Stilton Parish Council

Chair Report 2025-2026

Once again, your Parish Council has had a very busy year. With only 9 Councillors instead of the maximum of 11, each councillor has had to work that bit harder, resulting in all councillors being on most of our working groups and committees!

At the recent elections, we only had 8 nominations for the Parish Council, so therefore we were all automatically re-elected. Adam Vickers decided not to stand again. We would like to thank him for his contributions to the Council. At our May meeting, we were pleased to co-opt Clark Graham on to the Council and look forward to filling the two remaining vacancies.

Your Council has membership of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (National Association of Local Councils), the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management and Parish Online to help us fulfil our role.

During the year we have accomplished a lot. The largest project undertaken by the Parish Council was the Net Zero initiative. The council received a grant of £25,598.10 and have replaced the skatepark light fittings with LEDs, purchased 2 x 8kWh batteries to store excess power generated by the Pavilion solar panels. This was not just a case of purchasing two batteries, there was immense amount of work to enable correct installation. The project was completed earlier in the year, and the benefits are already being seen, so much so, it was apparent that we needed another battery to store more energy. This was paid form from our CIL money. The Parish Council is very much indebted to Cllr John Leonard who project managed the installation and spent hours ensuring that the project was completed within the time scale required by the grant provider and to the required standards,

The Parish Council has taken ownership of two pieces of land previously owned by Jelson, that are situated at the Mill Road junction with North Street, and the council continue to investigate ownership of other small pieces of land which appear never to have been transferred from the original developer.

The Green Spaces Working Group, continued to work on the Apreece Way Wildlife Garden where the information board has now been erected. While the bee lawn, hedges and trees are becoming established, the wildflower area is struggling, and this is probably the result of the long hot period of weather after the plugs were planted. We will continue to monitor this situation, and this working group would welcome any new members.

In the autumn the council planted spring bulbs in the cemetery, which gave a wonderful display earlier this year. We hope to continue with further bulb planting.

Bad parking and speeding continue to cause serious concerns. HDC have taken over the Civil Parking Enforcement from the police and while they have been seen in the village checking illegal parking, it doesn't appear to be a regular occurrence, therefore parking on the yellow lines continues. Pavement parking is also issue, as is double parking which is creating a serious issue for emergency vehicles.

The Traffic and Parking working group have applied for an LHI (Local Highways Infrastructure) grant for a solar powered MVAS unit, the equipment to convert the current MVAS unit to solar

and additional posts so the MVASs can moved to cover a greater area on a rotation basis. Again, this group would welcome new members.

The group also supports the reintroduction of the Speed Watch Group, but this can only work with additional volunteers.

Last year we saw the introduction of the Stilton Ditch Squad to monitor and clear the village waterways. This has been a great success and has prevented any flooding caused by blocked ditches.

The Local Government Reorganisation is ongoing, and the Parish Council encouraged the village to complete the consultation to express their preferred choice. In July we expect to learn who will be new Unitary Council.

HDC's Call for Sites, did not decide to take any of the new suggested sites in Stilton forward for future development which was good news for the village. We were pleased to note our in-depth report on each site was taken into account. However, your Parish Council is constantly keeping abreast of any changes or amendments. Work at the Cross Keys site at the golf course has started. The development at the Cheese pub is at a pre-work stage.

The YES Group received a grant from the Co-op and contributed £1000 for a new Glockenspiel play item for the Pavilion Play Park. Thank you to YES.

During the year the PC can award grants towards to organisations that benefit our village and its residents. We gave a £750 grant to the Stilton Christmas Lights. This group has worked very hard and gave a wonderful display of lights at Christmas. Long may they continue.

The Parish Council was happy to work along side Blackboard Events to bring a Farmers Market to the pavilion throughout the year. At this event the council has an area where we can communicate information and where you can come and chat about any issues you may have. If we don't know the answer, we can often point you in the correct direction.

Each year the Council has our playparks and skate park inspected for safety and any work required is completed. The skate park appears to be coming to the end of its life span so we will be looking for grants for some type of replacement.

Barn Close has been cleared of the play equipment because that had come to the end of its life span and was going to cost more than it was worth to repair. We are currently looking at designs and suppliers alongside grant funding, and will be choosing the new design and supplier at our June meeting with the new play area planned to up and running by the end of the summer.

During the year we have organised Community Green Waste bins, we have some at the Cemetery and at the Mill Road mini nature reserve. We have also erected 'Hedgehog Crossing' signs on Walnut Way at the request of residents.

Various items remain ongoing, these include the Neighbourhood Plan which has unfortunately come to a bit of a standstill, but we will be pushing forward with this in the coming months. Also, the Heritage Centre lease has not yet been agreed and signed but again we are hopeful with will happen very soon.

The North Street village sign is still missing in action! However, the new sign is coming along nicely and should soon be back in pride of place welcoming everyone to our village within a few weeks. We are sure the long wait will be worth it. Craftsmen cannot and should not be hurried!

Your Council was very proud to be awarded the Bronze Award from the Local Council Award Scheme. Anne Arscot was instrumental in this achievement, and we are now working towards the Silver Award.

The Council has renewed the Village Maintenance Contract with Huntingdonshire District Council; however, we have now taken some grass cutting in house now we have our own grasscutter, known as Mow-by, operated by our wonderful caretakers. We would like to thank Dee Darnell for keeping the planters on Caldecote Road and the Pavilion in year-round bloom.

Communication with the village is very important. We have a report in SCAN each month, we use our website, social media and our notice boards. We also have a twice-yearly newsletter that is hand delivered to each home.

It is unfortunate that we do experience vandalism especially at the Pavilion as this does cost money to rectify. Youngsters have been climbing on the dugouts, and these will soon be painted with anti-vandal paint, to try and prevent further vandalism and more importantly any serious failing accidents.

Stilton Parish Council continue to be supported by our District Councillor Tim Alban and our County Councillor Simon Bywater and we value their help, guidance and support. As a parish we also attend the Parish Forums, which is a gathering of local parish councils, and always a very worthwhile evening.

The Council is very lucky to have an amazing team of staff headed by our Clerk. So, a big thank you to Julianne, Julie and Julie, Victor and Andrew. We couldn't do it without you.

Also, thank you to those villagers who have joined our working groups, your help and expertise is appreciated.

Finally, a big thank to my fellow Councillors. We are elected officials, but we volunteer our time and some months seem to be meeting after meeting, but we all do it because we care about our village, the future of our village and everyone living within our village.

We do have two vacancies, so we would love to welcome new councillors. If you would like to dip your toe in the water without becoming a councillor, we have various working groups you can join.

Please don't forget we are an approachable and friendly bunch so if you have any concerns, it is nicer to hear about these issues directly rather than from a Facebook post.

Thank you

Sue Ayres
Chair Stilton Parish Council