

## Thurlaston Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022

John Bretherton, Chair of the Thurlaston Parish Council (TPC), opened the meeting and welcomed everyone attending. This year the meeting was held in St. Edmond's Church because of a clash with Village Hall bookings.

Attending from the TPC, John Bretherton, Chair, Keith Boardman, Stephen Lewington, Justin Owen and Brian Coleman. Plus 30 residents.

Apologies: Eleanor Holdsworth, SW Rugby News, Ev and Steve Murphy, Claire and Richard Street, Helen and Des Creery.

Rugby Borough Council report:

### **From the Diary of the Dunsmore Ward Councillors**

Cllr Howard Roberts (WCC & RBC), Cllr Peter Eccleson (RBC), Cllr Deepah Roberts (RBC)

### **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

#### Overview of the Year

The restrictions of COVID over the past twelve months have made life as a Councillor a little more difficult.

Cllr Deepah Roberts has served as Mayor of Rugby throughout these 12 months which is now sadly drawing to a close. As the Mayor of Rugby, she appointed Cadet Sergeant Benjamin Walker from Royal Air Force Air Cadets (TA Centre, Rugby), as Mayor's Cadet during her term of office.

Cllr Roberts chose 'respect and protect the environment' as the theme of her year in office. During her Mayoral term, she has supported Rugby for Heroes, a charity which works with the rugby community to raise funds and awareness for military personnel making the transition to civilian life, and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Training Centre, based in Leamington Spa. There was a great deal of planting for The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC), a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. In addition, the Mayor attended many religious events to show support for the diverse cultures within our community of Rugby.

Cllr Deepah Roberts balanced a very busy Mayoral year with her work in the NHS as a Nursing Manager based in London throughout the pandemic.

It has been a busy year for Cllr Howard Roberts in supporting the Mayor in her civic duties and also balancing his County seat and associated responsibilities with his Borough obligations as a Cabinet Member and portfolio holder for Health & Wellbeing. Rugby wants to ensure that Rugby continues to be a good place to live, with all residents having the access to opportunities, services and the support that they need to live well. Unfortunately, Howard has had some medical issues this year which have been a setback but this is where the 'team' within Dunsmore Ward have shown our combined strength in working together to cover all aspects of our responsibilities.

Howard, Deepah and Peter have been engaged in a varied number of activities throughout the period in addition to the Mayoral duties mentioned.

Cllr Peter Eccleson is Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at Rugby Borough Council which is a cross-party committee charged with challenging performance of our services.

Scrutiny reviews council services to ensure they are providing value for money, ensuring robust performance management mechanisms are in place, ensuring targets are met, along with making sure that services are looking to continuously improve their performance.

Peter also serves on the Planning Committee and is also Chairman of the recently formed Caldicott Group which is a joint venture set up by RBC to commercially monitor other joint ventures set up by this Council.

All three of us have challenged planning applications around the industrial developments at Thurlaston and other planning in the wider Southwest Rugby area. Since the planning applications were approved, we have concentrated on ensuring that the bio-diversity measures are reflecting our environmental concerns and the interests of our residents. We have also been engaged in the review of the leisure facilities at the Queens Jubilee Centre and the ongoing operations contract.

Your Councillors have been dealing with neighbour disputes, fly tipping, housing issues, planning disputes, grants, social housing and tenancy agreements, social welfare issues, immigration issues, refugee concerns - and the list goes on.

Despite the issues surrounding COVID we have continued to work diligently and in the best interests of our residents throughout this Dunsmore Ward.

**Minutes of the last APM held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021:** Passed as a true record. Proposed by Keith Boardman and seconded by Stephen Lewington. Future minutes will be approved at the Parish Council meeting.

**Parish Council Report:** presented by John Bretherton, Chair of the Parish Council.

Good evening, everyone. I would like to start by welcoming you all and saying what a pleasure it is to hold this Annual Parish Meeting in person with you for the first time since 2019. I would also like to thank the Church for hosting us in this lovely building.

There has been a world of change since 2019 and although it's said that change is the only constant in life, the rate of change in the last few years has been exceptional. As we shall hear, change is coming to Thurlaston as well.

