

Chairman's Annual Report.

In June 2018 I complained that only eight people out of an electorate of about three thousand had stood for the Parish Council and this would greatly impact on our ability to carry out all our duties for the benefit of Somersham.

Four years and a pandemic later, things have become worse with only five people standing. This is the minimum number that we are permitted to have for us to be quorate.

The Parish Council returning in an uncontested election are John Blundell, Tony Sansom, Dianna Skeggs, Ray Woolway and myself, Dick Sutton.

It has been a difficult year as the Government refused to allow any local authority (Parish, District and County) to continue to meet remotely even though the Government continued to do so. We managed only because of good weather so all windows and doors could be open and social distancing was in force.

Last year there was an outcry from several people about the increase in our precept on social media but only one person attended the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2021 to ask about it.

This year there has been absolute silence even though we have managed to keep the precept unchanged.

We have been successful in a bid for Somersham to become a 20 MPH zone and when the Highways Authority have drawn up their plans we will consult on them for peoples' opinions.

There have been some changes in the Office Staff.

Katie Ixer has left The Time Bank and Anna Chivers has replaced her and many of you have already met her.

I would like to thank Katie for all her hard work and I am sure that the Time Bank is in safe hands.

Our Deputy Clerk, Megan, has now gone to work in Europe after many years with the Council both as a Councillor and as the Deputy Clerk. I would like to thank Megan for her commitment to Somersham.

Looking forward we now have Irene Healis in post as our Clerk in Waiting so that she can shadow Penny until she retires.

We said “Goodbye” to Tony Hume, Jon Sewell, Deborah Smith, Nartasha Ruffell, Chris White, Geoffrey Wooster and Steve Criswell as Parish Councillors but Steve will continue as our District and County Councillor.

Luckily, we have three more people join us so I would like to welcome back Christine Dolby and Daryl Potter (former parish councillors) and welcome to Nicola Cross as our newest councillor. All were duly co-opted at our Annual Meeting held on 18th May 2022.

If Somersham is going to thrive we do need a full and active Parish Council especially as there are major developments about to happen. Please think hard about joining us as we do have seven vacancies.

I would like to thank the Parish Councillors, and all the staff, for their help and support through the difficult period that we have endured.

Finally, on a general note, the majority of the management of village organisations whether they be called Councils, Committees or Boards are mainly people of “a certain age”.

It is time for the next generation to take up the baton otherwise a vibrant and caring Somersham will cease to exist, and nobody wishes for that.