

Chairman's Annual Report.

Normally my Annual Report is a summary of what has happened over the past 12 months and it is fairly easy to write as I look back and see what I have said over the past year.

How things have radically changed in the recent months!

Before referring to the current situation, let me review the past year and the happenings in our village.

Unfortunately, we have had several instances of vandalism. The skate ramp was destroyed, damage was done to Hattie's Map and the Memorial Soldier at The Cross was so severely damaged that it had to be removed.

As everybody is aware, except those doing the vandalism, we all have to pay for the effects of these actions through our Council Tax which could have been lower without these expenses.

One ongoing main complaint is about dog fouling which, is committed by a very few, but it affects the majority of us. We cannot blame just outside visitors as this is an ongoing problem.

The youth club has had to close because we have been unable to recruit suitable qualified staff, but the good news is that a replacement has been found for September or when it is permitted to re-open. Somersham Youth Club's new venue will be at the Millennium Sports Facility, The Trundle, Somersham on the Connections Youth Bus with qualified staff.

On the bright side, we had another successful Carnival, a great performance by The Handlebards, a wonderful Flower Festival, The Christmas Lights and the Christmas Tree Festival with an appearance by a rotund gentleman with a white beard.

The Millennium Pavilion and Sports Facilities have been handed back to The Parish Council and we are now responsible for it.

I cannot finish this report without mentioning the current situation in which we all find ourselves and changes throughout the year.

We said "goodbye and thank you" to Kevin Hawkins, Mervyn Greaves and Paul McCloskey and "welcome" to Deborah Smith.

At present we are all in a "lockdown" situation to protect ourselves and others.

This means that the Carnival and Flower Festival have both been cancelled along with The Handlebards, but a replacement performance may be possible if there is enough time when the restrictions are lifted. It is too early to say what will happen with the Christmas Lights, but as soon as we have definite advice a decision will be made.

In this time of need, I am glad that our community spirit has come to the fore once again to help those who cannot get out for vital supplies or medicines. It started with a group called Somersham Community Cares and has been taken up, with their agreement and co-operation, by The Timebank. Thank you to the group for getting the ball rolling and thank you to Katie Ixer for organising everything through The Timebank.

We were given permission in April, by Parliament, to hold meetings remotely so The Parish Council will continue to operate although at diminished level. This means that important matters can still be dealt with including planning applications. Any public forum will also be done remotely so people can still raise their points of view.

What will happen next? We will have to wait and see.

Please follow the rules and keep yourselves safe.