

Lilford-cum-Wigsthorpe Thorpe Achurch
Annual Parish Meeting – Tuesday 9 May 2022

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Good evening and welcome everyone to the Lilford-cum-Wigsthorpe Thorpe Achurch Annual Parish Meeting.

I would like to start this evening by thanking our Parish Councillors for their commitment and continued contribution to the activities of the Parish Council. We continue to have representation for all four villages on the Council which has historically been challenging. I would also like to thank our District Councillors, Wendy and David Brackenby and Geoff Shacklock for their support and guidance during the course of the year which has continued to be invaluable for matters concerning our Parish.

Whilst it has been a slightly quieter year for the Parish Council as society has returned to normal following the pandemic period, the Council has remained active in many areas with a continued focus to drive to support and improve our community and protect our beautiful villages.

Key achievements and events during the year include:

1. **Jubilee and Coronation parties** - each community celebrated the Jubilee and Thorpe, Achurch and Lilford celebrated the Coronation. The Parish Council supported these events with donations towards memorabilia and party items and some villages even applied to close roads to host the celebrations. Each event was a success and a fantastic opportunity to celebrate with others from our wonderful villages.
2. **Acknowledging the sad passing of the late Queen** – with a book of condolence for the Parish opened and now with the Lord Lieutenant's Office for archiving, designated areas for the laying of flowers and Councillor Hopkinson rang the Church bell 96 times.
3. **Remembrance Day** – organising and laying a Poppy Wreath at the War Memorial in Achurch.
4. **Wellhead in Achurch** – working with the landowner to arrange repairs to parts of the wellhead and surrounding area which will hopefully will be complete over the coming weeks.
5. **Defibrillator in Thorpe** – formally accepting guardianship of the Thorpe defibrillator and weekly checks are now carried out by Oundle First Responders.
6. **Thorpe Cricket Club Clock** – taking receipt and care of the clock from the former Thorpe Cricket Club which the intention of having this repaired and kept safe at a suitable location in the Parish for everyone to enjoy.
7. **Parish assets** – maintaining on an ongoing programme to assess and maintain the community assets in the Parish. In this regard, a £200 donation was kindly made in memory of a former resident and work will now be carried out to restore the benches with the installation of an appropriate plaque.

The Council has also continued to consider a number of planning applications during the course of the year and as usual some have been more contentious than others. It is good that that a buyer was found for Lilford Hall and the Parish Council are hopeful that this historic asset will be restored sympathetically after recent years of decay.

We have also actively engaged with planning and development issues outside of the Parish frequently working collaboratively with other local Parishes. In particular, we have been involved in the STAUNCH campaign looking at the impact of the potential developments in Titchmarsh on our Parish and commented on the recent Manor Farm planning application.

The Parish Council has also continued to support the work being diligently carried out to gain Area of Outstanding National Beauty for the Nene Valley.

The Parish has continued to be represented and has a voice at local groups including the Police Liaison and the Rural Coordination Group. Thank you to Councillors Hopkinson and Healey and our brilliant Clerk, Nicki for making the time to attend these meetings.

As in previous years, we continue to have a limited level of public participation in Parish Council meetings with many residents preferring to pick matters up directly with the Councillors or by e-mail to our Clerk. I would encourage all local residents to have a voice. The Parish Council is here to serve the community.

Financially the Parish Council has a healthy reserve and the Council continues to manage its finances diligently with particular support from our PC Clerk Nicki Philips.

I would like to finish the meeting as I have done for the last two years with a very special thank you to Nicki Philips the Clerk of the Parish Council. As I said in previous years, Nicki really is the backbone of our Parish Council. She has a wealth of experience and knowledge and uses this with good humour to ensure that we continuously look for ways to improve what we are doing for the local communities. So thank you Nicki. We really do appreciate you and everything you do for us.

Thank you again for attending the Annual Parish Meeting. I will now open the meeting up for any questions or comments. After we have concluded the Annual Parish Meeting we will start the Annual Parish Council Meeting and you are welcome to stay for this.

Justin