### **Agenda [Slide]**

Tonight, we will hear something of the keeping calm and carrying on, with reports from Chair of the Village Hall, the Dunchurch Boughton School Trust, St Edmund's Church, the Poores Plot Charity, the Newcombe and Spears Almshouses, and plans for this year's Village Fete and for the Thurlaston Chronicle.

We will also hear from Keith Boardman, Chair of the Parish Council's Planning Subcommittee, on Rugby Borough's plans, and from Brian Coleman, another of our councillors, who is looking for support and interest on the Village Archives.

### **JB - Thurlaston Parish Council Chairman's Report [Slide]**

As alluded to in the Welcome, the context of this year's APM is an exceptional rate of change on a global scale.

We have had:

- The COVID Pandemic
- The joys of working from home (even just in your pants!)
- The drawbacks of working from home
- The Winners: Online Business has flourished
- The Losers: City Centres pockmarked with vacant units
- Inflation Rising, the Economy Damaged
- Business Leaders Wrestling with the new landscape

And to compound our problems, Putin's war reminds us that 75 years of peace should not be taken for granted. Europe has thousands of years of conflict; you might note Germany has dropped passive defence policies and is doubling its military spend.

### **JB - Change is Coming to Thurlaston [Slide]**

In our small corner of the World, we also need to brace ourselves for significant change.

Implementation of RBC's Local Plan is underway, some detailed Planning Applications are passed already, with more to follow.

Keith Boardman will run through the Local Plan related developments in more detail in a few minutes, but I would like to say a few words about how we have changed our approach and the reasoning behind it.

With plans passed and work started, we expect to see the first warehouses and road changes completed within two years, some only a few hundred yards of the Village.

You may be aware that Thurlaston Parish Council consistently pushed back on Local Plan features we considered to be detrimental – and this included the warehouses. However, we have accepted there is little chance of stopping what is already underway. For these cases, we have switched our focus to liaison, and locally this means liaison with Tritax Symmetry and Homes England in particular.

By talking with the developers and RBC, our aim is to help minimise inconvenience and upset, and to provide residents with advanced notice of disruption.

At the same time there are several live applications of significance at the heart of our village:

- Thurlaston Meadows Care Home, Retirement Living Housing Scheme (aka R20/1030) comprising of 40 bungalows. This kicked off in late November 2020 and is continues to the present – the latest addition to the application I am aware of is the Archaeological Investigation that took place in Q1 2022.
- Thurlaston Meadows Care Home also has a live application for two two-storey and two single-storey extensions, demolition of an air raid shelter, with associated changes to access and parking (aka R21/0152)
- On a smaller scale, but still significant and close to the centre of the Village, there is The Malthouse application (R21/0477) for the erection of 6 new dwellings.

While these applications are less complex than those for the warehouses, they are still far more difficult to manage than the average case and have tended to create more concern from

residents, perhaps due to their closed proximity to the Village Centre.

Where we decided it was warranted, we have sought professional help in the form of legal and planning consultancy expertise. When we received notice of R20/1030, shortly before Christmas 2020, we had to fund these costs on the hop – since then we have budgeted for this type of expenditure and expect we now have sufficient funds for future similar support. As it stands, we have just commissioned some further consultancy review work and in recent weeks have opened discussions with a barrister we have used previously to prepare for the possibility of him representing us at RBC's Planning Committee.

### **Liaison with Tritax & Homes England [Slide]**

We had update meetings in Q1 2022 with Tritax Symmetry & Homes England.

**Tritax Symmetry:** We met with them in St Edmunds on 2nd March 2022. Highlights:

- Tritax retains ownership of the units and lets them out to tenants – i.e. they should provide land-lord continuity
- Their intent is that the renewable energy produced on-site will normally supply the sites needs – the Energy Centre will be diesel-powered, but only used to supplement supply
- Expressed a willingness to keep us in touch with progress and put us in touch with the site manager

**Homes England:** We met with them via Zoom on the 9th March 2022. Highlights:

- Their summary included the Homestead Link Road and Sustainable Transport Corridor
- Provided us with a Missions & Objectives deck with development timeline estimates
- Expressed a willingness to keep us in touch with progress and put us in touch with the site manager

For avoidance doubt, we see these liaisons as informative, but they do not oblige us to agree with everything the developers propose, and we will continue to act with the best interests of the Parish in mind.

