

COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 14/5/18

I would like to begin with a reminder of the work of the communications working group – village voice, data, the parish council website, social media and last but not least village noticeboards. Not much you may think, but these are our main ways of communicating with our parishioners, both letting them know what we are doing and for them to let us know what they think of the work that we do.

I began this year by pleading the case for the communications group which was in danger of folding, the group was retained and for some time I was the only councillor on the group together with Tony Bubb, Stephen Martyn, Robert Smyth and the editor of Village Voice. John Vost had recently taken over as the new editor but our initial optimism was short-lived as after one edition John stepped down. Tony stepped in while the hunt for another editor began and we were pleased to welcome Patrick Preston to the role. Unfortunately Patrick was only able to stay with us for one edition and once again Tony bounced back and remains as our editor. We should not rest on our laurels as Tony was only a temporary measure (he says) so if you know of anyone who wishes to take over please let me know. The office staff do a sterling job of producing the magazine with Geraldine compiling it and coordinating the distributors, and Sarah being responsible for the advertisers. Recently she has had to get to grips with the requirements of the new data protection rules and has been busy chasing the advertisers for their written agreement in respect of our storing their personal data. Village Voice continues to be delivered to every residential property in the village, come rain or shine, wind or snow by a dedicated team of volunteers and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. I know from personal experience it can be a challenge to find some letter boxes and somewhat alarming when the magazine is snatched from a letter box by a madly barking dog.

Data was again produced last autumn with a larger map. After some discussion about its future Councillors were clear that they wished the information contained within Data to remain on paper rather than relying entirely on our website. So we are currently exploring various options as to the most cost-effective way of getting this information to our residents.

To keep the village up to date with our activities we maintain 3 notice boards around the village – outside Thaxters, the Coop and at the library. A fourth on the recreation ground succumbed to damage and old age and we are currently looking at options for an additional noticeboard in the southern part of the village.

Our website continues to be maintained by Stephen Martyn and its content was contact details for parish councillors, a calendar of our meetings and agendas and minutes. This has been increased this year by the inclusion of photos of councillors and information about village groups and societies. We are also intending that it should include all parish council policy and procedures, so it will be a resource for all councillors to find all information that they need about the parish council as well as for residents.

A new venture this year has been the setting up of a parish council Facebook page. However, it is proving challenging to maintain.

My thanks go to all members of the working group, Sue who attends the meetings when she is able and especially to the staff who have to implement our decisions.