



# HOLYBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

*Serving the communities of Beansheaf Farm and Fords Farm for the last 20 years*

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020**

The Annual Assembly is usually an opportunity for our residents to hear of the activities of the Parish Council over the past year and for residents and other groups to tell us of their involvement in the community. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the 2020 meeting was cancelled. However, new Government legislation is now in place enabling Parish Councils to meet virtually until May 2021 and we will, therefore, be operating future Council meetings by Zoom. In addition, our social media platforms and noticeboards will be used as widely as possible to keep our residents informed.

When the year began, we had no idea that three months later we would all be in lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has been a real challenge for everyone, particularly the vulnerable, the elderly and for our children. Volunteers from all sections of the community have come forward in West Berkshire and, for anyone needing help of any kind, the support has been there. West Berkshire Council has put in a huge effort to co-ordinate the needs and volunteers. Help has also been available from Kennet Valley Free Church. Working from home has been a diversion from the real world of work and, with children also working at home, it is not easy for families.

Thank you to our residents for adhering to the Government's guidelines, which has meant that the rate of infection in this area has been low. Our residents are fortunate that we have the Linear Park for exercise, which has been well used. At this time our Community Groups have been unable to meet at our Community Centres but, hopefully, they will resume as soon as group meetings are permitted.

The Parish Council is proud to have supported the following groups and charities through its grant process during the 2019/20 financial year. For more information on Parish Council grants please visit our website: [www.holybrook-pc.gov.uk](http://www.holybrook-pc.gov.uk).

- Citizens Advice, Reading (£350: October)
- Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre Ltd (£350: October)
- Kennet Valley Community Association (large grant, £4,500: November)
- Berkshire Vision (£200: December)
- Friends of Linear Park (£350: March)
- Standby Volunteer Group (£150: May)
- In addition, a donation was made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Our playgrounds are very important to the Parish and these are always well maintained and improved; this year the much loved and well-worn embankment slide was replaced at the Holybrook Play area for example. CIL projects continue with a new footpath on the Holymead making it more accessible, the erection of new noticeboards, whip planting in the Underwood Road play area, new litter bins and an upgrade to the toilets in the Kennet Valley Community Centre. The Parish Council is still working hard on the remaining, previously voted for CIL projects.

After meeting with Planning Officers at West Berkshire Council, our attempts to reduce the number of dwellings applied for at Dorking Way was unsuccessful and 199 properties are now in the process of being built. Noise and air pollution were another of our concerns, which went unheeded. Landscaping will be important on this development to enhance the area.

During the year, we held three Community Litter Picks. Unfortunately, these were not well supported by residents. However, a national litter pick 'The Great British Spring Clean' is planned for September when we will ask residents to join us in a huge effort to get the Parish clean and tidy – this may be as simple as ensuring the area around your own home is neat and free from overhanging foliage for example. More details will follow nearer the time.

In April 2020, Holybrook Parish Council had been in existence for 20 years and to mark this occasion, the Council has decided to plant 20 flowering trees in the Linear Park, which will give a wonderful blossom display in Spring. It is hoped that these trees can be installed this Autumn with the help and support of the Friends of Linear Park.

Finally, I give my thanks to Vice Chairman, Claire Tull, and all our Councillors for the support given throughout the year. The various skills of our Councillors are used to ensure that Holybrook Parish remains an area that our residents can be proud of. A big thank you to our Parish Clerk, Pam Kirkpatrick, whose diligence and enthusiasm make sure that we remain legal and solvent. The Finance Committee, working with the Clerk, ensure that any money spent is good value. Thanks also to our Administration Assistant, who supports the Clerk and makes sure that the Beansheaf Centre is well used.

Mary Bedwell  
**Chairman**