### **Borough & Parish Council Liaison Slide**

We also continue to build closer ties with the Borough and with our neighbouring PCs.

**Dunchurch Parish Council:** We have been working co-operatively with Dunchurch since the beginning of 2021, which makes a lot of sense given our close proximity. This has worked very well in terms of collaboration and in sharing consultancy contacts and costs to the benefit of both parties.

This year we have opened up contact with Bourton & Draycote, Frankton, Birdingbury and Cawston parish councils, and had encouraging responses from them all.

With regards to RBC, Brian Coleman, who joined the Parish Council last year, has been instrumental in establishing a new dialogue with RBC Senior Management.

- Mannie Ketley (Executive Director and Head of Paid Service), and
- Nicola Smith (RBC's new Chief Officer for Growth and Investment).

We had a Zoom Meeting with them on 4<sup>th</sup> February and hosted a visit from them on the 25<sup>th</sup> March, which took in the Village Hall, the Church and a walk across the footpath to Patricksfield and back via Biggin Hall Lane and Stocks Lane.

This has enabled us to convey some of our frustrations with RBC Planning, for example how difficult it can be when we are asked to respond to a large application within a 3–4-week period that falls over Christmas – and how they could make this easier. It was also presented opportunities for them to explain their challenges, constraints, and bases for making certain decisions.

### **Budget (Precept)**

I would like to talk about the money - our Budget, aka the Precept - an important subject, because this is how we are funded and you pay for this directly through your Council Tax, so I am sure you would like to understand something of how we set this and why.

At the end of 2020-21, our reserves dropped to their lowest ebb for many years (£3,317), which is largely why there was a steep increase in our Precept for 2021-22 to £27,750. When setting the Precept for 2022-23, we took into account the regular annual costs, the potential costs to renew/replace our parish assets and the possibility of ad-hoc costs, such as the one-off advice and support we need for responding to some of the larger planning applications.

Having updated our asset valuations, included some allowance for ad-hoc costs, and mindful a strong likelihood that inflation and energy rates will increase in the coming year, we set the Precept for 2022-23 at £20,000. This marks a 27% year-on-year reduction, but it is in line with our plan to maintain a prudent reserve in the coming years.

As stated before, Thurlaston Parish Council takes the management of council funds extremely seriously. There is no intent to increase expenditure unnecessarily. All spending is sanctioned formally at Parish Council and our accounts are in the public domain and published on the Parish Council Website.

### **Parish Council Structure [Slide]**

And I am sure you will all be relieved to hear that the last thing I want to cover is our Parish Council and several key changes that were made to our council at the beginning of the year. As some of you will know, two valued and longstanding council members, Norman Lines and Helen Creery, stepped down from the Council last year and we welcomed in two new and able members - Brian Coleman and Justin Owen, who both joined at the AGM in May 2021.

In lieu of the changing landscape, we restructured the Council's subcommittees in response to areas where we expected the weight of work would fall, and to bring the Council into line with recommended best practice.

Planning-related matters continue to take up more time than any other activity, so we restored the Planning Subcommittee with Keith Boardman as Chairman and lead, and all councillors as members. Keith continues to eat up a lion share of this work, for which we are all grateful, but Justin has been particularly supportive in poring over the most complex planning applications we have encountered, and Stephen and Brian have also made valuable observations. Justin has also made a significant contribution to maintenance of trees in the Parish, a subject that takes up more council time than you might expect!

Brian has added a new dimension in that he has been active in the community for many years and has used his contacts to improve our network. It was through Brian that the meeting with Mannie were arranged and this led to meeting with Nicola Smith very early in her post.

We created a new Staffing Subcommittee in response to advice from WCC on best practice with Stephen Lewington as Chairman and lead. Stephen has done a great job in bringing our policies and procedures up to date and has dealt with this sensitive area with his usual blend of charisma and common sense.

Sylvia Jacques continues to add value as our Parish Clerk, bringing a personal touch to the role and ensuring that tasks are followed through to a satisfactory conclusion, which often requires a degree of tenacity. Sylvia also maintains many of our links with utilities, suppliers and local tradespeople, and encourages councillors to keep their training up to date!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow councillors for their efforts and for the time they give to represent us all.

