**CHAIRMANS REPORT**

This is my third and final annual report as my time as Chairman comes to an end.

The carnival was its usual great success and the weather behaved itself. The turnout and participation seems to go from strength to strength and I am looking forward to helping to judge the floats and walkers again this year.

In July the Bishop of Ely came and consecrated the Burial Ground extension. Everybody looked up to him as he is over six foot tall. The Burial Ground has now been formally handed over to the Parish Church. It has been a long process ( over thirty years) but we got there in the end. It just shows what can be done with perseverance and good will.

The remainder of the High Street will be resurfaced once the power cabling has been upgraded and the cables are buried. We must just wait for UK Power to do their bit so the County Highways department can finish the job they started last year.

The Millennium Sports Facility with St John the Baptist Church hosted Picnic in the Park in August which was another success, especially as it was a fine warm evening. The surprise event was that the International Space Station flew over and was clearly visible. I hope that this event will continue as it would be a shame to lose it.

I did manage to be at the 10k Somersham Sprint this year and was exhausted by telling people were to go.

In October we had a visit from The Department of Communities and Local Government who came to see how a good Parish Council is run. They only visited 200 councils in the country and just two in Cambridgeshire. They appeared to be very impressed and kept saying that we were special even though we are just doing our best for Somersham.

The Christmas Lights were their usual success and this is due to all the volunteers. They don’t go shouting about what they do, but everybody can see and appreciate all their hard work.

We have won money to help with traffic speed reduction measures along The Bank and once a scheme is worked out, it will go out for public consultation to those affected.

We now have a full time assistant for our Parish Clerk to help with the ever growing work load. Welcome Megan!

The May 2015 local elections saw us welcome three new councillors Alice Bevens, Debbie Jones and Glyn Jones. This meant we had an uncontested election of 12 councillors but we were still left with 3 vacancies to fill. Sadly Alice and Glyn resigned for personal reasons before the end of 2015 and the parish council advertised for co-options to fill these vacancies.

During the year we have had 4 new councillors join us, Deb Carr, Roy Fabb, Tony Hulme and Davina McMurdo but we are still one short. When we are at full strength I will keep to my promise to shout “BINGO” as the next Parish Council Meeting.

Somersham was privileged to be a part of the ‘Wings For Life’ international charity run on Sunday 8th May 2016. The winner Steve Way managed to complete nearly 64k before the chase car driven by David Coultard caught up with him close to The Windmill on St Ives Road. On a disappointing note it was sad to find despite the prolonged advertising, a good number of selfish local car drivers ignored the rolling road closures putting participants and stewards at risk.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to thank all those fellow councillors who have supported me over the past three years and to all of you for bothering to read my scribbles.

**CHAIRMAN’S EXTRA by the Parish Clerk**

2015 was a busy year for Somersham Parish Council and I am pleased to report a summary of some of our activities:

* **Parish Councillors Attendance Records** – a copy of the Councillor’s individual attendance records for parish council meetings and working parties between May 2015 and April 2016 can be found on the ‘document archive’ tab on our website [www.somersham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.somersham-pc.gov.uk)
* **Time Bank** – The Somersham & Pidley Time Bank goes from strength to strength with Lucy Bird increasing membership and organising a number of social activities such as the Light Bites, 1940s extravaganza and nature walks to raise funds and enhance the social capital of the Time Bank membership. Coming soon for 2016 will be a new buggy walk and short health walks. Watch out for more news!
* **Youth Club** – The junior youth club is very active and our fabulous youth club staff Alice, Emily and Teresa are keen for more senior youth club members. Youth Club meets on a Monday night in The Victory Hall it is only £1.50 so please come along. Also look at the notice board on the Norwood Building by the children’s play area for term dates and activities.
* **Somersham Nature Reserve Group (SNRG)** – as well as maintain the lake and local nature reserve SNRG organizes a number of community activities including the nature walks (with the Time Bank), Apple Day, Bat Watch and star gazing. Again watch out for advertisements!
* **Health & Wellbeing Group** – this group meets three times a year and brings together key community workers, doctors, schools, children’s centre and community navigators to share information and knowledge which will bring direct benefit to the community.
* **Land east of West Newlands, proposed development of 45 houses and a residential care home** – The parish council is keen that all aspects of this significant outline development plan are fully discussed and reviewed during the consultation process and will keep the parish informed as it progresses.
* **Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) –** Following a public consultation in March – April 2015 revised TRO’s were instigated through the High Street which included moving the bus stop nearer to the centre of the village. Changes were also made to the road markings at Church Street by the car park.
* **World War 1 commemorative seats** – We have purchased two seats to commemorate all those that returned from conflict in World War 1 as well as those who did not. One seat has been installed on the Norwood Playing Field and the second seat will be installed by Hattie’s Map in Church Street by this summer.
* **A Guide for Old & New Residents** – an electronic residents pack full of useful information has been produced by the parish council’s ‘Localism Working Group’ it is available to download from the council’s website [www.somersham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.somersham-pc.gov.uk)

*Reference copies will be held in the library and we hope at the doctors surgeries.*

**Going forward for 2016 some of our planned projects are:**

* + To refurbish the fingerpost direction sign on The Cross
  + To improve parish communications in an effort to reach all members of the community by considering new ideas
  + To complete the 3 year programme of parish tree maintenance
  + To rejuvenate the play areas on the Norwood Playing Field
  + To implement a Public Spaces Protection Order at the lake to help prevent anti-social behavior from some dog owners who fail to keep their dogs on a lead and also clear up after their dogs
  + To consult with affected residents to install speed reduction measures at Chatteris Road. Please visit ‘Consultations & Initiatives’ tab on the councils website [www.somersham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.somersham-pc.gov.uk)