

BUCKERELL PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 15th May 2019

This has been a busy year for Buckerell and this is reflected in the work of the Council as we try to ensure our residents views are represented as best we can. The Council has highlighted the village views and needs to the local authorities, local police and some large organisations who have wanted to have an impact on our locality, such as Gigaclear Ltd.

Once again, a big issue is the condition of our roads, which in turn are subject to increased pressure on the DCC Highways budget. To lobby the department for attention we have conducted both 'Roads' and 'Ditches' surveys and allocated substantial funds to have a digger and driver clear problems over a number of days. We successfully bid for funding to do some of this ditch work under the Parishes Together scheme, but that will not be available in the future.

The parish had a great deal of upheaval over last summer due to Gigaclear installing the infrastructure for FTTP to most households. This must have been as disruptive as the installation of mains electric in 1946! Sadly our hopes to achieve better broadband speeds and competition for BT services have come to a halt, we hope temporarily.

The EDDC green waste service has proved popular and we still have a mobile library visit once a month and a public bus once a week. The Council continues to support the 'Lending Library' in the old village phonebox, and this year, jointly with the PCC we installed a 'Silent Soldier' in support of The Royal British Legion.

In late March, we organised a 'Village Clean Up Day' which was well supported and did make a difference to many parts of the village. A great community atmosphere and sense of achievement was felt, so the event may become an annual fixture. Looking forward, we have at last managed to not only obtain a grant to install a defibrillator, but have also agreed a site and have been granted permission to locate the appliance there. We hope never to have to use the equipment, but it will be good to have it ready and as many people trained as possible.

There is still work to be done. Buckerell lacks a Tree Warden, who does not need to be a council member. The defibrillator will need a weekly series of checks carried out so a 'Defib Monitor' needs to be found. Severe winter weather seems to be an increasing trend so a robust contingency plan and volunteers to respond are needed. A council is only as good as its members, so a diverse mix of people willing to take office has to be encouraged.

We have held six meetings since the last AGM. My grateful thanks go to Prue Pinsent for being Vice Chairman, Clare Slater and Geoff Wright for all their work and commitment. I was sorry to lose Russell Powell as Councillor, and I thank him for the hard work during his time on the council. Mr Ron Galling joined us in September and I am pleased he is settling into his role as Councillor, and in particular for being responsible for Road issues. My thanks also to PCSO Darren England for his regular reports. EDDC and County Councillors Susie Bond and Phil Twiss bring illuminating input from their respective councils and we thank them all for their support and contributions.

Our Clerk, Mr Ian Tucker has now been in role for over 12 months and I would like to thank him for all the commitment, expertise and encouragement he has given the

whole council. Ian's grasp of Council procedure, financial matters and maintenance of the PC website are invaluable.

The council once again has a strong position with regards to finances. The annual precept has remained virtually unchanged over recent years as we have a healthy 'contingency fund' to finance any projects we undertake. We are also fortunate to have Councillors and a Clerk who are prepared to research and submit funding bids for projects to benefit the village. We are also grateful to Cllr Phil Twiss and his Locality budget which has helped. We constantly seek to use funds for the enhancement of the locality and services and we are always happy to receive suggestions of projects that will further benefit Buckerell and our residents.

We must thank Mr David Wayne for his past year of activity as 'Village Maintenance Man'. The Buckerell Bugle continues to provide a valuable voice to the village and our thanks go to Mr Roy Williams, the editor and to Mrs Patricia Craig-Macquaide for continuing the good work. Thanks also go to the Buckerell Community Association and St Mary and St Giles Church PCC for their cooperation and support in events during the year, and Mr Doug Cowan for providing the venue for our meetings.

Finally, as I leave my term of office I am confident the Council is in a strong position to continue its work and I know the Council will continue to look forward, and to look after the interests of the village, its residents and its businesses for the future of us all.

Wendy Wayne
Chair
Buckerell Parish Council