### **Summary**

We all hope the coming year will be an improvement on the last few and that planned events, such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, our Village Fete and the personal events we all have planned go ahead unhampered. We expect there to be ongoing updates on from Homes England and Tritax Symmetry, which we will post on the Parish Council Website as and when.

**Parish Council Planning Subcommittee report:** presented by Keith Boardman, Chair of TPC Planning Subcommittee:

My report this year focuses on planning developments which are in close proximity to Thurlaston village and are Warwickshire CC and Rugby BC initiatives. The two most significant are WCC's Minerals Plan and RBC's Local Plan and its associated South West Rugby Supplementary Planning Document. Our Chairman, Cllr John Bretherton, has provided an update on other village planning matters.

A presentation deck used at the APM is available for viewing and download on Thurlaston Parish Council's website at <http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk>.

As it's almost three years since the Rugby Local Plan was formally adopted; it seems appropriate to assess developments thus far and take stock. Particular consideration is given to its impact on South West Rugby and the Parish Council's role during its implementation.

It was in June 2019 that the Rugby Local Plan (RLP) was formally endorsed by Rugby Borough Council (RBC) and approved by the Secretary of State. It is a legally binding plan and it will be implemented. However, a number of refinements to the plan continue to be made; and your Parish Council seeks to clarify and make ongoing representations concerning developments – most notably along the northern side of the Coventry Road (B4429).

The RLP has generated scores of planning and consultation documents. It has also generated much public disquiet; it has received little praise from local communities. As the leader of the Borough Council explained – 'it might not be the best plan but it is our plan and we are in control'. Are these hollow words; are we really in control? We think not.

Over the past three years your Parish Council has submitted over a dozen formal representations on various topics. They cannot all be listed and described here, however significant submissions are available on the Parish Council's website.

## **The Wider Context**

Whilst the RLP exists in its own right there are several ancillary RBC and WCC developments which should be highlighted because there are co-dependency's between them. For example, they include:

### **RBC's Corporate Strategy 2021-2024**

- Outcome 1 – Climate – the top priority as taken from resident votes. As I write this there seems little evidence that substantive plans have been formed by RBC to radically reduce pollution across the borough, our carbon footprint, and the behavioral changes that will be required. Topics identified thus far are mainly focused on RBC's own estate. We regret to inform residents that the RLP does not have to comply with latest DEFRA carbon reduction requirements because the plan was adopted prior to latest legislation. Whilst our MP backed our stance to comply with carbon reduction targets, he seemed reluctant to intervene. TPC considers this is very unsatisfactory and we continue to strive and make common sense prevail.
  - Outcome 2 – Economy
  - Outcome 3 – Health & communities
  - Outcome 4 - Organisation

### **Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034**

- It is proposed by 2026 Rugby should be served by an additional rail station to be known as Rugby Parkway at Houlton close to M1/J18 with 260+ car parking spaces.
- It was noted that Rugby station is the second most busy in Warwickshire after Leamington Spa. Pre-pandemic it had a 2.5 M footfall per year.

### **Rugby Road Travel Strategy**

- Joint (WCC and RBC) Strategic Transport Assessment 2017
- Framework HGV Route Management Strategy 2020
- RBC has not published a detailed integrated travel plan for South West Rugby . . . and yet the RLP proceeds apace. This is an ongoing concern because the RLP makes no firm commitments to develop fully the Potsford Dam Link to take north bound traffic directly away from Thurlaston without using Thurlaston roundabout and the Blue Boar intersection. TPC continues to lobby for substantive travel/transport plans, especially for HGVs.

### **Warwickshire Minerals Plan 2018**

- A Main Modifications report was published in Oct 2021.
- Consultation occurred between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022. TPC made its second representation. The revised Minerals Plan gives explicit recognition of the need for road improvements especially regarding Site 1 which will be located both sides of the Frankton Straight Mile. There are concerns about access and egress to the Major Road Network (MRNs A45 and A4071) and Strategic Road Network (SRN M45). TPC seeks an holistic assessment of the dual impact of the RLP and WCC Minerals Plan, and promotes the importance of the Potsford Dam Link – which heads northwards from the Thurlaston roundabout. The presentation deck shows indicative road layouts.

