of our current housing needs survey.

JOHN GITTINS

Chair, Coughton Parish Council. 7 March 2016