

**Thornhaugh Parish Council**  
**Chairman's Annual Report for the year April 2019 to April 2020**

During the past year the Parish Council met at St Andrews Church Six times and it was encouraging to see so many residents attending over the year and proactively participating in the affairs of the village.

It feels very surreal to be writing this in such circumstances and not to be able to hold the APM and AGM face to face as normal. The Coronavirus Pandemic has affected the world as we know it, and Thornhaugh of course is no exception when experiencing the impact of this deadly pandemic. Despite the devastating effect of the virus and the lockdown and the restrictions that have been imposed, some very positive and heart-warming acts of great kindness have been happening all around us. We have met neighbours that perhaps we haven't spent a great deal of time with in the past, people have shopped for one another and many have been doing those incredibly valuable "chats" for no other reason than to say hello and check someone is OK. We have had time to manicure our gardens and houses. We have come out to clap for our wonderful front-line workers, some of whom are of course residents of our lovely village, and we have had time to draw breath and enjoy the luxury of time and space. You can feel the positive effect on the environment – more birdsong, less road noise and clearer air. We have time to spend thinking about those we are close to and do things that would normally get crammed into a busy weekend. Whilst it is right that we recognise the devastation that this pandemic has caused both in human terms and to the economy, it is also right to reflect on the positive outcomes and hope that we can keep some of these going once things have returned to whatever form of normal is destined for our future. Stay safe and your Parish Council is here if you need us.

**Planning Applications**

We seem to have had quite a number of planning applications to review this year, from full planning permission for building works, to tree management. Formal applications are always discussed at Parish Council Meetings whenever the deadlines coincide with meeting dates. In between meetings, comments from Councillors are sought via email or face to face to ensure that a consensus view can be sent to the City Council by the relevant deadline. All planning applications are open for personal comment on the Peterborough Planning website, and all residents are encouraged to add their own views to those of the Parish Council if they have strong feelings on an application.

A new tree officer has been appointed. Stephen Chesney-Beales is now the Tree Officer for our area and has been in the village on a number of occasions to review tree management/removal applications. We have lost an inordinate amount of trees and hedgerows over the past eighteen months or so for various reasons to do with new building initiatives and health and safety reasons. It is sad to see so much of our village changing in this way, but all applications have been reviewed by the Tree Officer and we always seek his guidance and expertise.

**Footpaths**

Our thanks go to Martin Witherington and others who are still persisting with the footpath issue adjacent to the chicken farm. As soon as this is finalised, or any further progress made we will ensure this is included in the minutes of the appropriate meeting.

It is imperative that our footpaths are kept clear and passable at all times. Landowners have been encouraged to ensure this happens if a path has been blocked or difficult to use.

**Other Matters**

We have had no further communication from Highways England regarding the A47 dualling proposals, nor have we been successful in gaining funding to have the entrance/exit onto the A1 or the layby dealt with. Highways England are reluctant to commit funding. We will continue to pursue this, as always.

The hanging baskets were a pleasure to see again this year, and my thanks go Martin and Kay Lewis for ordering the baskets and to Penny Lewin Watts for helping to put them up. Also, thanks go to the residents who take care of them during the season and we are relying on those people to keep up the good work and ensure that the baskets are watered. The Autumn baskets have been beautiful this year and are still in flower in Meadow Lane. The summer replacements this year are under review and will depend on the

advice from the Government about essential travel to pick them up. We have some weeks yet to make a final decision.

My thanks to Alan and Joan Frost for hosting a great event in their garden this year. Despite inclement weather – yup, very wet – our spirits were not drowned. Good food, great company and a quiz kept the weather blues away. It is unlikely, sadly, that we will be able to hold a public event this year before the weather turns. Social distancing would make that very difficult. However, we'll keep this under review as the world about us changes.

The Thornhaugh Book Exchange is still doing well, with thanks to Penny Lewin Watts for keeping this tidy and dust free and the books refreshed. A great asset for the village, and certainly a talking point for the many visitors passing through. We are still looking to refurbish the phone box as soon as funds allow.

The Defibrillator Project is still underway. Thanks to the very generous donations received we now have enough funds to cover the cost of the unit and installation, some training and on-going maintenance and expenses. We are now waiting to hear from the Diocese as to whether we can install this in the Church Porch. This process is quite slow and has been exacerbated by the Pandemic but is still ongoing. We hope we can get this moving soon.

The “Litter Pick” initiative, started by Nikki Higgins, still continues. A few hardy souls go out even in inclement weather, and to everyone's credit efforts have continued during lockdown – socially distanced of course. My thanks to everyone who is so committed to this and for Nikki's energy in keeping this going.

We continue to be vigilant in managing Parish funds and bear in mind at all times that this money comes from your Council Tax so needs to be spent and accounted for appropriately. We are looking again this year to put together a suite of projects (eg. Website improvement, telephone box refurbishment, etc.) that may attract funding from the Augean Fund. If any residents have suggestions for projects that will benefit the community, please let me know and we can get them added to our list ready for submission at some stage this year. Funds are allocated each year to support the maintenance of the Church grounds, and the effects of that money can be seen in the beautifully maintained grounds.

Finally, but not least, my thanks as always to our long-suffering Parish Clerk, Deirdre who works hard to keep the Parish Council running efficiently and effectively.

Your Parish Council is here for you. Please don't hesitate to contact if you have any issues or suggestions. Your Councillors are still constantly in touch with one another electronically and by 'phone and will address any concerns or ideas you have even though we are unable, at present, to physically meet. Please keep any eye on the noticeboards and the website for information about future meetings.

Thanks for being a great community of people. Stay safe.

Christine Smith  
Chair, Thornhaugh Parish Council  
18<sup>th</sup> May 2020