### **Sustrans Route 41 extension(s)**

- TPC has been seeking an opportunity to collaborate with others to develop links between the Cawston Greenway and Route 41 at Draycote Hamlet – that is a direct link using the old LNWR rail route past Whitefields Golf Course. The proposal would provide a safe pedestrian M45 underpass thus facilitating access to retail outlets by and along the Straight Mile.
- TPC has engagement with Sustrans – in part, on the back of Route 41 developments between Birdingbury and Offchurch (known as the Lias Line Greenway). We attended a Sustrans presentation on the Lias extension on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

### **The Rugby Local Plan – implications to South West Rugby**

Within Thurlaston and Dunchurch parishes there are several developments on the northern side of the Coventry Road. In 2018 several parcels of land were secured by developers – these are detailed in the presentation pack.

The largest single scheme is the 111-acre Tritax Symmetry warehouse complex, known as Symmetry Park. This, with a Fire Station and Energy Centre, consumes most land up to Station Farm Cottage on its northern boundary. Symmetry Park is subject to numerous planning applications – in essence these are taken under reserve matters because outline planning permission was granted as part of the RLP. The Parish Council has already responded to various proposals concerning warehouse design/layout, road layouts, energy centre, bunds and numerous pollution concerns (air quality, acoustic, visual). These representations are on the TPC website. There is an iterative time-consuming process because Tritax Symmetry is continually ‘testing’ design ideas – typically as a consequence to logistics services market forces.

Further north there are two additional Tritax Symmetry housing schemes – known as Cawston Farm Phase I and II. In total this will provide circa 620 houses which will be a mix of 2-to-5 bedroom properties of which 30% will be affordable with a mix of rented and shared ownership. Running through the centre of the Tritax Symmetry schemes it is proposed to create a new north/south highway known as the Potsford Dam Link; there is currently no firm commitment to connect it to the Western Relief Road. TPC considers this a major concern because it could provide a direct route to the A4071/Western Relief Road and thus avoid the polluting effects of HGV traffic on the Coventry Road (B4429). There is no approved Rugby Travel Plan which is an ongoing concern for both Thurlaston and Dunchurch parish councils.

Further east towards Dunchurch, Homes England will create a large housing complex (circa 230 acres) with various social/community amenities. The scheme will have the benefit of a new Homestead Link Road which will act as a bypass to the Dunchurch crossroads – this is timetabled to be commissioned during 2024. An outline project timeline is provided within the presentation deck.

In summary the RLP is a 10-year plan which will require ongoing parish council attention – the level of commitment will depend on matters in hand. TPC’s stance is to use our endeavours to engage with developers – in essence to ensure we know what is going on and to what extent they may be disruptive to local communities. We do not want surprises. Of course, where we can, we hope to bring influence – certainly our recent conversations with Tritax Symmetry and their agents, such as Framptons Planning, have been useful information sharing sessions. In tandem with Symmetry Park there are several other matters which are attracting our attention, examples include:



- Travel Strategy and Plan – especially regarding HGV movements and their control;
- Highway designs and implementation timescales;
- Air Quality – making baseline assessments and monitoring the impact of projects being brought on stream;
- Warwickshire Minerals Plan – especially project timescales and highway changes;
- Potential to engage fully with Sustrans to improve, link and extend Route 41.

**Archives Report:** presented by Brian Coleman Curator of the Village Archives.

A large part of the APM meeting is about discovering how the village assets are managed e.g., the Poors Plot...by the 'Thurlaston Poors Plot Charity Committee', the Village Hall...by the 'Thurlaston Village Hall Committee' etc. All formal groups with a chairperson and sense of purpose.

This 10-minute slot is not just about 'the Thurlaston Archives' that we have in the cupboard in the Village Hall and how it is managed, it extends beyond that to the village, it's identity and character, it's provenance and inevitably to the properties and land etc., etc.!

Hopefully that is of interest to you all. Provenance can be a key factor with understanding the value of an item or place.

The proposal today then is to make the most of the records we have of the village, add to them and establish the best way to protect and improve access to them by digital means. This could be done by:

- forming a Thurlaston (Wa) Heritage Group
- researching and developing the existing asset,
- involving a larger number of residents to spread the task.
- following the model set by the "Community Archives & Heritage Group" a national organisation. We are in touch with a local group at Stretton-on-Dunsmore; other local groups at Southam and Leamington are potentially also on hand to encourage and advise.
- communicating the character of the village

We already have pictures, photo albums, books, artefacts, maps, personal stories, property synopses; a lot of the material was catalogued 15 years ago and since then additions have been made. A lot more can be done.

### **How will you get involved?**

Ideas exist for projects:

- Tri-page leaflets.... your property, your experience of the village etc.
- Book
- Beer Tree example
- Property packs
- Family lines
- Maps
- 1020 year long Timeline
- Trees. Planter John trees, etc
- Digitisation

- The Covid years

**This is a pivotal point in time for the archives.** It has been dormant in activity for the past three years and the future of the documents needs attention and ultimately preparing for long-term protection and availability. As I have alluded to this is not just a pile of fusty documents that are pored over by studious enthusiasts it is for everyone.... write your own story, be part of a community activity that could result in highlighting the character/nature of this village ...it is similar looking back to build the future.

There is a sheet circulating for you all to write your contact details down, preferably email, so we can establish a community group to build the picture expressing the character of this village. It could be useful in discussions with future major infringements to this village.

Your village needs you!

**Thurlaston Village Hall Report:** written by Mary Cook, Chair of the Village Hall and read by Judy Douglas.

The previous two years have been a strange and difficult time for all of us in different ways. The village hall has either been totally closed or had limited access. Our finances would have been in disarray except for a Covid grant from the government which was made for all organisations similar to village halls.

We have been able to keep going and also to be able to use part of the grant to redecorate the hall inside and out. Our finances and minutes are published on the Parish Council website. Fortunately we are now fully open and able to take bookings pretty much normally. We have a very enthusiastic committee to run the hall. Judy Douglas is our latest trustee and we benefit from her experience of being a leading light on the Thurlaston Ladies Club (TLC) We have one vacancy on the committee and a resident has expressed an interest in joining our team in the near future.

We would like to thank all those who fund raise for the hall as we could not manage without your efforts. The TLC has given us a grant of £200 this year which is very welcome indeed. Our gardening volunteers are also much appreciated.

In future we hope to have a big tea party on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> June. This is to bring the village together to celebrate our Queen's platinum jubilee as well as to raise funds for the hall. We are in the process of planning a pudding evening for later in the year. I am sure most people love puddings. A quiz evening is also in the planning stage.

The village hall is an important hub of this small community and it is a privilege to manage it for the benefit of all our residents

.  
Mary Cook, on behalf of the Village Hall Trustees.

**Dunchurch Broughton Endowed Trust:** report by Greg Irish, Trustee Governor and read by Sylvia Jacques.

The Trustee Governors are responsible for administering the Trust fund left to the junior school by a local benefactor Frances Boughton, after whom the school was named.

The school was keen to make better use of the outdoor areas and proposed some

significant development ideas. The trustees have agreed to support the school with this project which should give significant benefit. The plans include a Nature Conservation Area, spiritual garden, storytelling zone and outside learning zone. The plans have been drawn up and the project is progressing.

The trust remains in a healthy position.

**St. Edmunds Church:** report by Reverend Pat Townshend and read by Sylvia Jacques.

2022 continued to be a very disruptive year for St Edmund's owing to the pandemic. Nevertheless, we were able to hold 18 Communion Services, 36 weekly half hour reflective prayer meetings as well as a Remembrance service outside by the Cross and our annual St Edmund's Day service.

In 2021, we finished the refurbishment of Church House thanks to a very generous bequest from the Baugh family, who were strong supporters of St Edmund's over many years and gave us the beautiful stained-glass window admired by so many. Church House has now been let again, improving our finances, and should enable us to keep the church roof in a reasonable state, which is a continuing concern though we are aware that major repairs will become necessary in the future.

We have a faithful band of people who help to run the church; cleaning, providing and arranging the flowers, playing the music, keeping things in good repair and enabling us to run services. We give thanks also to the many villagers who help us along the way. Social events have started again. A more restricted but very enjoyable fete was held raising £650 for the church and an equal amount for the Village Hall. Congratulations and thanks to all involved. The popular village coffee mornings on 3rd Friday of the month have restarted, and the Myton Hospice coffee morning and sale raised an incredible £715. Many thanks to those who made it happen.

God bless you all in the year ahead.

**Poors Plot Charity:** No report submitted, although requested.

**Newcombe and Spears Almshouses:** presented by Walter Harvey.

For those who are not aware, the local Almshouses are a terrace of six small houses in Dunchurch between the Dun Cow and the Church, opposite the Scott statue and Mops. The charity was founded in 1690 and has run continuously since then. It is for the benefit of Dunchurch and Thurlaston residents and Thurlaston Parish Council nominates one trustee. As with all old buildings last rebuilt in Victorian times there is a constant requirement to repair and refurbish.

Although Covid 19 had an impact on the Almshouses, it did not seriously disrupt the day-to-day activities of either the Trust or the Trustees. Trustee meetings were held on zoom in the first half of the year with in-person meetings resuming at the end of October 2021.

Work to overcome rising damp was required in houses 1, 2 and 4 which did require the tenants to move elsewhere for a short time. The work at house 2 required extensive re-plastering to the living room and consequently the living room has been completely redecorated.

Our plans to replace the flat roofs at the rear of the houses with slated roofs and better insulation were frustrated by a lack of suitable contractors. Towards the end of the year, we

secured an acceptable offer but have yet to confirm details. It is hoped that work will commence in mid-May.

We had two new residents in May and July 2021. Currently two of our tenants have given notice of departure so that we are looking for new tenants. We have no one on our waiting list, so if you have a friend or relative in the area who may be interested then please let them know of this availability.

The Charity funds remain in good order and enable the trustees to maintain comfortable albeit limited accommodation for the residents.

**Village Fete:** presented by Sylvia Jacques Organiser of Fete Group.

2021 came with Covid still around and we decided we wanted to have a Fete but a smaller would be more sensible.

We went back to how the Fete used to be with stalls all along Church Lane, Books, Bric a brac, Raffle, the children had a stall selling used toys, Water and wine, Plants and produce, Ladies Club stall and we used the Church for the cake stall, teas in the Village Hall as usual, Pimms and music by Paul Jacques.

The date of the Fete was 10<sup>th</sup> July 2021, with the theme "Mini Fete".

Although the Fete was smaller and the takings down slightly, we still managed to give the Church and the Village Hall £650 each.

Most people we spoke to found the new style Fete enjoyable, saying it was more intimate, a lovely atmosphere and more like a Village Fete.

Now 2022, Covid is still with us, high numbers particularly in Rugby, so we have decided to use the same format this year of the Mini Fete in Church Lane.

We already have some volunteers to help run the Fete.

The theme is "Platinum Jubilee" and we are hoping everyone can wear something Platinum, crowns or some clothing or even dress as the Queen.

If you can support us in any way, please stay at the end of this meeting and discuss possibilities.

The Church has kindly allowed us to be here tonight and a donation in the tray as you go out would be appreciated.

**Thurlaston Chronicle:** presented by Sylvia Jacques

Following on from our long-standing Chronicle Editor, Brian Coleman, stepping down in 2019, we have not had a Permanent Editor for this popular magazine which gives so much information and news of the village.

So, without any volunteers coming forward, Keith Boardman stood in as Interim Editor and the Chronicle did appear in August 2020 after all. Full colour version! We are still hoping for someone to step forward and fill the post of Editor.

Last year, 2021, saw all the problems with Covid and we were unable to produce one. This year, Paula Irish, journalist, has produced the 2022 Chronicle with the help of Gill Dakin and Sue Winton and a little help from me. This year's version will be larger and have colour and you will hopefully all enjoy reading the articles.

Please come forward if you would like to take on the role of Editor.

**Open Forum:**

No questions were put forward for discussion. Residents invited to participate in Wine and Nibbles.

**Any Future Business:** presented by Sylvia Jacques, Parish Clerk.

For some time, the verges at the corner of Church Lane and Main Street have been destroyed by heavy vehicles driving over this area. A number of solutions have been tried or discussed. Cllr Howard Roberts said he had a similar problem in his own village and this was solved with laying cobblestones. He is willing to assist with the cost from his Councillors grant.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

The date of the next APM will be during March or April 2023. As this is an election year, this may affect the date.

Minutes by Sylvia Jacques.

[Parish.clerk@thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Parish.clerk@thurlaston-pc.gov.uk)

Signed by Chair..... Dated.....